

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 15 – December 2016

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OPINION POLLS

Importance of Christmas

More than nine in ten Britons celebrate Christmas, according to a poll by YouGov, conducted online on 1-2 December 2016 among a sample of 2,022 adults, and on behalf of the British Humanist Association (BHA). The groups least likely to celebrate Christmas are the 18-24s, the never married, and Londoners (15% each); full-time students (19%); and non-Christians (although cell sizes were small). Religious nones are about as likely as the rest of the population to celebrate Christmas. However, when presented with a list of twelve factors which might make Christmas an important time of year for them, respondents assigned the two explicitly religious aspects to the bottom two places. Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ was ranked eleventh in order of importance, chosen by 22% overall, albeit by 31% of over-55s and 32% of retired people; even among professing Anglicans and Catholics, the proportion did not reach more than 39% and 55%, respectively. Attending a religious service was put last, on 15%, the two extremes being Catholics (39%) and religious nones (3%). By far the most valued facets of Christmas were spending time with family (76%) and giving presents to friends or family (63%). The BHA's press release, incorporating a link to the full dataset, can be found at:

<https://humanism.org.uk/2016/12/16/friends-family-food-and-giving-the-real-meaning-of-christmas-revealed/>

Christmas Day shopping

Notwithstanding the statutory prohibition on large shops opening on Christmas Day, 17% of UK adults (rising to 21% of men and 28% of 18-24s) want them to be open on the day, according to an online survey by OnePoll for Nationwide Current Accounts undertaken between 30 November and 5 December 2016. Moreover, 29% of the 2,000 respondents admitted to having popped to the corner shop on Christmas Day, mostly for food or drink items or batteries, the figure peaking at 41% in Scotland. Boredom and last-minute needs were the main reasons for wanting Christmas Day trading. The Nationwide press release is at:

<http://www.nationwide.co.uk/about/media-centre-and-specialist-areas/media-centre/press-releases/archive/2016/12/14-open-all-hours>

Belief in God

The Times took advantage of the Christmas season to check on the current level of belief in God in Britain. It commissioned YouGov to run an online poll among a sample of 1,595 adults on 18-19 December 2016. Belief in God or a higher spiritual power was expressed by 28%, four points less than in February 2015, while avowed disbelief had risen over the same period from 33% to 38%. A further 20% believed in some sort of spiritual power but not in God and 14% were unsure what to think. Disbelief peaked among 18-24s (46%) and men (50%). The

survey also enquired into the claimed frequency of church attendance other than for rites of passage and intended churchgoing over Christmas, both questions eliciting characteristically aspirational replies. The detailed poll findings have not yet been posted online but the article about them in the print edition of *The Times* for 23 December can be read (if you register with a few details or you are already a subscriber) at:

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/belief-in-god-slumps-after-turbulent-year-mqz9j7mlh>

Humanist ceremonies

More than two-thirds (68%) of the British public are aware that it is possible to have a humanist celebrant at ceremonies marking rites of passage, and 30% claim to have attended one or more such humanist ‘services’ according to a poll by YouGov for the British Humanist Association (BHA), for which 4,085 adults were interviewed online on 28-29 July 2016. Attendance at humanist ceremonies is greatest for Scottish Presbyterians (63%) and Scots generally (58%), reflecting the fact that in Scotland – unlike in England and Wales – it is possible to have a humanist wedding. Self-identified humanists apart (56% of whom have been to a humanist ceremony), the next highest proportions are among groups whose age increases their likelihood of going to funerals, for which humanist celebrants have been on offer since the late 1970s (for the over-55s the figure is 40%, the retired 42%, and the widowed 48%). In a second YouGov poll for the BHA, conducted between 29 November and 1 December 2016 among 4,375 Britons, 14% indicated they would wish to have a humanist funeral themselves, including 27% of residents of Scotland and North-East England. Another form of non-religious funeral was chosen by a further 14%, a Christian funeral by 36%, another religious funeral by 3%, while 34% in the aggregate were undecided, did not want any ceremony, or preferred not to say. The BHA’s press release, incorporating a link to the full datasets, can be found at:

<https://humanism.org.uk/2016/12/08/14-of-britons-would-opt-for-a-humanist-funeral-as-new-figures-show-bha-ceremonies-more-popular-than-ever/>

