

**BRIN Working Papers on Religious Statistics**  
**Working Paper 2**



**Religion in Great Britain, 1939-99:  
A Compendium of Gallup Poll Data**

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## Introduction

The nature, chronology, and causation of religious change in Britain continues to be contested by historians and sociologists, drawing upon a range of quantitative and qualitative measures. Traditionally, the statistical evidence which has been deployed in support of this scholarship has largely related to church membership and church attendance, given the relative paucity of information collected by the State. Although the potential of sample surveys as sources has been recognized, the analysis has disproportionately concentrated on the most accessible and most academically-led datasets, such as the British Social Attitudes Surveys and the European Values Surveys. Opinion polls have been less often mined, in part at least because they have been so poorly archived in Britain (in comparison with, say, the United States). In this working paper an attempt is made to draw together the principal data on religion gathered by the British Gallup Poll and to make them freely available as a resource to inform the ongoing debate on the secularization of British society.

### *History of Gallup Poll in Britain*

The Gallup Poll was the first and, for a long time, the largest and best-known opinion polling agency in Britain. It was founded in 1937, initially as the British Institute of Public Opinion (BIPO), as the first overseas affiliate of George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO, 1935), albeit it was an independent commercial entity, being incorporated as a limited liability company in 1943. BIPO was owned and managed by Henry Durant (1902-82) and owed much of its early success and visibility to the exclusive rights to publish British Gallup results which were sold to the *News Chronicle* in 1938, until that newspaper's demise in 1960. Polling commenced on a monthly basis but had become weekly by the mid-1950s. There was a change of nomenclature to Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Limited in 1952, although BIPO remained in use until at least 1958 and 'Gallup Poll' was a common shortened form. The story of the Gallup Poll during Durant's time has recently been told in Mark Roodhouse, "Fish-and-Chip Intelligence": Henry Durant and the British Institute of Public Opinion, 1936-63', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2013), pp. 224-48.

Durant's ill-health necessitated the sale of Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Limited to Mercury Securities in 1963. The company prospered for many years, notwithstanding the emergence of several rivals, perhaps not so much from its opinion polling (from which its fame derived) as from its market research (which accounted for the majority of its business). However, competition became much more acute in the 1990s, and the reputation of the polling industry as a whole suffered as a result of its apparently indifferent performance in 'forecasting' the 1992 and 1997 British general elections, leading to significant changes in methodology. Gallup's profitability declined, and in 1995 it became the Gallup Organization, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gallup Inc. in the United States. Although Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Limited was not formally dissolved until 2000, it had already ceased to be used as a trading name in 1994. The Gallup Organization continues to exist as a UK company, with a focus on the provision of research-based consulting services, but there was a diminished emphasis on public opinion polling after 2001. Symptomatic of the change in climate was the switch to the new online pollster YouGov in 2002 by the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*, which in 1961 had picked up the mantle from the *News Chronicle* of commissioning and publishing many Gallup Polls in Britain.

### *Gallup Poll's methods*

Gallup undertook a wide range of quantitative research over the years, among a diversity of survey populations, and employing various data collection techniques. However, for national cross-sections of Great Britain (our concern in this working paper) interviews were overwhelmingly conducted face-to-face, in the street or in the home. There was some experimentation with telephone interviewing from the late 1980s and a general switch to this method from 1997. Stratification was used to select sampling points but, for each point, quota sampling was mostly applied to recruit interviewees, not least because it was far less expensive than random sampling. Notwithstanding, random sampling was used for some special (i.e. non-omnibus) surveys before 1997 and much more widely after that date. Polls were initially confined to persons of voting age (21 when Gallup began operations in 1937, being lowered to 18 in 1969), and, for obvious reasons, this always remained the case for polls with a wholly or partly political focus. But, for other topics, surveys of all adult Britons aged 16 and over were introduced from the early 1950s.

### *Published Gallup Poll results*

As already noted, many Gallup Poll findings appeared in the pages of the *News Chronicle* between 1938 and 1960 and in the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* between 1961 and 2001. However, the early reports were often written by journalists rather than by Gallup staff or other experts and tended to be lacking in methodological detail and analysis of findings for sub-groups.

An early attempt to collate the poll findings of AIPO and its various overseas affiliates, including BIPO, was Hadley Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951). This was effectively superseded in the British case by George Gallup (ed.), *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain, 1937-1975* (2 vols, New York: Random House, 1976). Both collations generally report topline data only, and neither is absolutely complete, particularly as regards special (i.e. non-omnibus) surveys.

Meanwhile, Gallup itself had started to publish the monthly *Gallup Political Index* (1960-90) and *Gallup Political & Economic Index* (1991-2002), whose scope is much wider than the title might imply, although, again, special surveys are not covered comprehensively. The serial is available in a limited number of research libraries, while the run for 1960-88 was also republished on microfiche as part of David Tyler (ed.), *World Political Opinion and Social Surveys, Series One: British Opinion Polls, Part I – Basic Set, 1950-1988* (Reading: Research Publications, 1990), together with a new printed cumulative index.

Senior members of Gallup staff prepared round-ups of Gallup polling data for 1980, 1981, and 1985 in, respectively: Norman Webb and Robert Wybrow, *The Gallup Report* (London: Sphere Books, 1981); Norman Webb and Robert Wybrow, *The Gallup Report: Your Opinions in 1981* (London: Sphere Books, 1982); and Gordon Heald and Robert Wybrow, *The Gallup Survey of Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1986). Wybrow, who worked for Gallup in Britain from 1956 to 1998 (including as a director from 1978 to 1998), also prepared *Britain Speaks Out, 1937-87: A Social History as Seen through the Gallup Data* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

An almost complete topline record of Gallup's political polling is Anthony King (ed.), *British Political Opinion, 1937-2000: The Gallup Polls* (London: Politico's, 2001), which was actually compiled by



Wybrow. In his introduction to the book, King – the eminent political scientist and commentator on Gallup surveys for the *Daily Telegraph* – mooted a companion second volume on Gallup's non-political polls, but it never materialized.

In addition to these overviews, printed reports on the most important individual Gallup surveys were often prepared. Only a few of these were ever formally published, an example from the religion field being Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., *Television and Religion* (London: University of London Press, 1964). Most were intended for private circulation, but copies have sometimes found their way into major research libraries.

### *Paper and electronic archives of Gallup Poll*

Gallup Poll in Britain has had several owners over the years and it has even more frequently moved its headquarters location. These factors alone are not conducive to the maintenance and retention of historic archives and records, and the current Gallup Organization has failed to reply to the author's enquiry about its own holdings. Nor do any archives appear to have been deposited in a public record repository. But some certainly existed when the author consulted them at the offices of Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Limited on the Finchley Road in London during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and, fortunately, he was permitted by Gallup to make photocopies of some unpublished material relating to religion, which he has been able to draw upon in this working paper.

By far the biggest cache of digital datasets of British Gallup Polls is at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, comprising almost 2,500 datasets between 1954 and 1991. These are mostly omnibus (rather than special) polls, and there is still some considerable way to go in making documentation available and converting files to modern formats. It should also be remembered that the Roper Center is a subscription-based membership organization, and there are at present only two members in the UK (London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Oxford). By contrast, the UK's own Data Archive holds only a small and rather eclectic collection of around 125 Gallup datasets, spanning the years 1938-46 (including all 58 surviving Gallup Polls for these years) and 1955-91, and containing just one major religion-related dataset (SN 1570, Roman Catholic Opinion, 1978). Datasets for multinational surveys where Gallup was responsible for the British fieldwork, such as the earliest Eurobarometers and European Values Surveys, are available from multiple data centres, including user-friendly access via the Centre for Comparative European Survey Data Information System.

