

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 14 – November 2016

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OPINION POLLS

Freedom of speech

The case involving Ashers Bakery in Belfast, found guilty of discrimination for declining on religious grounds to bake a cake promoting same-sex marriage, rumbles on and now seems destined for the UK Supreme Court. The ongoing row has prompted the Coalition for Marriage to commission ComRes to rerun a poll which it originally undertook for the Christian Institute in March 2015. On this second occasion 2,000 Britons were interviewed online on 4-6 November 2016 and asked whether business people should be taken to court for refusing to supply goods or services in eight sets of circumstances. On the scenario identical to the Ashers case, 65% of respondents said that the refusal of a Christian bakery to produce a cake supporting same-sex marriage should not be grounds for taking to court, only 16% disagreeing (and no more than 23% of religious nones). Even lower endorsement of court action was registered for the other seven scenarios which included the refusal of: a Muslim printer to print cartoons of the Prophet; an atheist web designer to create a website promoting creationism; a Muslim film company to make a pornographic film; a Christian bakery to make a cake celebrating Satanism; and a Roman Catholic printing company to print advertisements calling for the legalization of abortion. Full data tables are available at:

http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Coalition-for-Marriage_-Freedom-of-Speech-Polling_-November-2016.pdf

Faith schools

Government has proposed allowing new and existing faith schools to select up to 100% of their places according to religious criteria, thereby ending the 50% cap which has operated for the last nine years. However, a Populus poll commissioned by the Accord Coalition and British Humanist Association, for which 2,054 adults were interviewed online on 14-16 October 2016, has found that 72% of Britons agree that state-funded schools should not be allowed, in their admissions policies, to select or discriminate against prospective pupils on religious grounds. Just 15% of the public disagree with the ComRes statement, with 13% undecided. This strong majority against the application of religious criteria in school admissions varies little across demographic sub-groups, including among religious groups. Full data tables are at:

http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/OmFaith-Schools_Q2.pdf

Theresa May's faith

More than one-quarter (27%) of British adults say they have been alarmed by Prime Minister Theresa May's recent admission that her faith in God gives her confidence she is doing the right thing, according to one of YouGov's app-based polls on 30 November 2016. One in five (18%) were reassured by her comment while 49% claimed it had no effect on how they felt

about May's actions. Asked, in a supplementary question, whether they lived their own life according to some kind of defined philosophy or system of beliefs, 29% replied in the affirmative but a clear majority (64%) stated they took life as it comes in terms of making a series of practical choices. Topline results only are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/11/30/government-regulation-company-management-theresa-m/>

Protestant ethic and future of religion

Reminded that economic data show the world's most prosperous nations are mostly Protestant, 25% of respondents to one of YouGov's app-based surveys on 3 November 2016 thought there was a direct tie between the economic prosperity of these countries and their Protestantism. However, the majority, 58%, detected no obvious links between the two factors, while 18% were unsure or gave other answers. Asked additionally which faith would be dominant in the world 500 years from now, 24% suggested Islam against 14% for Christianity. But 33% felt that no single faith would be dominant and 17% anticipated that religion would have all but disappeared. Topline results are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/11/03/religions-protestantism-and-economic-prosperity-fo/>

US presidential election

Donald Trump may have won the US presidential election, but he commands limited appeal among British voters, according to an online YouGov poll on 3-4 October 2016. Of the 1,690 adults interviewed, only 11% overall preferred the Republican Trump to his Democrat rival, Hillary Clinton (65%), the remaining 23% being undecided. Among the principal religious groups (cell sizes for the others were too small to be viable), Clinton's share rose to 70% with religious nones, Anglicans and Catholics being marginally more likely than average to favour Trump, albeit he attracted the support of just 13% and 16%, respectively. The question was asked as part of a more general survey of attitudes to globalization (including immigration and multiculturalism), and the full British data tables, with breaks by religion, can be found at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/wf8goubck5/Great%20Britain_W.pdf