Welsh humanists

The majority (51%) of adults in Wales do not regard themselves as belonging to any particular religion, while 35% identify with a humanist approach to life and morality by selecting the ‘humanist answer’ to three statement questions about the understanding of the universe and of right and wrong. This is according to the findings of a YouGov poll conducted in the Principality on behalf of the British Humanist Association (BHA) between 17 and 21 November 2016, for which 1,000 Welsh residents were interviewed online. Demographic sub-groups especially predisposed to the humanist viewpoint included: cohabitants (45%), religious nones (47%), and persons aged 25-34 (50%). The proportion of religious nones peaked among under-25s (73%) and 25-34s (69%). The BHA’s press release, incorporating the wording of the three statement questions as well as a link to the full dataset, can be found at:

<https://humanism.org.uk/2016/11/30/nearly-a-million-welsh-adults-have-a-humanist-approach-to-life-yougov-research-shows/>

Trust in the Church

The Charity Awareness Monitor (CAM), from nfpSynergy, includes a regular module on trust in public bodies and institutions, and headline findings from the October 2016 fieldwork, for

which 1,000 Britons aged 16 and over were interviewed online, have just been released. Respondents were asked to rate the trustworthiness of 24 organizations. The proportion expressing quite a lot (27%) or a great deal (8%) of trust in the Church was 35% compared with 56% who had very little (29%) or not much (27%) trust. The Church lay in fourteenth position in terms of trustworthiness, the most trusted bodies being the National Health Service and the armed forces. The Church's rating has been fairly stable in recent CAMs, being trusted by 36% in May 2016 and 33% in October 2015. The latest report from nfpSynergy can be found at:

<http://nfpsynergy.net/press-release/nfpsynergy-trust-charities-report-december-2016>

Trust in the clergy

Clergy/priests were ranked seventh in the Ipsos MORI Veracity Index, 2016, for which 1,019 Britons aged 15 and over were interviewed face-to-face between 14 October and 1 November 2016. Asked whether they generally trusted each of 24 professions or groups to tell the truth, 69% of respondents said they trusted clergy/priests to do so, well behind nurses (93%), doctors (91%), and teachers (88%), but far ahead of politicians generally (15%), government ministers (20%), and journalists (24%). One-quarter did not trust clergy/priests with 5% undecided. The Veracity Index was first run in 1983, when clergy/priests headed a shorter table of 13 professions with a trustworthiness score of 85%, but confidence in them has been slipping somewhat since then. The topline and disaggregated data for 2016 are available at:

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1896/Enough-of-Experts-Ipsos-MORI-Veracity-Index-2016.aspx>

Religious observance in Scottish schools

A majority (55%) of Scots believes that children should not be made to participate in religious observance at school, an online poll by YouGov for the Scottish edition of *The Times* has found. As many as 38% of all Scots (and 48% of Scottish National Party voters) feel there should be no place for collective worship in the Scottish education system and a further 17% want children to be able to opt out, even without parental consent. One-quarter (24%) favour withdrawal with parental consent while just 11% agree that religious observance should be compulsory in all schools with no ability to opt out. The current arrangements for collective worship in Scottish schools date back to 1872 and the Scottish Government has been slow to respond to demands for change. The detailed poll findings have not yet been posted online but the article about them in the print edition of *The Times* for 29 December can be read (if you register with a few details or you are already a subscriber) at:

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/take-religion-out-of-the-classroom-9j6x06mzw>

Muslim numbers

Britons greatly overestimate the number of Muslims living in the country, according to the latest annual Perils of Perception study from Ipsos, conducted in 40 nations between 22 September and 6 November 2016. The average guess at the current proportion of Muslims in Britain was 15% and of the likely number in 2020 22%, three times the reality and projection. Britain was not alone, for many other Western countries also greatly overestimated their Muslim populations while Muslim majority nations tended to underestimate them. British

fieldwork was conducted online among a sample of 1,000 adults aged 16-64. Topline results have been posted at:

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3817/Perceptions-are-not-reality-what-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx>