### *Gallup Poll surveys on religion*

In his “‘Fish-and-Chip Intelligence’” Roodhouse (p. 237) observed of BIPO under Durant's leadership: ‘Religion was a noticeable absence from the list of standard and special controls. As far as Durant was concerned, religion was no longer an important factor shaping public opinion at mid-century.’ In fact, occasional questions on religion appeared from the outset, commencing with church membership and churchgoing in November 1937, although it was admittedly not until 1954 and 1957 that the first detailed studies on religion were conducted, for the BBC and *News Chronicle*, respectively. Religious affiliation was introduced as an occasional variable from August 1943, and this obviously permitted analysis of how religion shaped public attitudes to a range of topics, exemplified in Bernice Martin's useful compilation ‘Comments on Some Gallup Poll Statistics’, in David Martin (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* [1] (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 146-97. Although the volume and

nature of Gallup's polling on religion-related themes ultimately depended on what its clients were willing to commission and pay for, it was also influenced by internal factors and interests, especially during Gordon Heald's time with the company as director (1969-80) and managing director (1980-94), before he left to found Opinion Research Business.

This compendium does not attempt to capture all of the British Gallup data on religion. Some are probably irretrievably lost, but many are from questions asked only on one occasion and for one particular client. Given increasing scholarly concern about religious change in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century, the working paper attempts to tabulate Gallup time series, for which there is a minimum of two data points (preferably spaced some years apart), as well as consistency in methodology and question-wording. The source database on the British Religion in Numbers website is a good starting-point for those wishing to identify Gallup's non-recurrent questions on religion.

In using the tables which follow, readers should also bear in mind other important aspects of the scope of this undertaking:

- All data relate to national cross-sections of the population of Great Britain (i.e. England, Wales, and Scotland, excluding Northern Ireland), and no surveys of spatial sub-divisions of Britain are included
- All data relate to adults aged 16/18/21 years and over, and no surveys of demographic sub-groups are included
- All data were collected by means of face-to-face or telephone interview
- The surveys comprise those solely undertaken in Britain as well as multinational surveys (such as Eurobarometers or European Values Surveys) where Gallup was initially responsible for the British fieldwork
- Question-wording is given but very minor variations over the years are not noted
- Exact sample sizes for each survey are cited when available, otherwise the normal target sample size for omnibus surveys of the period is given
- To avoid the tables becoming overly complex, fieldwork dates are expressed as months and years only, omitting the days
- To avoid the tables becoming overly complex, sources are not cited but figures are mostly drawn from the publications noted above, supplemented by unpublished material kindly provided to the author by senior Gallup staff in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s
- Following Gallup, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole point, and therefore some columns may not sum to 100
- All data are reported as topline, with no breaks for demographic sub-groups, which are, in any case, not consistently available
- In each section, tables are arranged in chronological order of the question first being asked, with the exception that tables on cognate topics have been grouped together

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Birmingham, February 2015  
Clive D. Field

## Religiosity

**Table 1: Extent to which comfort and strength were derived from religion, 1941-90**

Question: 'Do you find that you get comfort and strength from religion or not?'

	1/1941	3/1981	6-9/1990
	%	%	%
Yes	51	46	44
No	42	49	54
Don't know	7	5	3
N =	2,175	1,231	1,484

**Table 2: Relative influence of religion and politics in people's lives, 1948-96**

Question: 'Speaking generally, which would you say has more influence in people's lives – religion or politics?'

	6/1948	2/1957	6/1964	2/1996
	%	%	%	%
Religion	27	30	26	13
Politics	54	41	37	68
About same	20	17	22	12
Don't know	11	12	15	7
N =	2,000	2,261	1,000	935

**Table 3: Perceived extent to which religion is increasing/losing influence on British life, 1957-96**

Question: 'At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on British life or losing its influence?'

	2/1957	5/1965	5/1967	4-5/1973	5-6/1975
	%	%	%	%	%
Increasing	17	11	9	10	12
No change	18	21	19	11	12
Losing	52	54	65	70	70
Don't know	13	14	7	9	6
N =	2,261	1,000	1,000	892	958
	3/1982	11/1982	12/1989	5/1993	7/1996
	%	%	%	%	%
Increasing	14	17	12	12	11
No change	13	13	14	10	12
Losing	67	64	69	73	73
Don't know	6	6	6	6	5
N =	1,032	991	969	1,002	1,046

**Table 4: Perceptions of whether the British people are getting better or worse in terms of religious attitudes, 1968-96**

Question: 'Do you think that the British people are getting better or getting worse from the point of view of its attitude to religion?'

	5/1968	3/1969	5/1996
	%	%	%
Improving	10	8	4
Worsening	61	63	59
No change	19	18	24
Don't know	10	12	13
N -	1,000	1,000	876

**Table 5: Importance of religion in respondent's life, 1975-86**

Question: 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to a religion? If so, do you personally feel, irrespective of how often you go to church, that your religion is of great importance, some importance, or only of little importance in your life?'

	10/1975	5-6/1976	11/1976	4-5/1977	10-11/1977
	%	%	%	%	%
Great importance	21	21	25	28	24
Some importance	34	32	32	31	30
Little importance	17	16	12	13	15
No importance/no religion	26	29	29	27	31
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1
N =	1,138	1,028	1,051	1,117	1,060
	10-11/1978	4/1979	10/1979	3-4/1984	10-11/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Great importance	24	27	28	28	21
Some importance	32	31	30	30	29
Little importance	18	18	16	12	14
No importance/no religion	22	23	26	29	35
Don't know	3	1	1	1	1
N =	1,008	1,008	1,103	1,042	1,000

**Table 6: Importance of religion in respondent's life, 1982-96**

Question: 'Please look at this card and tell me, for each item that I read out, how important you think it is in your life – religion.'

	3/1982	6-9/1990	7/1990	7/1996
	%	%	%	%
Very important	18	16	16	17
Quite important	28	29	24	27
Not very important	32	36	29	NA
Not at all important	22	19	30	NA
<i>Unimportant</i>	54	55	59	54
Don't know	1	0	1	1
N =	1,076	1,484	1,015	1,046

**Table 7: Self-rated religiosity, 1981-90**

Question: 'Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are ...'

	3/1981	3-4/1982	10/1982	3-4/1983	10/1983
	%	%	%	%	%
A religious person	58	53	61	57	60
Not a religious person	36	40	32	36	33
A convinced atheist	4	5	5	6	5
Don't know	2	2	3	2	2
N =	1,231	1,136	1,000	1,027	973
	10/1984	10-11/1988	3-4/1989	7/1989	6-9/1990
	%	%	%	%	%
A religious person	57	61	59	62	54
Not a religious person	36	31	30	29	38
A convinced atheist	5	4	6	5	4
Don't know	2	5	5	5	4
N =	1,083	1,324	976	1,248	1,484

**Table 8: Self-rated religiosity, 1985-98**

Question: 'Would you say you are very religious, somewhat religious, or not religious at all?'

	4/1985	10/1986	12/1989	5/1993	8-9/1998
	%	%	%	%	%
Very religious	8	8	7	9	18
Somewhat religious	56	50	49	43	42
Not religious	34	42	42	46	39
Don't know	2	1	1	2	0
N =	1,067	1,027	969	1,002	1,022

Note: The 1998 category was 'religious' rather than 'very religious'.

**Table 9: Sources of religious rules, 1985 and 1989**

Question: 'Would you say you pretty much follow the religious rules you learned as a child from your church or synagogue, or have you developed your own set of personal religious rules now that you are an adult?'

	4/1985	12/1989
	%	%
Childhood	47	41
Personal set	37	37
Not religious now	14	18
Don't know	3	3
N =	1,067	969

**Table 10: Importance of spiritual well-being in respondent's life, 1988 and 1992**

Question: 'How important are the following things in your life – spiritual well-being?'

	9/1988	11/1992
	%	%
Not very important	27	32
Quite important	36	39
Very important	30	24
More important than anything else	3	3
Don't know	5	2
N =	872	1,007

## Religious Affiliation

Gallup enquired into religious affiliation on numerous occasions, commencing in August 1943, and especially frequently during the early 1960s. Only a selection of relevant data are reproduced here, but a fuller checklist to 1982 can be found in Clive Field, 'Non-Recurrent Christian Data', in W.F. Maunder (ed.), *Religion* (Reviews of United Kingdom Statistical Sources, 20, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), pp. 365-87. Table 11 shows the results for surveys which employed the largest samples (usually arrived at by aggregating several consecutive individual polls) and used the standard question 'what is your religious denomination?' This is widely regarded as being a 'leading' question, implying not only that respondents should or would have a religion to declare but that they could also denominationalize it. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the numbers self-identifying as without faith were relatively limited, at least until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Table 12 illustrates the effect of asking a somewhat more 'neutral' question (in Gallup's fieldwork for Eurobarometers): 'do you regard yourself as belonging to a religion? If so, which of them?' On this formulation, the proportion professing no religion is significantly increased. Gallup's coding of specific denominations and faiths was not necessarily consistent. It is likely that some groups which would have been conventionally regarded as part of the Free Churches were assigned to the category of 'other religion'. That category subsumed both Christians and non-Christians, the latter not being separately identified in most surveys. The no religion category in Table 11 seems to have included some non-respondents, as well as those who identified as having no faith.