Anti-Semitism in relation to Israel

Next year (2017) marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, whereby the British government committed to using its best endeavours to establish in Palestine a national home for Jewish people, but without detriment to the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in the area. Interviewed online by Populus on 14-16 October 2016, on behalf of the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM), a plurality (43%) of 2,054 Britons still agrees that, in principle, this was the right position for the government to have taken at that time, but 18% disagree and 39% are neutral or undecided. Much water has flowed under the bridge during the intervening century, not least the establishment of the state of Israel, whose actions in the Middle East have divided British public opinion, especially since the 1980s. A majority (57%) is clear that criticism of Israel does not in itself constitute anti-Semitism, 11% saying the contrary, although a plurality (48%) admits that hating Israel and questioning its right to

exist is anti-Semitic, 20% dissenting. Islamic State (ISIS) is equally viewed as a threat to the security of Israel (by 81% of Britons) and to that of the UK (93%). Full data tables are at:

<http://www.populus.co.uk/polls/>

A summary of the findings of the poll, including comparisons with last year's survey, can be found in BICOM's press release at:

<http://www.bicom.org.uk/analysis/new-bicom-poll-finds-even-stronger-opposition-boycotts-israel/>

Islam and British values

YouGov@Cambridge, the partnership between pollster YouGov and the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, has added two further data points to its tracker on the compatibility between Islam and British values. Since the start of 2015, cross-sections of Britons have been asked whether they believe Islam is generally compatible with the values of British society or they perceive there is a fundamental clash between the two. Topline results are tabulated below, from which it will be seen that half the population judges there is a fundamental clash between Islam and British values, with a peak of 59% in June and October 2015, with no more than one-fifth to one-quarter deeming the two compatible. In the latest survey (on 9-10 October 2016 among 1,694 adults), demographic sub-groups most inclined to perceive a clash were UKIP supporters (81%), people who voted for the UK to leave the European Union in this year's referendum (72%), and over-65s (64%). Both topline and disaggregated data can be accessed by following the 'Tracker: Islam and British Values' and 'Latest Documents' links at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/cambridge/>

% across	Compatible	Clash	Neither	Don't know
<i>2015</i>				
January	23	52	12	13
February	23	52	12	13
March	22	55	10	13
May	19	58	9	14
June	20	59	9	12
July	20	56	10	13
August	20	53	12	15
September	20	58	9	13
October	19	59	10	12
December	25	50	13	13
<i>2016</i>				
January	25	51	11	13
February	20	56	12	12
March	22	51	10	17
July	25	49	14	13
October	23	52	12	13

Halloween (1)

US-style Halloween celebrations are on the verge of displacing the UK's traditional Bonfire (Guy Fawkes) Night activities as the principal autumnal festival, according to BMG Research's online poll of 1,546 UK adults on 19-24 October 2016. The proportion of respondents indicating that they would be celebrating Halloween (31 October) or Bonfire Night (5 November) in some way was tied at 49% each, with both commemorations especially appealing to under-25s (82% of whom said they were planning to observe Halloween and 75% Bonfire Night). Both days have religious origins (Halloween as All Hallows' Eve, in remembrance of the souls of the dead, and Bonfire Night marking a failed plot by Roman Catholic conspirators in 1605 to blow up the Houses of Parliament) but have now become thoroughly secularized. Full data tables are at:

<http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CONFIDENTIAL-BMG-POLL-OCTOBER-data-tables-311016-1.pdf>

Halloween (2)

Intentions (definite or probable) to celebrate Halloween were returned at a much lower 21% in another online poll conducted at the same time, by YouGov among 1,631 Britons on 23-24 October 2016, albeit this was still the highest figure of the seven European countries surveyed. The apparent discrepancy with the BMG Research study is perhaps explained by the fact that the latter offered a list of particular Halloween activities (including watching horror films) from which to choose, whereas YouGov used a more binary-style question about celebrating Halloween. YouGov's topline figures for all seven nations are at:

[http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9n40aplkni/Eurotrack_October USElection Website.pdf](http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9n40aplkni/Eurotrack_October_USElection_Website.pdf)

Halloween (3)

The results of a second, app-based (and potentially not fully representative) poll were posted by YouGov on 1 November 2016. Interviewees were not asked whether they planned to celebrate Halloween themselves but whether they approved of seven specific Halloween activities. Just 17% approved of none of them, with approval being highest for making pumpkin lanterns (72%), apple bobbing (66%), and Christian observance of All Hallows' Eve (51%). Responding to a separate question, 53% said that the tradition of souling (the Christian origin of trick-or-treating) should be preserved, 26% disagreeing, and 20% uncertain or giving other answers. Topline figures only are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/11/01/should-nigel-farage-be-made-lord-halloween/>

Cryogenics

Cryogenics have been in the news recently, with the revelation that the body of a 14-year-old girl who had died of cancer has been cryogenically frozen in the hope that she can be 'woken up' and cured at some point in the future. In a YouGov poll of 4,389 Britons on 18 November 2016, 22% of adults thought there might be some chance, however small, the girl could indeed be brought back to life, UKIP voters and the under-40s being particularly confident. Nevertheless, a majority (57%) judged this impossible, rising to 65% of Conservatives and

over-60s, with a further 21% undecided. Three-quarters of the public indicated they did not wish to be cryogenically frozen after death themselves, just 7% expressing the wish to be so, the biggest proportion (13%) being among those aged 25-39. Full results will be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/da79f270-ad76-11e6-8bd0-005056901c24/question/16a319c0-ad77-11e6-8bd0-005056901c24/social>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Passing on faith

Secularization, especially in a Christian context, is often attributed to diminished religious socialization of children. Traditionally, there were three principal agencies for achieving this: Church, school, and home. Church provision (notably through Sunday schools) has largely collapsed. The school is no longer a major player since the curriculum emphasis has shifted dramatically from Christian instruction to multi-faith religious and moral education. The importance of the home has also diminished because many parents have become secularized and more child-centred approaches have persuaded them of the importance of children being left to make up their own minds in matters of religious belief.

Some confirmation of weakened parental commitment to the transmission of faith to their children is now provided in a survey by ComRes for Theos, for which 1,013 British parents with children aged 18 and under were interviewed online on 24-29 August 2016. Only 38% of the sample claimed to be definite believers in God and 17% to attend a religious service once a month or more, with 40% professing no religion at all. Asked whether it is an important part of being a parent actively to pass on beliefs in God or a higher power to children, just 30% agreed while 60% judged it was for children to come to their own opinion independently of their parents. Three-fifths were indifferent whether their children held the same beliefs about God as they did and no more than two-fifths had even had a conversation with their children on the subject. One-third suggested that technology and social media would have more of an impact on their children's beliefs than their own input. Not unexpectedly, believers in God, regular attenders at religious services, and non-Christians exhibited higher than average levels of commitment to passing on their faith.

The survey is summarized in the foreword (by Nick Spencer) to a new Theos report by Olwyn Mark exploring generic issues of *Passing on Faith* at:

[http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/Passing%20on%20faith%20combined%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/Passing%20on%20faith%20combined%20(1).pdf)

Full data tables are available from ComRes at:

http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Theos_Passing-on-Faith_Data-Tables.pdf

University students

The Student Christian Movement (SCM) has voiced concerns about the spiritual support available for higher education students, following receipt of a 26-page report which it

commissioned from David Lankshear of St Mary's Centre on *Students in Higher Education and Christian Churches*. This was based on statistical analysis of the responses received from 118 churches (disproportionately United Reformed) to an online survey about their contact with higher education students which was run by SCM during the first half of 2016. The majority of churches (54%) had no higher education students in their congregations and 81% had nobody whose role it was to work with students. Many local church leaders felt that going to university had a negative (29%) or mixed (52%) impact on faith, a message picked up in a major news story about the survey in the *Methodist Recorder* (11 November 2016, pp. 1-2). The report, which its author views as little more than a pilot study, can be viewed at:

<http://www.movement.org.uk/sites/default/files/A%20report%20for%20the%20Student%20Christian%20Movement.pdf>

Church of England statistics for mission

The Church of England's *Statistics for Mission, 2015* is an impressive 51-page digest of and commentary on data derived from the latest set of parochial returns, with a full description of methodology and a copy of the schedule. The report exhibits continuing decline of the Church across a broad range of performance indicators, subsuming attendance, membership, and rites of passage, the rate of decrease since 2005 varying between 9% (average adult weekly attendance) and 39% (funerals conducted at crematoria and cemeteries). Membership and attendance levels have fallen over a long period, and from a relatively low baseline, but the diminishing take-up of rites of passage has been a more recent phenomenon, with funerals only significantly impacted since the 1980s. Of course, the net picture masks areas of growth in individual dioceses and parishes, giving hope to some within the Church. Commenting on the statistics, William Nye, the Church's Secretary General, bullishly said: 'The Church of England is setting out on a journey of Renewal and Reform, aiming to reverse our numerical decline in attendance so that we become a growing church in every region and for every generation.' On present evidence, there are few grounds for thinking this will ever be achieved. *Statistics for Mission, 2015* is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3331683/2015statisticsformission.pdf>

Conservative evangelical Anglican churches

Despite the gloomy outlook for the Church of England as a whole, average weekly attendance at more than 300 churches linked to the conservative evangelical Reform movement is said to have been growing at the rate of 3% to 4% during the past five years. Congregations at these churches are also typically larger and younger than the norm: their average attendance is 99 compared to 40 in the Church of England generally, with 18% of worshippers over 70 years of age against 30% in the wider Church. The story is reported by *Christian Today* at:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/conservative.anglican.churches.buck.trend.of.decline/101241.htm>

Fresh Expressions

The Church of England would doubtless find it difficult to acknowledge publicly that churchmanship might impact levels of attendance, but it continues to salute Fresh Expressions of Church (fxC) as an engine of growth. Four new reports on fxC have recently been published

by the Church Army's Research Unit, two of them of a quantitative nature. The more substantial (234 pages) of the pair is by George Lings, *The Day of Small Things: An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church in 21 Dioceses of the Church of England*. This is based on interviews with the leaders (equally likely to be male or female) of 1,109 fxCs started between 1992 and 2014, three-quarters of them in the past ten years. These fxCs are attended by 50,600 worshippers, equivalent to 10% of the average weekly attendance of the dioceses concerned (albeit the average congregation – 50 – is smaller than for a typical parish church). Their religious origins are examined in a second (81-page) report by Claire Dalpra and John Vivian, *Who's There? The Church Backgrounds of Attenders in Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church*. This examined a hand-picked sample of 66 fxCs and a control group of 24 parish churches, utilizing a sixfold classification of previous churchgoing by the 1,997 attenders at fxCs and 953 at parish churches. The research revealed that 38% of the former were not existing churchgoers when they began attending fxC (albeit this is a lower proportion than estimated by fxC leaders), and that fxCs had a more even age and gender distribution than parish churches. The reports can be downloaded from:

http://www.churcharmy.org/Groups/244966/Church_Army/Church_Army/Our_work/Research/Fresh_expressions_of/Fresh_expressions_of.aspx

Major Parish Churches

Sustaining Major Parish Churches: Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities has been prepared by Purcell on behalf of a partnership comprising Historic England (which funded the research), the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Church of England's Church Buildings Council, the Greater Churches Network, and Doncaster Minster. It collates and analyses a range of statistical and other data relating to the condition, resourcing, and use of the Church of England's self-designated 'Major Parish Churches', based upon a dataset of 300 such churches, an online survey of a sub-set of them, and a series of case studies. The three-part report can be downloaded from:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustaining-major-parish-churches/>