Muslims and terrorism

One-third of Britons think religious views are a common cause of individual acts of terrorism, according to the 4,812 respondents to one of YouGov's app-based polls on 22 December 2016. An identical proportion agree that terrorist acts carried out by Muslims reveal something significant about the nature of Islam itself, thirteen points more than judge terrorism perpetrated by Catholics or Protestants to say something about the nature of Christianity. Conservative and UKIP voters are particularly inclined to conflate Muslims and Islam when it comes to terrorism, at 40% and 62%, respectively, as are men (41%). Half the sample sought to distance Islam from terrorist acts committed by Muslims, the most charitably disposed groups being Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party voters (60%) and 18-24s (61%). Full results have been posted at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/52dc14d0-c82c-11e6-947e-eebe41e67c16>

Killing Muslims

On 12 December 2016 in London, a man stabbed another passenger on a crowded train after having shouted 'I want to kill a Muslim'. Two days later, in one of its app-based polls, YouGov asked 4,055 adult Britons whether they considered this man to be a terrorist or not. One-quarter of respondents was undecided and the remainder divided. Two in five (39%) judged the attacker to have been a terrorist, peaking at 52% of 18-24 year olds, while 36% said he was not. Full results have been posted at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/b85cf140-c1e1-11e6-9034-eebe41e67c16>

Muslim opinions

British Muslims are living in a state of 'unsettled belonging', according to a new report by Policy Exchange and based upon the numerically most extensive survey of that community to date, for which 3,040 self-identifying Muslims were interviewed face-to-face by ICM Unlimited between 19 May and 23 July 2016. Taken as a whole, the three authors (Martyn Frampton, David Goodhart, and Khalid Mahmood) of *Unsettled Belonging: A Survey of Britain's Muslim Communities* conclude, British Muslims 'are loyal to the UK, and with essentially "normal" and familiar priorities and concerns; yet equally, they remain disturbed by fears about discrimination and narratives that foreground a sense of Muslim victimhood'. Such a worldview acts as a break on assimilation into mainstream society, the separateness of British Muslims being most obviously seen in tendencies to be religiously devout, to hold socially conservative views, to favour implementation of elements of Sharia law, to believe in conspiracy theories, and to remain ambivalent about the challenges posed by extremism. These and other issues are explored in the core chapters which dissect Muslim opinion under the seven headings of priorities, engagement, integration, education, radicalization, sympathizers (with violence and terrorism), and conspiracy theories. In presenting their findings, the authors (rightly) emphasize the complexity and diversity of Muslim views and the difficulties of

generalizing about the Muslim community as a whole, which they see as, in reality, a patchwork of communities that fails to identify fully with any single national gatekeeper body for Muslims (the marginal influence of the Muslim Council of Britain being especially highlighted). The 87-page report is available to download at:

https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PEXJ5037_Muslim_Communities_FINAL.pdf

The full data tables, extending to 1,511 pages and covering both Muslims and a control sample of 2,047 Britons, can be found at:

<https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Policy-Exchange-ICM-Muslims-Survey-web.pdf>

Self-assessed religiosity

The full data tables from the Policy Exchange survey (see above) offer plenty of scope for in-depth analysis. Here we take just one of the questions put to both Muslim and control samples: ‘how religious do you consider yourself to be?’ Respondents were invited to answer on a scale running from 1 (not religious at all) to 10 (fully devout) where a mean score of 5.5 presumably represented the hard boundary between not religious and religious. For adult Britons in the control sample the mean score was 3.51, denoting quite irreligious, even Christians not managing more than 5.06 and the normally relatively religious over-75s only 4.46. In fact, few demographic sub-groups in the control sample broke through the threshold of 5.5, the principal exception being those who had attended a place of religious observance once or more during the past week, many of whom would have been devout non-Christians (including Muslims). Not unexpectedly, by far the least religious in the control sample were people who professed no religion (1.37). In the Muslim sample, the mean score was 7.09, reaching 8.00 among Muslims aged 65 and over.