**Table 11: Religious affiliation, 1946-96**

Question: 'What is your religious denomination?'

	7- 8/1946	1947-49	2/1957	8- 12/1963	9- 10/1964	2/1974	9- 10/1974
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Church of England	45	51	55	61	62	61	60
Church of Scotland	8	8	7	8	8	7	7
Free Church	19	15	15	11	11	7	6
Roman Catholic	11	11	9	10	10	11	11
Other religion	6	6	5	4	4	6	7
No religion	11	9	9	6	6	8	9
N =	3,239	7,000	2,261	21,495	10,708	9,540	8,428
	2- 4/1978	4- 5/1979	4- 5/1982	5/1987	3/1992	1996	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Church of England	60	61	58	58	55	53	
Church of Scotland	7	7	8	7	6	5	
Free Church	7	7	8	4	5	5	
Roman Catholic	12	12	13	13	14	12	
Other religion	6	5	6	7	5	8	
No religion	8	8	7	12	15	16	
N =	11,061	11,097	5,800	3,918	4,064	4,666	

Note: The figures for the Church of England and Church of Scotland in 1992 are estimated since only a total for both denominations combined was coded.

**Table 12: Religious affiliation, 1975-87**

Question: 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to a religion? If so, which of them?'

	10/1975	10-11/1978	10/1981	3-4/1984	3-4/1987
	%	%	%	%	%
Church of England	47	46	44	45	40
Church of Scotland	4	6	5	5	5
Free Church	8	6	6	5	4
Catholic	9	8	10	9	8
Other religion	6	6	7	6	6
No religion	26	25	27	29	36
Don't know	NA	2	1	1	1
N =	1,138	1,046	1,088	1,042	982



**Table 13: Self-reported church membership, 1937 and 1990**

Question: 'Are you a member of a [Christian] church?'

	11/1937	4/1990
	%	%
Yes	78	41
No	22	59
N =	2,000	847

## Beliefs about God

**Table 14: Belief in God, 1947-93**

Question: 'Which of these statements comes closest to your belief?'

	12/1947	2/1957	3-4/1963	3/1979	3/1981
	%	%	%	%	%
There is a personal God	45	41	38	35	30
There is some sort of spirit or life force	39	37	33	41	38
I don't really think there is any sort of God or life force	16	6	9	8	9
I don't know what to think	NA	16	20	17	19
Don't know	NA	NA	NA	NA	4
N =	2,000	2,261	1,076	918	1,231
	4/1981	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993
	%	%	%	%	%
There is a personal God	36	31	30	32	30
There is some sort of spirit or life force	37	41	39	41	40
I don't really think there is any sort of God or life force	12	16	12	10	14
I don't know what to think	15	11	19	15	15
Don't know	NA	NA	1	1	1
N =	994	1,012	969	1,484	1,002

**Table 15: Belief in God, 1968-99**

Question: 'Which of the following do you believe in – God?'

	5/1968	4-5/1973	5-6/1975	3/1979	3/1981	4/1981	6/1985
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	77	74	72	76	75	73	71
No	11	12	17	15	16	19	NA
Don't know	12	14	11	9	9	8	NA
N =	1,000	892	958	918	1,231	994	909
	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993	3/1995	11/1999	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	68	64	71	64	61	68	
No	26	24	20	28	30	27	
Don't know	6	12	9	8	9	5	
N =	1,012	969	1,484	1,002	996	1,013	

**Table 16: Importance of God in respondent's life, 1981-93**

Question: 'How important is God in your life?'

	3/1981	3/1982	4-5/1982	6/1982	11/1982	3-4/1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 Not at all	14	15	13	15	13	13
2	6	3	4	4	3	6
3	7	7	6	6	5	7
4	8	5	6	6	6	5
5	13	18	14	16	15	12
6	7	10	9	10	10	8
7	9	7	8	10	7	9
8	10	9	8	7	8	11
9	5	2	4	3	5	5
10 Very	19	0	26	22	26	21
Don't know/no answer	2	24	2	1	2	2
N =	1,231	1,032	947	1,000	991	1,027
	5/1984	8/1984	10-11/1985	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 Not at all	15	14	14	22	17	24
2	3	5	5	8	7	6
3	7	7	7	10	10	9
4	5	4	6	5	7	5
5	15	15	13	14	14	15
6	7	8	7	7	8	7
7	7	7	8	6	9	5
8	9	9	10	8	7	6
9	3	4	4	3	3	4
10 Very	26	23	23	18	16	18
Don't know/no answer	4	5	2	1	1	1
N =	1,030	1,001	1,053	969	1,484	1,002

**Table 17: Self-reported awareness of the presence of God, 1986 and 1989**

Question: 'People sometimes talk about certain kinds of personal experience which involve a non-everyday awareness of a presence or power. Here is a list of some of the kinds of things they talk about. Have any of these ever happened to you? If so, how often, once or twice, several times, or constantly – an awareness of the presence of God?'

	6/1986	12/1989
	%	%
Never/don't know	73	64
Once or twice	6	13
Several times	9	11
Constantly	12	12
N =	985	969

**Table 18: Extent to which belief in God was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – belief in God.'

	11-12/1988	8/1989	7/1991
	%	%	%
In	43	36	42
Out	41	41	42
Don't know/no answer	16	23	16
N =	1,002	965	1,032

## Beliefs about the afterlife

**Table 19: Belief in life after death, 1939-99**

Questions: 'Do you believe in life after death?' (1939-63, 9-10/1973, 11/1974-1/1975), 'Which of these do you believe in – life after death?' (1968, 4-5/1973, 10/1973, 1975-99 except 9-11/1979), 'I am going to read out a few sets of statements on religion. Please choose one statement from each set which comes closest to your own feelings – there is a/no life after death' (9-11/1979)

	3/1939	12/1947	2/1957	3/1960	3-4/1963	5/1968	4-5/1973	10/1973
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	48	49	54	56	53	38	37	47
No	34	27	17	18	22	35	39	53
Don't know	18	24	29	26	25	27	24	NA
N =	1,761	2,000	2,261	1,000	1,076	1,000	892	1,000
	10/1973	11/1974-1/1975	5-6/1975	2/1978	9-11/1979	3/1981	11/1981	6/1985
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	37	43	35	36	46	45	40	43
No	44	35	45	47	23	36	42	NA
Don't know	18	22	20	17	31	19	18	NA
N =	1,000	307	958	1,000	987	1,231	968	909
	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	6-9/1990	4/1993	2/1995	11/1999	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	50	37	42	44	42	39	50	
No	45	48	42	41	41	44	39	
Don't know	15	15	16	15	17	17	11	
N =	901	920	969	1,484	977	997	1,013	

**Table 20: Belief in heaven, 1968-99**

Question: 'Which of the following do you believe in – heaven?'

	5/1968	4-5/1973	5-6/1975	3/1979	3/1981	4/1981	6/1985
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	54	51	49	57	57	53	48
No	27	31	36	31	32	37	NA
Don't know	19	18	14	12	11	10	NA
N =	1,000	892	958	918	1,231	994	909
	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993	3/1995	11/1999	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	52	55	53	53	50	62	
No	42	34	38	39	40	33	
Don't know	6	11	9	8	11	5	
N =	1,012	969	1,484	1,002	996	1,013	

**Table 21: Belief in hell, 1968-99**

Question: 'Which of the following do you believe in – hell?'