Jewish schools

A new study by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, charts dramatic growth since the 1950s, by respectively 400% and 500%, in the number of Jewish schools and Jewish pupils in the UK. This expansion occurred despite a decline in the Jewish population for much of the period, rather being driven by increased uptake of Jewish schooling among Jews. Whereas only one in five Jewish children attended Jewish schools in the 1970s, today the proportion is 63% (and 100% in strictly Orthodox Jewish families), with 30,900 Jewish children enrolled at 139 Jewish schools in the 2014/15 academic year. The majority (57%) of the pupils attends the 97 strictly Orthodox schools (55 primary, 42 secondary), the remainder the 42 mainstream Jewish schools (33 primary, 9 secondary). These, and many other, fascinating facts and figures are in the 45-page report by Daniel Staetsky and Jonathan Boyd on *The Rise and Rise of Jewish Schools in the United Kingdom: Numbers, Trends, and Policy Issues*, which can be downloaded from:

http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/The_rise_and_rise_of_Jewish_schools_in_the_United_Kingdom.pdf

Judaism in the workplace

According to sundry reports in the Jewish and secular press, a survey of 190 Jews conducted in October 2016 as part of the Chief Rabbi's ShabbatUK initiative found that 41% of respondents considered their faith had been an issue in the workplace during the course of their career. Moreover, 32% felt uncomfortable about asking their employer to leave work early on Fridays in order to observe the Jewish Sabbath, 27% were reluctant to discuss their faith openly in the workplace (although 72% had done so), and 17% avoided wearing a Jewish religious symbol or item of clothing when at work.

UK Sikh Survey

The UK Sikh Survey, 2016 (authored by Dabinderjit Singh, Randeep Singh, and Jas Singh) has been developed by the Sikh Network, which is responsible for co-ordinating dialogue with the Government with regard to the goals set out in the *Sikh Manifesto, 2015-2020*. Described as 'the largest and most comprehensive ever survey of UK Sikhs', its 4,559 respondents were recruited between May and August 2016 through a combination of self-selection and targeting of hard-to-reach groups. Although the sample is said to exhibit a good regional, gender, and age mix, the methodology adopted may mean it is not fully representative of the Sikh community in terms of either demographics or activism. Notwithstanding, the findings in this overview report (more detailed analyses are promised) provide a fascinating insight into the experiences and attitudes of UK Sikhs, to set alongside the annual *British Sikh Report* (which commenced in 2013 and is already inviting responses to its own 2017 questionnaire). In particular, *The UK Sikh Survey, 2016* demonstrated strong support for the Government to do more to help achieve Sikh political agendas. Almost unanimously, Sikhs would welcome a separate Sikh ethnic tick box in the 2021 census; a statutory code of practice for the 5Ks (Sikh articles of faith) and the Sikh turban, in order to prevent discrimination against Sikhs in the workplace and in public; and an independent public enquiry into the UK Government's actions in relation to the 'Sikh Genocide' in India in 1984. *The UK Sikh Survey, 2016* is available at:

<http://www.thesikhnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UK-Sikh-Survey-2016-Findings-FINAL.pdf>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Religious affiliation in Scotland

Two new sources of religious affiliation statistics for Scotland have become available, from the Scottish Government's Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ), 2015 (a unified dataset formed from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, the Scottish Health Survey, and the Scottish Household Survey) and from Glasgow City Council's Glasgow Household Survey, 2016. Topline results are shown below, together with the Glasgow figures from SSCQ.