Importance of religion

Another angle on the personal saliency of religion was explored in wave 86.2 of Eurobarometer, undertaken by TNS on behalf of the European Commission in the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) and five candidate countries. UK fieldwork was completed between 5 and 14 November 2016 by means of face-to-face interview with 1,343 adults aged 15 and over. Asked to select from a list of twelve values a maximum of three which were most important to them personally, only 4% of UK respondents chose religion, far fewer than respect for human life, human rights, and peace – which shared joint first place on 41% each. UK citizens also gave religion a low score as a factor creating a feeling of community within the EU (7%) and as a value best representing the EU (3%). Topline results for all countries surveyed are available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2137>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Doing God by doing good

Theos think tank was launched in November 2006 with an essay on *Doing God*. To mark its anniversary, Nick Spencer has written *Doing Good: A Future for Christianity in the 21st Century* (London: Theos, 2016, 70pp., ISBN 978-0-9931969-7-3). The first of the report's three chapters reviews what has happened to Christianity in the UK during the past decade or so, citing much of the statistical evidence for decline, particularly in terms of religious affiliation and attendance, and for the growth of other religions. Drawing on the work of Charles Taylor, chapter 2 situates the current state of Christianity in its wider social context, both spiritual and temporal, and touches on the 'spiritual but not religious' phenomenon, quoting relevant sample survey data. Chapter 3 focuses on an observed trend in Christianity to social action, which Spencer sees as running counter to the overall narrative of decline and which he dubs Christian 'social liturgy' (to distinguish it from the 'social gospel' which flourished in the early twentieth century and is often seen to have ended in failure). This social liturgy is viewed by Spencer as a 'healthy redirection' of Christianity and as central to its future in the UK – 'doing God' by 'doing good'. The report is available at:

<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Doing%20Good%205.pdf>

Christian funders

Another new report from Theos is by Ben Ryan and concerns *Christian Funders and Grant-Making: An Analysis* (48pp., ISBN 978-0-9931969-5-9). For the purposes of this study, Christian funders were defined as registered charities that make grants to organizations (as opposed to individuals) and that have some form of Christian ethos, excluding those supporting only a single church, school, or hospital. Within England and Wales 268 such funders were identified from the Charity Commission's database, and the report offers a quantitative profile of their focus, denominational identity, income, and largest awarded grant. Additional qualitative insights were gained through interviews with 21 funders and 16 grant recipients. Five recommendations are offered for making the Christian funding sector 'maximally effective'. The report is available at:

<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/Christian%20funders%20-%20for%20download-FINAL.pdf>

Faith schools

In its latest report – Jon Andrews and Rebecca Johnes, *Faith Schools, Pupil Performance, and Social Selection* – the Education Policy Institute (EPI) has reopened the question of the effectiveness of faith schools by reanalysing official statistics from the Department for Education. Examining the raw data in isolation, pupils at faith schools, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, tend to do better than their counterparts at non-faith schools, in terms of their overall attainment and the progress they make, in both primary and secondary sectors in England. However, EPI found that these outcome gains largely disappear after adjusting for pupil characteristics such as disadvantage, prior attainment, and ethnicity. In particular, faith schools educate a lower proportion of disadvantaged children than non-faith schools, a lower proportion with special educational needs, and a larger proportion of high-attaining pupils. Therefore, it is concluded, increasing faith school provision, as the

Government intends to do, may not yield places of a significantly higher quality than in non-faith schools and may also come at the price of greater social segregation and diminished social mobility. The report is available at:

http://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Pupil_characteristics_and_performance_at_faith_schools.pdf

Meanwhile, the Department for Education has been required by the UK Statistics Authority to amend its recent Green Paper, following a complaint by the British Humanist Association (BHA) over the ‘misleading’ figures it presented on the impact of religious selection at faith schools. See the BHA’s press release at:

<https://humanism.org.uk/2016/12/09/departement-for-education-ordered-to-amend-misleading-faith-school-figures-by-uk-statistics-authority-following-bha-complaint/>

Catholic schools

The Catholic Education Service for England and Wales has published the digest of its 2016 census of Catholic schools and colleges, which, for the third year running, achieved a return of 100%. In separate reports for England and Wales, there are details of: the number, type, and size distribution of schools and colleges; the number of pupils disaggregated by school type, Catholicity, gender, ethnicity, eligibility for free school meals, and special educational needs; and the number, qualifications, Catholicity, and ethnicity of teaching and support staff. Appendices provide additional breaks by diocese. One of the new features of this year’s census which has attracted some media attention has been the religious breakdown of the one-third of the 783,000 pupils at maintained Catholic schools and colleges in England who are not Catholic. One-half of them are from other Christian denominations, 10% are Muslims, and 23% have no religion (the balance of 17% presumably representing other non-Christian religions or religion not stated). Overall, 90% of students at maintained Catholic schools and colleges have a faith background, with 84% being Christian. In recent years, the proportion of Catholic pupils at these schools and colleges has been stable in the primary sector but gently declining at secondary and tertiary levels. The reports can be accessed via the links at:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census>