	5/1968	4-5/1973	5-6/1975	3/1979	3/1981	4/1981	6/1985
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	23	20	20	22	26	21	30
No	58	67	71	66	63	72	NA
Don't know	19	13	9	12	11	7	NA
N =	1,000	892	958	918	1,231	994	909
	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993	3/1995	11/1999	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	21	24	25	26	24	32	
No	73	65	65	66	68	63	
Don't know	6	11	10	8	8	5	
N =	1,012	969	1,484	1,002	996	1,013	

**Table 22: Belief in reincarnation, 1968-95**

Question: 'Which of the following do you believe in – reincarnation?'

	5/1968	4-5/1973	5-6/1975	3/1979	3/1981	4/1981
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	18	22	22	28	27	28
No	52	51	58	51	54	57
Don't know	30	27	20	21	19	15
N =	1,000	892	958	918	1,231	994
	6/1985	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993	3/1995
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	20	25	27	32	26	26
No	NA	62	56	55	56	58
Don't know	NA	13	17	14	17	17
N =	909	1,012	969	1,484	1,002	996

Note: The 1990 question referred to 'resurrection of the dead'.

## Beliefs about the Bible

**Table 23: Knowledge of the Bible, 1949 and 1999**

Question: 'Can you give me the name of any of the four gospels, that is to say the first four books of the New Testament?'

	10/1949	11/1999
	%	%
All correct	61	48
3 correct	5	4
2 correct	6	3
1 correct	3	3
Don't know/incorrect	25	43
N =	2,000	1,013

**Table 24: Household ownership of a Bible, 1954-91**

Question: 'Have you any of these books in your home – Bible?'

	2/1954	12/1959	6/1991
	%	%	%
Yes	90	84	79
No	10	16	21
N =	2,000	1,000	1,029

**Table 25: Beliefs about the Old Testament, 1960-93**

Question: 'Which of these comes nearest to expressing your views about the Old Testament?'

	1/1960	3/1979	4/1981	7/1986	12/1989	5/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Of divine authority and its commands should be followed without question	19	12	14	10	9	10
Mostly of divine authority but some of it needs interpretation	41	39	34	38	34	34
Mostly a collection of stories and fables	22	33	42	45	43	45
Don't know	18	16	10	8	14	11
N =	1,500	918	994	1,012	969	1,002



**Table 26: Beliefs about the New Testament, 1960-93**

Question: 'Which of these comes nearest to expressing your views about the New Testament?'

	1/1960	3/1979	4/1981	7/1986	12/1989	5/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Of divine authority and its commands should be followed without question	25	13	14	13	10	13
Mostly of divine authority but some of it needs interpretation	43	42	39	39	37	36
Mostly a collection of stories and fables	13	28	34	39	38	40
Don't know	19	17	14	9	15	11
N =	1,500	918	994	1,012	969	1,002

**Table 27: Perceived extent to which the Bible is essential to the Christian Church, 1960-86**

Question: 'Do you think that the Bible is essential to the Christian Church or would the Church still survive even if the idea that the Bible is of divine authority were to be rejected?'

	1/1960	3/1979	4/1981	7/1986
	%	%	%	%
Is essential	72	60	68	63
Church will survive	15	28	24	29
Don't know	13	12	8	8
N =	1,500	918	994	1,012

**Table 28: Beliefs about the gospel miracles, 1984-93**

Question: 'Thinking about the gospel miracles, do you believe that they are mostly historical facts, mostly the gospel writers' interpretations of certain events, or mostly legends?'

	10/1984	12/1989	5/1993
	%	%	%
Mostly historical facts	25	15	21
Mostly gospel writers' interpretations	38	42	38
Mostly legends	26	28	31
Don't know	10	14	10
N =	943	969	1,002

## Other ‘traditional’ beliefs

**Table 29: Belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, 1957-93**

Question: ‘Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God or just a man?’

	2/1957	3-4/1963	3/1979	4/1981	7/1986	12/1989	5/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Son of God	71	60	55	52	48	46	46
Just a man	9	16	25	31	32	30	34
Just a story	6	7	7	5	8	9	9
Don’t know	14	17	13	11	11	15	12
N =	2,261	1,076	918	994	1,012	969	1,002

**Table 30: Belief in the devil, 1957-99**

Questions: ‘Do you believe that there is or is not a devil?’ (1957-63), ‘Which of the following do you believe in – the devil?’ (1968-99)

	2/1957	3-4/1963	5/1968	4-5/1973	5-6/1975	3/1979	3/1981	4/1981
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	34	35	21	18	20	22	30	21
No	42	47	60	69	72	68	60	73
Don’t know	24	18	19	13	8	10	10	7
N =	2,261	1,076	1,000	892	958	918	1,231	994
	6/1985	7/1986	12/1989	6-9/1990	5/1993	3/1995	11/1999	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	32	21	26	30	26	24	29	
No	NA	74	65	61	65	69	66	
Don’t know	NA	5	9	9	8	7	5	
N =	909	1,012	969	1,484	1,002	996	1,013	

**Table 31: Belief in a soul, 1981-90**

Question: ‘Which, if any, of the following do you believe in – a soul?’

	3/1981	6/1985	6-9/1990
	%	%	%
Yes	58	51	64
No	27	NA	28
Don’t know	14	NA	8
N =	1,231	909	1,484

**Table 32: Belief in sin, 1981-90**

Question: 'Which, if any, of the following do you believe in – sin?'

	3/1981	6/1985	6-9/1990
	%	%	%
Yes	68	53	68
No	25	NA	27
Don't know	7	NA	5
N =	1,231	909	1,484

**Table 33: Extent to which belief in religious faith was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1989-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – belief in religious faith.'

	3/1989	4/1990	11-12/1991
	%	%	%
In	30	35	30
Out	56	51	57
Don't know/no answer	14	14	13
N =	970	976	1,025

## Paranormal beliefs

**Table 34: Belief in exchanging messages with the dead, 1940-95**

Questions: 'Do you believe it is possible for the living to exchange messages with the dead?' (1940, 1957), 'Which of these do you believe in – exchanging messages with the dead?' (1973-95)

	3/1940	2/1957	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	14	15	12	12	9	13
No	66	52	77	77	83	80
Don't know	20	33	11	11	7	7
N =	1,796	2,261	1,000	958	1,000	968
	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	14	14	16	14	13	
No	78	78	73	77	82	
Don't know	8	8	11	9	5	
N =	901	920	969	977	997	

**Table 35: Belief in superstitions, 1946-86**

Question: 'Are there any superstitions you believe in?'

	5/1946	11/1984	9/1986
	%	%	%
Yes	35	26	26
No	63	74	74
No answer	2	NA	NA
N =	1,830	947	977

**Table 36: Practice of specific superstitions, 1946-96**

Question: 'Do you ...'

	5/1946	11/1984	9/1986
	%	%	%
<i>Throw salt over your shoulder</i>			
Yes	30	30	31
No	63	70	69
No answer	7	NA	NA
<i>Touch wood</i>			
Yes	38	51	51
No	55	49	49
No answer	7	NA	NA
<i>Walk under ladders</i>			
Yes	43	56	53
No	50	44	47
No answer	7	NA	NA
N =	1,830	947	977

**Table 37: Belief in thought transference, 1949-95**

Questions: 'Do you believe in thought transference (telepathy)?' (1949), 'Which of these do you believe in – thought transference between two people?' (1973-95)

	9/1949	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	39	45	48	49	53
No	38	42	37	38	37
Don't know	23	14	15	13	10
N =	2,000	1,000	958	1,000	968
	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	52	53	52	45	45
No	38	36	37	44	48
Don't know	10	10	11	10	7
N =	901	920	969	977	997

**Table 38: Belief in ghosts, 1950-95**

Questions: 'Do you believe in ghosts?' (1950), 'Which of these do you believe in – ghosts?' (1973-95)

	3/1950	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	10	18	18	20	24
No	80	74	72	72	70
Don't know	10	9	10	8	6
N =	2,000	1,000	958	1,000	968
	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	27	27	32	31	31
No	65	65	60	61	62
Don't know	8	8	8	8	7
N =	901	920	969	977	997

**Table 39: Reported sighting of a ghost, 1950-93**

Question: 'Have you ever seen a ghost?'