An Excel worksheet disaggregating the SSCQ national data by various spatial units and demographic characteristics can be found in Table 4.3 via the link at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys/SSCQ/SSCQ2015>

For Glasgow in 2016, only headline results are currently available, on p. 73 of the Ipsos MORI report on the Glasgow Household Survey at:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=35362&p=0>

% down	Scotland 2015	Glasgow 2015	Glasgow 2016
No religion	46.6	42.6	40
Church of Scotland	27.5	17.1	18
Roman Catholic	14.5	22.5	24
Other Christian	7.3	6.7	4
Muslim	1.7	6.4	6
Other non-Christian	1.6	2.9	5
N =	20,183	1,734	1,023

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Ageing and religion

Ahead of its annual ‘Future of Ageing’ conference, the International Longevity Centre (ILC)–UK unveiled some new analysis from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) dataset for 2004-14. In its press release, ILC–UK advised ‘outreach programmes by religious groups looking to grow their congregations might best be focused on over 60s who have recently started hitting the gym or campaigning with their local political party (of any affiliation)’. This followed the discovery from ELSA that over-60s who join a gym are 4% more likely also to join a religious group, and that those who join a political party are 8% more likely also to join a religious group. It was also found that belonging to a religious group had a small but positive impact on the sense of worth and happiness of older people. Panel members were more likely to join a religious group as they grew older, albeit, in a nod to secularization, fewer belonged to a religious group compared with previous cohorts of the same age (for example, since 2002 6% fewer in their early 60s and 7% less in their late 60s). The press release, which includes an embedded slide show, is available at:

http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/news/news_posts/press_release_new_analysis_shows_those_60_who_join_a_gym_more_likely_to_join

A Level students

The upward trend in students taking the Advanced Level examination in Religious Studies (RS) is now well established, but relatively little is known about their profile since the reform of A Levels in 2000. Two articles in the current issue (Vol. 37, No. 3, 2016) of *Journal of Beliefs and Values* shed light on the matter. They both derive from questionnaires completed by students towards the beginning and end of the first year of their study of A Level RS at the same schools.

Leslie Francis, Jeff Astley, and Stephen Parker answer the research questions ‘Who Studies Religion at Advanced Level: Why and to What Effect?’ (pp. 334-46). They use the questionnaires completed by 462 students towards the end of the first year and investigate their demography, motivation, experience, and attitudes. ‘Key findings demonstrated that 78% of

students opted for the subject because they enjoyed their earlier experiences of religious studies in school, that 80% of students have become more tolerant of religious diversity, and that only 7% of students feel that studying religion at A level has undermined their personal religious faith while three times that number feel that it has affirmed their religious faith.’

The following article derives from both sets of questionnaires, the first completed by 652 students. Written by Andrew Village and Leslie Francis, it concerns ‘The Development of the Francis Moral Values Scales: A Study among 16- to 18-Year-Old Students Taking Religious Studies at A Level in the UK’ (pp. 347-56). Initially, considerable variation was found in the proportion of students regarding specific moral issues and behaviours as wrong. However, factor analysis applied to their responses to the Likert items permitted the isolation of constructs to form three short scales (for anti-social behaviour, sex and relationships, and substance use) which are recommended as a parsimonious way of assessing general moral values among adolescents.

Access options to these articles are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cjbv20/37/3?nav=tocList>

Religious discrimination and higher education

The limited evidence base for religious discrimination experienced by UK university students is summarized on pp. 23-6, 46-8, and 84-7 of *Changing the Culture: Report of the Universities UK Taskforce Examining Violence against Women, Harassment and Hate Crime Affecting University Students* (London: Universities UK, 2016). Despite several approaches by Universities UK, the Federation of Student Islamic Societies did not contribute to the work of the taskforce, although Tell MAMA did participate on behalf of Muslims. The report is available at:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/changing-the-culture.pdf>

Multiplying churches

Back in 1974-75, David Wasdell of the Urban Church Project modelled Church of England statistics of parochial population and participation to argue for multiplying lay-led congregational units as a way of stimulating church growth, in preference to increasing clergy numbers or combining parishes. His advice was ignored by, and unpalatable to, the ecclesiastical authorities, and his work for the Church was terminated. Now George Lings has applied Wasdell’s methods to the Church’s 2011 statistics and similarly (albeit wordily) replicated ‘A Case for Multiplying the Type and Number of Churches’, *Rural Theology*, Vol. 14, No. 2, November 2016, pp. 112-33. In the process, he provides a rationale for Fresh Expressions of Church (fxC), which are typically small and often lay-led. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14704994.2016.1234858>