Rooted in the Church

As part of its Renewal and Reform programme, the Church of England has been wrestling with the question ‘what helps root young people in the worshipping life of the Church of England so that they continue to engage with the Church as a place of spiritual nurture and growth into their adult years?’ In pursuit of an answer, the Church’s Education Office commissioned Research by Design to conduct empirical research in a sample of 210 Anglican congregations between September 2015 and February 2016. Respondents comprised two groups of current or former attenders at an Anglican church, 878 parents of children aged 11-30 and 641 young adults aged 16-30, who participated by face-to-face interview or, more commonly, by means of self-completion online or paper questionnaires. Thirty individuals (14 young adults and 16 parents) were followed up by telephone interview, to gain qualitative insights. Six main conclusions were distilled from the evidence, relating to the importance of: building a culture of inter-generational relationships; ensuring churches are inclusive of all ages in their leadership and worship; recognizing young people and young adults as equal members of the

Body of Christ; admitting baptized children to Holy Communion before confirmation; making churches unconditionally welcoming for young people; and supporting church youth workers and leaders. The *Rooted in the Church Summary Report* is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3775547/rooted-in-the-church-summary-report-nov-2016.pdf>

Non-churchgoers

Will Bissett has combined the skills acquired from a business background and his role as an ordained minister in the Church of England to write *Outside In* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2016, xii + 111 + xiii + 149pp., ISBN 978-1-5127-4199-5, paperback, \$19.95). The work, based on postgraduate research conducted by online questionnaire in January-February 2013, explores the perceptions of God, Jesus, Christianity, Christians, and Church among 228 persons in the UK who were regular churchgoers (80), Christians with low or no churchgoing (70), or religious nones (78). Respondents comprised an opportunity sample and thus are unlikely to be representative of the target population (which was principally non-churchgoers), even if a reasonable age and gender balance was coincidentally achieved. The project's value is thus more illustrative than quantitative. Part II of the book sets out the research findings, while part I seeks to identify their practical theological relevance for the Church in addressing its 'image problem'. The volume's webpage is at:

<http://bookstore.westbowpress.com/Products/SKU-000944035/Outside-In.aspx>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Casey Review

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published *The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration*, by Dame Louise Casey (ISBN 978-1-4098-4953-7). The 199-page study was commissioned in July 2015 by the then Prime Minister and Home Secretary as one in a long line of attempts to address community integration and cohesion. There is a significant amount of religious content in the new review, and not just confined to the separate chapter on religion (pp. 121-36). The coverage disproportionately highlights issues affecting British Muslims, including a summary of their attitudes (pp. 68-72). Although the review conducted no new quantitative research, it does draw upon pre-existing census, other official, and sample survey data. The report can be downloaded from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574565/The_Casey_Review.pdf

Is Britain fairer?

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published a three-page factsheet on religion or belief in connection with its quinquennial review of equality and human rights in Britain, entitled *Is Britain Fairer?* The factsheet cites statistics for the principal religious groups in relation to fear or experience of crime, educational qualifications, employment and earnings, health, and political engagement. It is available at:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/key_facts_and_findings-religion_2.pdf

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Religion and education

Religion and Education around the World is the Pew Research Center's latest report on global trends. It assembles data on the educational attainment of adherents of six faith groups (Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and religiously unaffiliated) from 151 different countries. Five educational indicators are used: no formal schooling; primary schooling only; secondary schooling; post-secondary education; and average years of schooling. Statistics are drawn from census and other sources, in the case of the UK from the 2011 population census. In terms of length of schooling, Hindus were the best educated group (with a mean of 13.9 years) in the UK and Christians the least (11.8), although the latter statistic reflects the disproportionately elderly profile of Christians, many of whom grew up when the official school-leaving age was lower than now and post-secondary education opportunities were limited. The report and sortable detailed tables are available at:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2016/12/13/religion-and-education-around-the-world/>

Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2015

The Pew Research Center has also released the dataset from the Spring 2015 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, undertaken in 40 nations, including Great Britain (where telephone interviews were conducted among a sample of 999 adults on 8-28 April). Topics of religious interest comprised: concern about Islamic State and attitudes to military actions against it; frequency of private prayer; opinions of Jews and Muslims; attitudes to freedom of religion; and importance attached to religion. Findings on these subjects have mostly already been reported by British Religion in Numbers. The dataset can be downloaded from:

<http://www.pewglobal.org/category/datasets/2015/>

Late secularization

In a characteristically spirited article, Steve Bruce anticipates ongoing secularization in Britain: 'The Sociology of Late Secularization: Social Divisions and Religiosity', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 2016, pp. 613-31. Secularization has been shown to be a generational process, he contends, and the scale of it is now too large and well established to be reversed by further immigration, outbreeding of the non-religious by the religious, or conversion. Bruce additionally highlights the socially and culturally distinctive character of the diminishing band of religious when compared with the religious indifference and ignorance of mainstream society, as well as the decreasing social interaction between these two populations. The strong identification of religion with migration and minorities has amplified the sense that it is alien. Statistical and other evidence is cited in support of the argument. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-4446.12219/full>

Religious polarization

Some support for the idea of increased polarization between a religious core minority on the one hand and a non-religious majority on the other is provided by Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme in ‘The Remaining Core: A Fresh Look at Religiosity Trends in Great Britain’, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 2016, pp. 632-54. She draws upon a sophisticated analysis of British Social Attitudes Survey data from 1983 to 2012 (for affiliation and attendance), including the three International Social Survey Program (ISSP) religion modules of 1991, 1998, and 2008 (for religious beliefs and attitudes). She argues that the religiously committed group (defined as those professing a religion and saying they attend church at least once a month) has stabilized proportionally since the Millennium and among cohorts born since the 1960s, attributing this to demographic gains from immigration and higher than average fertility. Religious decline is continuing but now sourced from previously nominal affiliates reassigning themselves as religious nones. Moreover, according to ISSP, there is a growing divide between the religiously committed and the religiously unaffiliated in terms of both their religious beliefs and opinions about the public role of religion. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-4446.12205/full>

Religious nones

Important insights into non-religion are contributed by Ben Clements and Peter Gries in their “‘Religious Nones” in the United Kingdom: How Atheists and Agnostics Think about Religion and Politics”, published in the First View edition of *Politics and Religion*. The article draws upon an online survey of 1,248 UK adults by YouGov in Spring 2014 to examine how those who identify as atheist or agnostic differ from the religiously affiliated in terms of religiosity (belief, behaviour, and salience of faith), left-right ideology, and socio-political policy preferences. Secular groups are shown to be more left-leaning than religious people while atheists and agnostics differ both from each other and especially from the religiously affiliated on matters of public policy, the religious effect being especially pronounced with regard to attitudes towards the legalization of same-sex marriage. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-religion/article/div-classtitlereligious-nones-in-the-united-kingdom-how-atheists-and-agnostics-think-about-religion-and-politicsdiv/6A1FC1367FF84CDBB4EAF99047F0CDDE>

Anglican Communion

Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion, 1980 to the Present, edited by David Goodhew (London: Routledge, 2017, 352pp., ISBN 978-1-472-43364-0, £24.99, paperback) comprises an introduction and conclusion by Goodhew, an afterword by Graham Kings, an overview by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo of ‘The Changing Demographics of Global Anglicanism, 1970-2010’, and 13 geographical chapters (five on Africa, four on Asia, two on the Americas, and one on England). The volume has been five years in the making and comes with fulsome commendations, Grace Davie, for example, describing it as ‘a veritable goldmine. It contains a huge amount of mostly numerical information on the Anglican Communion in all its fullness.’