	3/1950	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	2	4	5	7	9	12	9	14	10
No	98	93	90	90	88	85	88	83	87
Not sure	NA	3	5	4	3	3	3	4	4
N =	2,000	1,000	958	1,000	968	901	920	969	977

**Table 40: Self-reported awareness of the presence of someone who had died, 1981-89**

Questions: 'Did you ever have any of the following experiences – felt as though you were really in touch with someone who had died?' (1981), 'People sometimes talk about certain kinds of personal experience which involve a non-everyday awareness of a presence or power. Here is a list of some of the kinds of things they talk about. Have any of these ever happened to you? If so, how often, once or twice, several times, or constantly – an awareness that you are in the presence of someone who has died?' (1986, 1989)

	3/1981	6/1986	12/1989
	%	%	%
Never/don't know	74	82	75
<i>Yes – all</i>	26	18	25
Once or twice	NA	9	16
Several times	NA	7	7
Constantly	NA	2	2
N =	1,231	985	969

**Table 41: Extent to which belief in ghosts was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – belief in ghosts.'

	11/1988	8/1989	7/1991
	%	%	%
In	27	31	32
Out	50	48	49
Don't know/no answer	23	21	19
N =	968	976	1,000

**Table 42: Belief in foretelling the future, 1951 and 1995**

Question: 'Do you believe in foretelling the future by any of the following?'

	3/1951	9/1995
	%	%
Yes – cards	7	12
Yes – reading hands	7	10
Yes – tea leaves	6	4
Yes – stars	6	15
Yes – reading bumps	2	2
Yes – some other method	3	5
No	80	75
N =	2,000	991

**Table 43: Incidence of paying to have fortune told, 1973-93**

Question: 'Have you ever paid to have your fortune told?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	30	34	23	24	24	21	26	24
No	70	66	77	76	76	79	74	76
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901	920	969	977



**Table 44: Belief in black magic, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – black magic?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	10	14	10	9	8
No	83	78	85	86	87
Don't know	7	8	5	5	5
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	11	15	10	10	
No	84	80	85	86	
Don't know	5	5	5	4	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 45: Extent to which belief in black magic was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – belief in black magic.'

	12/1988	9/1989	8/1991
	%	%	%
In	19	23	21
Out	55	63	54
Don't know/no answer	25	14	25
N =	921	980	1,000

**Table 46: Belief in faith healing, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – faith healing?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	38	42	44	43	47
No	48	43	42	44	42
Don't know	14	15	13	13	12
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	48	47	42	39	
No	43	40	44	52	
Don't know	9	13	14	9	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 47: Belief in flying saucers, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – flying saucers?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	15	20	27	24	19
No	75	65	61	64	72
Don't know	10	14	12	12	9
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	21	21	17	24	
No	67	69	73	67	
Don't know	11	11	9	9	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 48: Extent to which belief in flying saucers was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – belief in flying saucers.'

	11/1988	7/1989	7/1991
	%	%	%
In	20	22	23
Out	61	66	66
Don't know/no answer	18	12	11
N =	955	907	1,000

**Table 49: Belief in horoscopes, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – horoscopes?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	22	27	20	20	23
No	73	66	76	77	72
Don't know	5	7	4	3	5
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	23	24	21	21	
No	74	72	74	76	
Don't know	3	4	5	3	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 50: Extent to which horoscopes were perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – horoscopes.'

	11/1988	6/1989	6/1991
	%	%	%
In	61	53	60
Out	26	32	25
Don't know/no answer	13	15	16
N =	905	971	1,000

**Table 51: Belief in hypnotism, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – hypnotism?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	42	42	41	42	37
No	50	48	53	48	56
Don't know	7	10	7	10	7
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	45	44	41	42	
No	47	47	48	53	
Don't know	8	9	11	5	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 52: Belief in lucky charms or lucky mascots, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – lucky charms or lucky mascots?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	16	21	15	16	19
No	79	74	83	82	79
Don't know	5	5	2	2	2
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	17	20	18	15	
No	80	76	79	83	
Don't know	3	5	3	5	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 53: Belief in premonition, 1973-95**

Question: 'Which of these do you believe in – being able to forecast that something is going to happen before it actually happens?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	46	51	48	54	52
No	44	36	43	41	42
Don't know	11	12	10	5	6
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901
	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993	2/1995	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	54	57	48	45	
No	39	36	43	48	
Don't know	7	7	9	7	
N =	920	969	977	997	

**Table 54: Self-reported experience of a premonition, 1986 and 1989**

Question: 'People sometimes talk about certain kinds of personal experience which involve a non-everyday awareness of a presence or power. Here is a list of some of the kinds of things they talk about. Have any of these ever happened to you? If so, how often, once or twice, several times, or constantly – Knowing that something is going to happen beforehand, ie a premonition?'

	6/1986	12/1989
	%	%
Never/don't know	62	56
Once or twice	18	24
Several times	17	17
Constantly	3	2

**Table 55: Experience of déjà vu, 1973-93**

Question: 'Have you ever been somewhere or has something ever happened to you, when you've thought that you've been there before or that it happened before?'

	10/1973	5-6/1975	2/1978	11/1981	5-6/1986	9-10/1988	12/1989	4/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	50	56	55	62	62	66	67	65
No	43	39	38	36	35	33	31	35
Don't know	8	5	7	2	3	1	2	1
N =	1,000	958	1,000	968	901	920	969	977

**Table 56: Belief in astrology, 1985 and 1995**

Question: 'Which of any of the following do you believe in – astrology?'

	6/1985	2/1995
	%	%
Yes	23	29
No	NA	67
Don't know	NA	4
N =	909	997

## Churchgoing

Gallup first posed a question about churchgoing in November 1937, and the topic was explored on many occasions thereafter, although it never became a standard background variable. A checklist (doubtless incomplete) of relevant polls to 1982 can be found in Field, 'Non-Recurrent Christian Data', pp. 389-404. Unfortunately, variant question-wording was employed over the years, with, in particular, some questions including attendance at church solely for rites of passage and others (especially in the 1980s and 1990s) expressly discounting it. The coding of the frequency of churchgoing was also not standardized, necessitating some compression of response codes in order to secure reasonable comparability over time, albeit at the loss of some granularity. Finally, it should be remembered that claimed levels of churchgoing were always subject to considerable inflation, since there was a tendency for many respondents to give aspirational answers, with the possible exception of questions asking about the Sunday immediately prior to interview (Table 57), which arguably offer the most accurate picture for Britain in this period. Accordingly, polling evidence about church attendance should ideally never be used in isolation but always alongside more independent counts by the Churches or in community studies. With these significant caveats, Table 58 presents data for a selection of polls with the largest aggregated sample sizes for the years 1978-92. It has been judged too problematic to construct a similar Gallup time series for earlier years.

**Table 57: Self-reported churchgoing on the previous Sunday, 1948-88**

Question: 'Please tell me whether you did any of these things last Sunday – went to church?'

	9-10/1948	2/1957	5/1958	4/1968	11/1985	4-5/1988
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mentioned	15	14	12	14	14	13
Not mentioned	85	86	88	86	86	87
N =	4,000	2,261	1,000	1,000	916	934

**Table 58: Claimed frequency of attendance at religious services, 1978-92**

Questions: 'About how often nowadays do you go to a place of worship or don't you go at all?' (1978), 'Apart from weddings, funerals, and baptisms, about how often do you attend religious services these days?' (1982-92)

	2-4/1978	4-5/1982	12/1988-1/1989	7-8/1989	2/1991	3/1992
	%	%	%	%	%	%
At least weekly	13	15	13	15	13	15
At least monthly	6	9	6	6	6	7
Occasionally	21	20	19	19	20	17
Never or practically never	60	56	62	60	61	60
N =	11,061	5,800	3,780	3,883	4,000	4,064

**Table 59: Anticipated churchgoing on Christmas Day, 1964-97**

Questions: 'Do you normally go to church on Christmas Day or not?' (1964-96), 'Which, if any, will you do on Christmas Day – go to church' (1997)

	12/1964	12/1969	12/1970	12/1984	12/1986
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	36	28	30	30	27
No	64	72	70	70	73
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000	906	937
	12/1989	12/1995	12/1996	11/1997	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	28	25	31	25	
No	72	75	66	74	
N =	969	939	915	1,003	

**Table 60: Anticipated churchgoing on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, 1991 and 1996**

Question: 'Do you expect to go to church on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day?'