Christmas

Given the time of year, and the relative dearth of academic literature on the subject, it seems appropriate to mention a new book by Christopher Deacy, *Christmas as Religion: Rethinking Santa, the Secular, and the Sacred* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, xiii + 223pp., ISBN 978-0-19-875456-5, £30.00, hardback). Its significance lies not so much in its quantitative strength (indeed, one struggles to find a single statistic in the entire volume) as its avowed refutation of the secularization thesis by a characterization of Christmas as ‘one of the most unexpected and fecund manifestations of religion in the world today’ (p. 201); ‘it is its very secularity that makes Christmas such a compelling, and transcendent, religious holiday’ (p. vii). The work’s methodological approach is heavily influenced by implicit religion, viewing the secular as a repository of the religious, and the evidential basis disproportionately derives from film and radio (the author’s particular field of expertise). No real attempt is made to address the issue of how, beyond interpretation and assertion, such claims can be measured empirically, including through content analysis, corpus linguistics, or sample surveys. As for the secularization thesis, Deacy ‘mostly ignores a hugely complex debate’, as David Martin has pointed out in his review in *Church Times*, 25 November 2016, p. xvii. The webpage for *Christmas as Religion* is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/christmas-as-religion-9780198754565?q=Deacy&lang=en&cc=gb>

NEW DATASETS AT UK DATA SERVICE

SN 6614: Understanding Society (Wave 6)

The dataset for Wave 6 of Understanding Society (United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study) has just been released. Fieldwork was undertaken by TNS BMRB (in Great Britain) and Millward Brown (in Northern Ireland), and face-to-face interviews were achieved with 42,021 adults aged 16 and over between 8 January 2014 and 11 May 2016, representing a response rate of 65% of panel members. Funded by the ESRC and a consortium of government departments, Understanding Society is a highly complex dataset built from several strands, including the rump of the former British Household Panel Survey and a new Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Boost. The religious content of Wave 6 seems to have been limited to questions on religious affiliation, using a belonging form of wording (seemingly asked only of new entrants to the panel), and on membership of and participation in religious groups or organizations. A full catalogue description, with links to supporting documentation, can be found at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=6614&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 8070: Taking Part, 2015-16

Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure, and Sport is undertaken by TNS BMRB on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport and three of its non-departmental public bodies. For the year 11 cross-section (there is also a longitudinal component), face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10,171 adults aged 16 and over in England between April 2015 and March 2016. The demographic questions included two on religion (‘what is your religion?’ and ‘Are you currently practising your religion?’) which can be used as variables to

analyse answers to the topics covered in the main questionnaire. Besides participation in cultural, leisure, and sporting activities, these extended to subjective wellbeing, socialization, volunteering, charitable giving, and community cohesion. A full catalogue description, with links to supporting documentation, can be found at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8070&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 8081: Community Life Survey, 2015-16

This is the fourth annual wave of the Community Life Survey, initiated by the Cabinet Office in 2012-13 to carry forward some of the questions in the discontinued Citizenship Survey. Fieldwork for this wave took place between 1 July 2015 and 30 April 2016, face-to-face interviews being completed by TNS BMRB with 3,027 adults aged 16 and over in England (being a response rate of 61%). Besides demographics, the interview schedule explored identity and social networks, community, civic engagement, volunteering, social action, and subjective wellbeing. More specifically, respondents were asked about their religion and whether they practised it, the proportion of their friends drawn from the same religious group, their participation in and volunteering for religious groups, and their charitable giving to religious causes. A full catalogue description of the dataset, with links to supporting documentation, can be found at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8081&type=Data%20catalogue>