The chapter on the Church of England is contributed by David Voas, telling a story of net absolute and relative decline (in terms of the number of stipendiary clergy, electoral roll members, communicants, attendances, and occasional offices, all to 2012-13) but with marked geographical variations (notably the emergence of the dioceses of London, Southwark, Oxford, and Ely as the Church's equivalent of academia's 'golden triangle'). Voas also offers an explanation of church decline as the product of generational replacement, as reflected in national sample surveys. He concludes with a summary of three 'counter-currents', or good news stories in the life of the Church: a substantial increase in giving, the rise in attendances at cathedral services, and Fresh Expressions of Church. The book's webpage is at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Growth-and-Division-in-the-Anglican-Communion-1980-to-the-Present/Goodhew/p/book/9781472433640>

Early Primitive Methodism

The proletarian and democratic self-image of the early Primitive Methodist movement during the first half of the nineteenth century is challenged in Sandy Calder's *The Origins of Primitive Methodism* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016, xvii + 293pp., ISBN 978-1-78327-081-1, £75.00, hardback). Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence, Calder paints a picture of a connexion led in its formative years by a fairly prosperous elite of middle-class preachers and lay officials and appealing to a respectable working-class constituency drawn to its 'old-time' religion. Major primary sources include baptismal registers and the official census of religious attendance in 1851, considered in, respectively, chapters 6 and 7. Neither is analysed in as much statistical depth as might be desired, although some useful methodological points are made. The author's claims about the social profile of Primitive Methodism in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the roots of its eventual failure, are insecurely founded and require reassessment in the light of the tabulation of the denomination's vital registers published in the third volume (2015) of *The Dissenters* by Michael Watts, which presumably appeared too late for Calder to consult. The book's webpage is at:

<https://boydellandbrewer.com/the-origins-of-primitive-methodism-hb.html>

Free Churches and the Labour Party

Few students of British politics will not be familiar with the repeated claims made by Morgan Phillips, when General Secretary of the Labour Party in the late 1940s and 1950s, that socialism in Britain owed more to Methodism than to Marx. But what was the reality? In a revision of his doctoral thesis, Peter Catterall has provided at least part of an answer in his *Labour and the Free Churches, 1918-1939: Radicalism, Righteousness, and Religion* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, xiv + 322pp., ISBN 978-1-4411-1589-8, £90.00, hardback). His sources are principally qualitative – notably contemporary newspapers, autobiographies and biographies, and archival – but, wherever possible, he does endeavour to quantify them. Thus, there are tables showing: the numbers of Free Church ministers or laity who stood as Parliamentary candidates or were elected as MPs (table 2 and appendix); and the religious affiliations of Labour MPs (table 9), members of the Parliamentary Committee/General Council of the Trades Union Congress (table 10), members and officers of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party (table 11), and of Labour councillors in Bolton (table 12), Bradford (table 13), Liverpool (table 14), and Norfolk (table 16). There are also tables recording the lobby voting in the House of Commons of Free Church Labour, Liberal, and Conservative MPs on three key

issues (tables 15, 17, and 19). The Free Churches provided a disproportionate number of Labour Parliamentary candidates but Catterall does not believe that this reflected the electoral behaviour of Free Church voters between the wars, with a strong lingering attachment to the Liberal Party and even some shift towards the Conservatives. The book's webpage is at:

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/labour-and-the-free-churches-1918-1939-9781441115898/>

Scottish Muslims

Relative to England, Scotland's Muslim population is tiny (77,000 at the last census), but it has nevertheless already been extensively investigated by academics. Recently, two more studies have been added to the scholarly literature.

Khadijah Elshayyal, *Scottish Muslims in Numbers: Understanding Scotland's Muslim Population through the 2011 Census* (Edinburgh: Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, 2016, 60pp., ISBN 978-1-5272-0181-1, paperback) unpacks the census results for Scottish Muslims under four principal headings of demography, civic life, inequalities, and labour market issues. It can be downloaded from:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf

Stefano Bonino, *Muslims in Scotland: The Making of Community in a Post-9/11 World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, xv + 240pp., ISBN 978-1-4744-0802-8, paperback, £19.99) is more qualitative in its approach, its principal primary source being ethnographic fieldwork in Edinburgh between 2011 and 2013, and grounded in a substantial bibliography. A particular focus is on the evidential balance between integration and discrimination, with an upbeat epilogue envisaging 'a Scottish communitarianism, where diversity and human universals meet'. A fuller exposition of Scottish sample survey data about the incidence of Islamophobia would have been helpful. The book's webpage is at:

<https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-muslims-in-scotland.html>