	12/1991	12/1996
	%	%
Yes	36	31
No	62	66
Don't know	2	3
N =	993	915

**Table 61: Anticipated churchgoing on Easter Sunday, 1968-96**

Questions: 'Which of these things do you think you will be doing on Easter Sunday – go to church?' (1968), 'Do you normally go to church on Easter Sunday or not?' (1989-96)

	4/1968	12/1989	3-4/1993	3-4/1996
	%	%	%	%
Yes	27	25	21	22
No	73	75	79	78
N =	1,000	969	1,160	1,119



**Table 62: Extent to which churchgoing was perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – churchgoing.'

	9/1988	5/1989	3/1990	5/1991
	%	%	%	%
In	21	24	32	21
Out	65	67	55	66
Don't know/no answer	14	10	13	13
N =	975	876	894	973

## Other religious practices

**Table 63: Intended abstinence during Lent, 1939-96**

Question: 'What are you giving up for Lent?'

	2/1939	3-4/1993	3-4/1996
	%	%	%
Something	12	8	9
Nothing	88	92	91
N =	1,523	1,160	1,119

**Table 64: Incidence of marriage in church, 1952 and 1995**

Question: 'Were you married in a church or registry office?'

	4/1952	2/1995
	%	%
Church	79	69
Registry office	20	29
Elsewhere	1	1
N =	2,000	2,232

**Table 65: Perceived primary purpose of Christmas, 1964-95**

Question: 'Do you regard Christmas mainly as ...'

	12/1964	12/1969	12/1970	12/1974	11/1975	11/1976
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A religious festival	35	38	35	36	34	35
A holiday	26	26	24	28	26	23
An opportunity to meet family and friends	23	23	30	33	32	34
An occasion for eating and drinking	5	11	15	11	10	10
None of these/don't know	11	2	NA	NA	5	4
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	937	1,000
	12/1984	11/1985	12/1986	12/1989	12/1995	
	%	%	%	%	%	
A religious festival	41	38	34	35	28	
A holiday	24	34	23	12	19	
An opportunity to meet family and friends	44	82	31	39	35	
An occasion for eating and drinking	18	37	13	10	12	
None of these/don't know	4	3	3	5	5	
N =	906	1,000	937	969	939	

Note: Multiple answers were permitted in some polls.

**Table 66: Perceived primary purpose of Christmas, 1991 and 1996**

Question: 'Do you personally think of Christmas as mainly a religious occasion or mainly an occasion for having a pleasant time with family and friends?'

	12/1991	12/1996
	%	%
Religious occasion	16	17
Pleasant time with family and friends	54	49
Both	26	29
Neither	4	5
N =	993	915

**Table 67: Perceived changes in the religious nature of Christmas compared with childhood, 1964-95**

Question: 'Would you say that Christmas is becoming more religious, less religious or remaining about the same compared with your childhood?'

	12/1964	12/1969	12/1970	12/1984	12/1986	12/1989	12/1995
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More religious	6	2	3	3	3	3	2
Less religious	65	77	76	76	74	72	80
About the same	28	18	17	20	22	24	16
Don't know	1	3	5	1	1	2	2
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000	906	937	969	939

**Table 68: Self-reported prayer, meditation, or contemplation, 1981 and 1990**

Question: 'Do you take any moments of prayer, meditation, or contemplation, or something like that?'

	3/1981	6-9/1990
	%	%
Yes	49	53
No	50	46
Don't know	1	1
N =	1,231	1,484

**Table 69: Self-reported prayer, 1989-99**

Question: 'Do you ever pray?'

	12/1989	5/1993	11/1999
	%	%	%
Yes – every day	21	20	NA
Yes – several times a week	13	15	NA
Yes – several times a month	9	8	NA
Yes – less often	17	16	NA
<i>Yes – all</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>69</i>
No	40	41	30
N =	969	1,002	1,013

**Table 70: Extent to which godparents were perceived as being in or out of fashion, 1988-91**

Question: 'Different things, such as products or ideas, can be popular, "in" fashion, or "out" of fashion. I am going to read out some items and I would like you to tell me whether you think they are "in" or "out" at present – godparents.'

	11/1988	8/1989	7/1991
	%	%	%
In	47	55	59
Out	39	33	28
Don't know/no answer	14	12	13
N =	955	976	996

## Attitudes to organized religion

**Table 71: Attitudes to church unity negotiations, 1949-82**

Question: 'Would you approve or disapprove if there were negotiations between the Church of England and the Nonconformist Churches on the question of all of them uniting?'

	11/1949	2/1957	10/1961	6-7/1963	1/1967	3/1982	6/1982
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	45	49	54	61	59	45	45
Disapprove	19	14	15	10	14	14	12
Neither/don't mind	24	NA	18	12	18	30	31
Don't know	12	37	13	17	9	11	12
N =	2,000	2,261	1,000	1,072	1,000	1,032	1,000

**Table 72: Perceived influence of the Churches on the country's future, 1963 and 1968**

Question: 'How much influence would you say these groups have on this country's future - Churches?'

	1/1963	6/1968	12/1968
	%	%	%
Great	14	10	10
Some	31	29	28
Little or none	45	56	54
Don't know	10	5	7
N	1,000	1,000	2,000

**Table 73: Perceived influence of the Church on the country's future, 1969-93**

Question: 'How much influence would you say these people or groups have on this country's future - the Church?'

	6/1969	2/1973	1/1976	11/1982	11/1987	6/1991	7-8/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A lot	15	17	13	15	16	12	10
A little	42	40	47	48	52	45	42
None at all	34	36	33	33	29	40	44
Don't know	10	7	7	4	4	3	5
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000	948	937	985	1,060

**Table 74: Perceived motivations of clergy, 1974 and 1996**

Question: 'Do you think that these people do their job mainly because of the good they can do for the community or mainly because of what they personally get out of the job – vicar, priest, or minister?'

	5/1974	8/1996
	%	%
Community	63	67
Self	10	9
Both	15	15
Don't know	12	8
N =	1,000	978

**Table 75: Degree of confidence in the Church, 1981-95**

Question: 'Please look at this card and tell me for each item listed how much confidence you have in them – Church.'

	3/1981	4/1983	2/1985	1/1987	11-12/1987	12/1989
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	19	22	20	17	17	15
Quite a lot	29	30	36	25	28	28
Not very much	40	31	29	41	36	41
None at all	10	17	15	17	17	15
Don't know	2	0	0	0	2	1
N	1,231	1,016	1,042	606	907	969
	1990	6-9/1990	3/1991	12/1992	2/1993	6/1995
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	14	16	11	11	12	12
Quite a lot	31	26	28	27	25	26
Not very much	40	44	42	36	40	39
None at all	11	13	18	26	23	21
Don't know	4	1	1	0	1	2
N	1,040	1,484	1,002	995	1,034	983

**Table 76: Degree of confidence in the leaders of organized religion, 1984 and 1989**

Question: 'I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them – organised religion?'

	12/1984	6-7/1989
	%	%
Great deal	12	8
Some	38	29
Hardly any	41	50
Don't know	9	13
N =	945	1,020

**Table 77: Perceived adequacy of the answers given by the Church to modern problems, 1981 and 1990**

Question: 'Generally speaking, do you think that the Church is giving, in your country, adequate answers to ... ?'

	3/1981	9/1981	6-9/1990
	%	%	%
<i>Moral problems and needs of the individual</i>			
Yes	30	NA	28
No	45	NA	53
Don't know	25	NA	19
<i>Problems of family life</i>			
Yes	32	22	31
No	44	53	54
Don't know	24	25	16
<i>People's spiritual needs</i>			
Yes	42	29	53
No	32	44	31
Don't know	26	27	15
<i>Social problems facing our country today</i>			
Yes	NA	17	25
No	NA	57	60
Don't know	NA	25	15
N =	1,231	1,031	1,484



## Attitudes to Roman Catholics

**Table 78: Attitudes to church unity negotiations between Protestant and Catholic Churches, 1949 - 82**

Question: 'Would you approve or disapprove if similar [church unity] negotiations took place between the Roman Catholic and all other Churches in this country?'

	11/1949	10/1961	6-7/1963	1/1967	8/1968	3/1982	6/1982
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	23	40	53	49	49	44	47
Disapprove	48	33	18	26	21	22	20
Neither/don't mind	17	15	10	15	21	28	27
Don't know	12	12	19	10	9	7	6
N =	2,000	1,000	1,072	1,000	1,000	1,032	1,000

**Table 79: Attitudes to voting for a Catholic candidate at a Parliamentary election, 1958 and 1965**

Question: 'If the party of your choice nominated a generally well-qualified person as Parliamentary candidate who happened to be a Roman Catholic ... would you vote for him/her?'

	11/1958	9/1965
	%	%
Yes	82	84
No	16	16
N =	968	1,000

**Table 80: Attitudes to the power wielded by Roman Catholics, 1959 and 1969**

Question: 'In this country do you think these groups have more power or less power than they should really have – Catholics?'

	8/1959	6/1969
	%	%
More	31	20
Less	9	8
About right	32	47
Don't know	28	24
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 81: Attitudes to the establishment of official relationships between the Vatican and the Kremlin, 1961-66**

Question: 'At present there is no formal agreement between the Vatican and the Kremlin for official relationships with each other. Would you approve or disapprove if such an agreement were reached?'

	10/1961	4/1963	6-7/1963	2/1966
	%	%	%	%
Approve	51	55	53	54
Disapprove	16	14	14	12
Don't know	33	31	33	34
N =	1,000	1,088	1,072	1,000

**Table 82: Attitudes to Roman Catholics, 1961-62 and 1967**

Question: 'Which of these words most clearly sums up your attitudes towards Roman Catholics?'

	12/1961-1/1962	12/1967
	%	%
Very good	15	15
Good	31	30
Fairly good	24	26
Poor	7	9
Very poor	6	6
Don't know	17	14
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 83: Attitudes to marriage between Catholics and Protestants, 1968-93**

Question: 'Do you agree or disagree with marriage between Catholics and Protestants?'

	5/1968	8-9/1973	7/1993
	%	%	%
Agree	61	71	87
Disagree	24	15	5
Don't know	15	15	9
N =	1,000	1,000	1,007

**Table 84: Approval of the papal visit to Britain of John Paul II, 1982**

Question: 'Do you approve or disapprove of the visit?'

	11-15/3	7-12/4	21-26/4	28/4-4/5	5-10/5
	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly approve	13	13	10	11	13
Approve	37	38	31	28	33
Neither approve nor disapprove	33	36	41	44	42
Disapprove	8	6	10	11	9
Strongly disapprove	4	5	6	6	3
Don't know	5	1	2	1	1
N =	1,032	944	968	947	958
	12-17/5	19-24/5	9-15/6	30/6-5/7	11
	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly approve	10	10	19	24	16
Approve	28	35	44	39	38
Neither approve nor disapprove	45	40	29	28	33
Disapprove	10	18	5	6	9
Strongly disapprove	5	5	2	3	2
Don't know	2	1	1	1	1
N =	934	963	1,000	936	991

Note: Dates refer to days and months in 1982. The papal visit took place between 28 May and 2 June inclusive.

**Table 85: Interest in the papal visit to Britain of John Paul II, 1982**

Question: 'How interested would you say you are in the papal visit to Britain?'

	11-15/3	7-12/4	21-26/4	28/4-4/5	5-10/5	12-17/5	19-24/5	9-15/6	30/6-5/7
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very	13	14	10	13	13	12	13	24	28
Quite	23	25	23	17	22	17	21	32	28
Not very	26	27	28	28	29	23	26	20	18
Not at all	38	33	39	41	35	47	39	23	26
Don't know	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
N	1,032	944	968	947	958	934	963	1,000	936

Note: Dates refer to days and months in 1982. The papal visit took place between 28 May and 2 June inclusive.

**Table 86: Anticipated/actual engagement with the papal visit to Britain of John Paul II, 1982**

Question: 'Do you intend to try to?'

	7- 12/4	21- 26/4	28/4- 4/5	5-10/5	12- 17/5	19- 24/5	9- 15/6	30/6- 5/7
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attend functions/ ceremonies	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	2
See Pope pass through streets	6	3	3	3	4	2	1	2
See televised coverage of events	47	47	41	46	35	40	75	71
Anything else	NA	NA	NA	1	1	1	3	2
None of these	47	48	54	49	58	53	22	25
N =	944	968	947	958	934	963	1,000	936

Notes: Dates refer to days and months in 1982. The papal visit took place between 28 May and 2 June inclusive. Therefore, the first six surveys relate to anticipated engagement and the last two to actual engagement.

## Attitudes to Jews

**Table 87: Perceived trend in anti-Jewish feeling, 1939-93**

Questions: 'Among the people you know, is anti-Jewish feeling increasing, decreasing, or about the same?' (1939-60), 'Looking ahead over the next several years, do you think that anti-Semitism in our country will increase greatly, increase somewhat, remain the same, decrease somewhat, or decrease greatly?' (1993)

	8/1939	11/1940	1/1942	1/1943	1/1960	9/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increasing	20	21	19	25	20	25
Decreasing	10	12	11	15	7	6
About the same	46	34	43	43	73	50
Don't know	24	32	28	17	NA	20
N =	1,811	2,285	2,002	1,996	999	959

**Table 88: Attitudes to voting for a Jewish candidate at a Parliamentary election, 1958 and 1965**

Question: 'If the party of your choice nominated a generally well-qualified person as Parliamentary candidate who happened to be ... a Jew ... would you vote for him/her?'

	11/1958	9/1965
	%	%
Yes	71	76
No	27	24
N =	968	1,000

**Table 89: Attitudes to the power wielded by Jews, 1959 and 1969**

Question: 'In this country do you think these groups have more power or less power than they should really have – Jews?'

	8/1959	6/1969
	%	%
More	34	16
Less	8	7
About right	28	48
Don't know	30	29
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 90: Attitudes to Jews, 1961-62 and 1967**

Question: 'Which of these words most clearly sums up your attitudes towards Jews?'

	12/1961-1/1962	12/1967
	%	%
Very good	14	16
Good	29	30
Fairly good	32	31
Poor	7	8
Very poor	5	3
Don't know	13	12
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 91: Attitudes to the proximity of Jews, 1964 and 1993**

Question: 'Which of the four phrases on this card best describes how you would feel about having Jewish people as ...'

	11- 12/1964	11/1993		11- 12/1964	11/1993
	%	%		%	%
<i>Neighbours</i>			<i>Your principal or employer</i>		
Would be pleased	7	9	Would be pleased	5	9
Would not mind	71	85	Would not mind	52	81
Would rather not	11	3	Would rather not	15	5
Would strongly dislike it	3	1	Would strongly dislike it	6	1
Don't know	8	1	Don't know	22	4
<i>Friends</i>			<i>Your son-in-law</i>		
Would be pleased	5	11	Would be pleased	4	8
Would not mind	50	82	Would not mind	39	78
Would rather not	9	3	Would rather not	22	8
Would strongly dislike it	2	1	Would strongly dislike it	9	2
Don't know	34	2	Don't know	26	4
<i>School fellows to your children</i>			<i>Your daughter-in-law</i>		
Would be pleased	5	10	Would be pleased	4	8
Would not mind	60	81	Would not mind	39	79
Would rather not	10	2	Would rather not	21	8
Would strongly dislike it	2	0	Would strongly dislike it	9	2
Don't know	23	6	Don't know	27	3
<i>Fellow workers</i>					
Would be pleased	6	10			
Would not mind	61	85			
Would rather not	8	2			
Would strongly dislike it	4	1			
Don't know	21	2			
N =	1,000	966	N =	1,000	966

**Table 92: Attitudes to marriage between Jews and non-Jews, 1968-93**

Question: 'Do you agree or disagree with marriage between Jews and non-Jews?'