Child abuse

An Exploration of Knowledge about Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief has been compiled by Lisa Oakley, Kathryn Kinmond, Mor Dioum, and Justin Humphreys on behalf of the National Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief. The research was led by Manchester Metropolitan University in partnership with the Victoria Climbié Foundation and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service. It is based upon the responses of a self-selecting sample of 1,361 professionals who completed an online survey on the subject, 57% of whom had backgrounds in faith organizations, 23% in the police, and 11% in teaching. Although 61% of informants were confident they understood the term 'child abuse linked to faith or belief', only 33% felt they could identify indicators of it, just 25% had received specific training on the issue, and a mere 12% were familiar with the National Action Plan in the area. The report is available at:

<http://vcf-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/An-Exploration-of-Knowledge-about-Child-Abuse-linked-to-Faith-or-Belief.pdf>

Mathematics of Christmas

A quirky new book with which to close our coverage of the year is Hannah Fry and Thomas Oléron Evans, *The Indisputable Existence of Santa Claus: The Mathematics of Christmas* (London: Doubleday, 2016, [6] + 138pp., ISBN 978-0-857-52460-7, hardback, £9.99). The authors, both professional mathematicians, offer us, according to the blurb, ‘a dazzling, magical mathematical tour [of Christmas] complete with graphs, diagrams and sketches’. The ten short chapters cover: the indisputable existence of Santa Claus; decorating the tree; buying presents; secret Santa; wrapping presents; cooking turkey; Christmas crackers; the Queen; how to win at Monopoly; and watching Santa’s weight. Although the actual religious content is minimal, reflecting the reality of the modern Christmas, the work is a fun read, a light-hearted introduction to the uses of mathematical modelling, and doubtless the nearest we will come to seeing mathematicians letting their hair down. The book’s webpage is at:

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1113056/the-indisputable-existence-of-santa-claus/>

British Religion in Numbers

A further update of the British Religion in Numbers (BRIN) source database has just taken place, as follows: new entries have been created for 86 British religious statistical sources, 70 of them from 2016; 40 existing entries have been augmented, mostly by additional bibliographical references; and 4 existing entries have been consolidated into 2. The total of sources described in the database now stands at 2,636, disproportionately sample surveys. Sources can be browsed at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/source-list/>

An advanced search facility is available at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/search/>

NEW DATASETS AT UK DATA SERVICE

SN 8078: ONS Opinions Survey, Census Religion Module, 2009

Between 2007 and 2009 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) trialled five different types of question concerning religious affiliation to help inform its decision about the final wording to be used in the 2011 census of population (this experimentation, and its outcome, is briefly described in Clive Field’s article in *Religion*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2014, pp. 368-9). The vehicle for the trialling was the ONS Opinions Survey, a monthly omnibus of a cross-section of the British adult population. Between April and July 2009 the additional religion module put to interviewees in the survey asked ‘which of these best describes you?’ followed by a list of six world faiths and options to specify another religion or no religion, with spontaneous comments on the question by respondents also being noted. SN 8078 comprises a secure access version of the dataset for this module. A catalogue description of the dataset with links to documentation is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8078&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 8100: Scottish Health Survey, 2015

The Scottish Health Survey, 2015 is the eleventh in a series initiated in 1995. It was conducted by ScotCen Social Research on behalf of the Scottish Government, 6,418 adults aged 16 and over living in private households throughout Scotland being interviewed face-to-face between January 2015 and February 2016. A belonging form of question about religious affiliation was asked of all respondents, which can be used as a variable for analysing answers to all other questions, whether health-related or not. Additionally, questions about the experience of discrimination or harassment on religious and other grounds were included in Version A of the questionnaire, which was put to a part-sample. A catalogue description of the dataset with links to documentation is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8100&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 8116: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2015

The annual British Social Attitudes Survey is undertaken by NatCen Social Research on behalf of the Economic and Social Research Council and a consortium of government departments and charitable funders. In 2015 fieldwork was completed between July and November, interviews being achieved with 4,328 adults aged 18 and over living in private households throughout Britain (representing a response of 51%). The standard questions on religious affiliation (current and by upbringing) and attendance at religious services were put to the entire sample. Additionally, sub-samples B and D answered (via self-completion questionnaire) a question on their experience of discrimination with regard to work, including on the grounds of religion. A catalogue description of the dataset with links to documentation is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8116&type=Data%20catalogue>