	5/1968	8-9/1973	7/1993
	%	%	%
Agree	50	61	82
Disagree	23	16	6
Don't know	27	22	12
N =	1,000	1,000	1,007

## Attitudes to Sunday observance

**Table 93: Attitudes to the Sunday opening of cinemas, 1941 and 1944**

Questions: 'Do you approve or disapprove of people being able to go to ... cinemas on Sundays in war-time?' (1941), 'Do you approve or disapprove during wartime of the Sunday opening of cinemas?' (1944)

	4/1941	1/1944
	%	%
Approve	70	67
Disapprove	23	28
Don't know	7	5
N =	2,192	1,451

**Table 94: Attitudes to the Sunday opening of theatres, 1941-57**

Questions: 'Do you approve or disapprove of people being able to go to ... theatres ... on Sundays in war-time?' (1941), 'Would you approve or disapprove of theatres being allowed to open on Sundays, just as they do on other days?' (1943, 1953, 1957), 'Do you approve or disapprove during war-time of the Sunday opening of ... theatres?' (1944)

	4/1941	1/1943	1/1944	1-2/1953	2/1957
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	66	58	56	50	55
Disapprove	26	33	33	41	39
Don't know	8	10	11	9	6
N =	2,192	1,996	1,451	2,000	2,261

**Table 95: Attitudes to the Sunday opening of places of entertainment, 1958-69**

Question: 'Would you approve or disapprove if the present laws were changed to allow places of entertainment (theatres, cinemas, etc.) to open Sundays as weekdays?'

	5/1958	2/1965	3/1969
	%	%	%
Approve	50	56	65
Disapprove	39	37	26
Don't know	11	7	9
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000



**Table 96: Attitudes to horse-racing being allowed on Sundays, 1953 and 1957**

Question: 'And horse racing being allowed on Sunday?'

	1-2/1953	2/1957
	%	%
Approve	26	29
Disapprove	64	62
Don't know	10	9
N =	2,000	2,261

**Table 97: Attitudes to professional sport being played on Sundays, 1953-69**

Questions: 'How about professional sport being allowed on Sunday?' (1953, 1957), 'Would you approve or disapprove if the present laws were changed to allow professional sport (cricket, football, etc.) on Sunday?' (1958-69)

	1-2/1953	2/1957	5/1958	2/1965	3/1969
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	43	47	46	53	65
Disapprove	48	45	41	39	26
Don't know	9	8	13	8	9
N =	2,000	2,261	1,000	1,000	1,000

**Table 98: Attitudes to legislative regulation of Sundays, 1958 and 1965**

Question: 'Do you think that what people are permitted to do on a Sunday should be subject to special legal restriction or should Sunday be like any other day of the week as far as the law is concerned?'

	5/1958	2/1965
	%	%
Sunday like other days	47	51
Sunday should be restricted	41	40
Don't know	12	9
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 99: Attitudes to the Sunday opening of public houses, 1958-84**

Question: 'Would you approve or disapprove if the present laws were changed to allow public houses to open the same hours Sundays as weekdays?'

	5/1958	2/1965	3/1969	10/1984
	%	%	%	%
Approve	39	39	45	55
Disapprove	44	50	36	36
Don't know	17	11	19	9
N =	1,000	1,000	1,000	973

**Table 100: Attitudes to shopping on Sundays, 1962 and 1965**

Question: 'Do you think it is or is not wrong to buy things on a Sunday?'

	4/1962	2/1965
	%	%
Is wrong	26	27
Not wrong	67	67
Don't know	7	6
N =	1,000	1,000

**Table 101: Attitudes to deregulation of Sunday trading, 1985 and 1988**

Question: 'The Government is intending to scrap all restrictions on shop opening hours and introduce Sunday trading. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?'

	11/1985	4-5/1988
	%	%
Good idea	52	54
Bad idea	39	40
Don't know	9	7
N =	916	934

## Other religious attitudes

**Table 102: Importance attached to religious beliefs for a successful marriage, 1952-90**

Question: 'Here is a list of things which some people think make for a successful marriage. Please tell me, for each one, whether you think it is very important, rather important, or not very important – shared religious beliefs.'

	4/1952	3/1981	4/1982	6-9/1990
	%	%	%	%
Very	18	21	17	19
Rather	24	25	20	24
Not very	58	53	61	56
Don't know	0	1	2	1
N =	2,000	1,231	1,882	1,484

Note: The 1952 question related to 'strong religious beliefs'.

**Table 103: Incidence of shared attitudes towards religion in marriage, 1981 and 1990**

Question: 'Do (did) you and your partner share any of the following – attitudes towards religion?'

	3/1981	6-9/1990
	%	%
Mentioned	61	49
Not mentioned	39	51
N =	1,231	1,484

**Table 104: Knowledge of and attitudes to Billy Graham, 1954-84**

Question: 'Have you heard of Billy Graham? [If so] How do you regard him?'

	3/1954	5-6/1954	6/1966	5/1984	8/1984
	%	%	%	%	%
A good and religious man doing very good work	18	34	33	NA	NA
A good man but not likely to do much good here	15	13	19	NA	NA
Just a curiosity, a performer	13	7	13	NA	NA
They need him more in America	12	11	8	NA	NA
Not interested in him	17	22	20	NA	NA
Don't know	8	1	6	NA	NA
<i>Have heard of Billy Graham</i>	83	88	98	85	89
Not heard of Billy Graham	17	12	2	15	11
N =	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,030	1,001

**Table 105: Attitudes to the involvement of the Church in politics, 1957-89**

Questions: 'Should the Church keep out of political matters or should it express its views on day-to-day social and political questions?' (1957, 1968, 1969), 'Do you think that the Church should or should not take sides in political issues?' (1984, 1989)

	2/1957	8/1968	6/1969	10/1984	12/1989
	%	%	%	%	%
Keep out/should not take sides	53	60	65	69	67
Express views/should take sides	36	30	27	25	25
Don't know	11	7	8	6	8
N =	2,261	1,000	1,000	943	969

**Table 106: Attitudes to homosexuality and faith, 1977-93**

Question: 'In your opinion, can a homosexual be a good Christian, Jew, etc. or not?'

	8/1977	7/1979	10-11/1981	3/1985	11-12/1986	10/1991	7-8/1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	66	77	77	74	72	75	74
No	14	10	12	12	15	13	13
Don't know	20	13	11	14	13	12	12
N	1,021	905	998	983	1,078	973	946

**Table 107: Attitudes to homosexual clergy, 1977-91**

Question: 'Now I would like to ask you about hiring of homosexuals in specific occupations. Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for the following occupations – clergy?'

	8/1977	7/1979	10-11/1981	3/1985	11-12/1986	10/1991
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Should	40	42	42	38	37	49
Should not	46	46	48	46	52	41
Don't know	13	12	10	16	12	10
N	1,021	905	998	983	1,078	973

**Table 108: Attitudes to members of minority religious sects or cults as neighbours, 1981-96**

Question: 'On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours – members of minority religious sects or cults.'

	3/1981	4/1982	10/1985	3/1993	12/1996
	%	%	%	%	%
Mentioned	21	25	28	23	26
Not mentioned	79	75	72	77	74
N =	1,231	1,882	953	1,007	943

**Table 109: Perceived existence of religious discrimination, 1983-88**

Question: 'Do you think that there is or is not any discrimination in this country today against people because of their religion?'

	11/1983	5/1984	5/1988
	%	%	%
Is	47	34	43
Is not	49	59	50
Don't know	4	7	6
N =	1,066	971	931

**Table 110: Attitudes to making religious discrimination illegal, 1983-88**

Question: 'Do you think that it should or should not be illegal to discriminate against a person because of their religion?'

	11/1983	5/1984	5/1988
	%	%	%
Should	59	57	62
Should not	37	38	35
Don't know	4	5	3
N =	1,066	971	931

**Table 111: Attitudes to religious education in schools, 1985 and 1993**

Question: 'I am going to read you a list of some subjects currently taught in schools. For each of these subjects could you tell me whether they should be given more emphasis and attention in schools, less emphasis, about the same as occurs now, or should not be taught at all – religious education?'

	1/1985	4/1993
	%	%
More	28	26
Less	11	17
Same	49	45
Not at all	7	6
Don't know	4	6
N =	845	1,018

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