

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 25 – October 2017

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OPINION POLLS

Global views on religion

Great Britain has again emerged as one of the least religious nations in the world, this time from the latest report of Ipsos Global @dvisor, for which 17,401 online interviews were conducted with adults aged 16-64 in 23 countries (1,010 of them in Britain) between 24 June and 8 July 2017. On this occasion, six Likert-style religious indicators were included in the survey, the ‘agree’ (strongly and somewhat) responses to which are tabulated below. In Britain, under one-quarter of people claimed their religion defined them as a person (the third lowest score in any of the countries), while 62% agreed that religion did more harm than good (the seventh highest score). The report, in the form of slides featuring topline results for each nation, together with detailed data tables showing breaks by demographics, can be found at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/global-study-shows-six-ten-britons-above-global-average-believe-religion-does-more-harm-good>

% agreeing with each statement	Britain	Global
Religion does more harm in the world than good	62	49
My religion defines me as a person	23	38
I am completely comfortable being around people who have different religious beliefs than me	85	74
I lose respect for people when I find out that they are not religious	10	16
Religious people are better citizens	22	32
Religious practices are an important factor in the moral life of my country's citizens	37	50

British and American values

On behalf of UnHerd, ComRes conducted online surveys about values among samples of the adult populations of Great Britain (n = 2,059 on 7-8 August 2017) and the United States (n = 1,011 on 7-9 August 2017). A couple of the questions had a religious dimension. One asked which of ten groups or things on a list was the most dangerous in the world today (multiple options evidently being possible). In Britain, religious leaders scored highly as a risk, ranking as the second most dangerous threat (31%), a considerable way behind terrorists (80%), of course, but just ahead of fake news (26%); in the US, by contrast, religious leaders were placed seventh, on 14%, with fake news in second position (38%), after terrorists (80%). The other question forced respondents to choose between two statements: ‘we need more Christianity in our nation’s life’ or ‘we need less Christianity in our nation’s life’. Surprisingly, perhaps, Britons elected for *more* Christianity (58%), peaking at 73% among over-55s, whereas a majority of Americans (53%) preferred *less* Christianity. This finding potentially reopens the debate about the extent to which Britain is or should be a ‘Christian country’ and the role of ‘Christian values’ within it. Data tables can be found at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/unherd-values-survey/>

Religious narratives

Neil MacGregor, former director of the British Museum, claimed recently that Britain is the first society to operate without shared religious beliefs and rituals at its heart, adding that ‘we are trying to live without an agreed narrative of our communal place in the cosmos and in time’. In an app-based YouGov poll reported on 23 October 2017, 30% said that we are indeed living without an agreed narrative but that this was a good thing, while 24% judged that we are living without an agreed narrative and it was a bad thing. One-third (32%) assessed that our society does have a narrative but were split between those who sensed it was working well (13%) and those who thought it was not (19%). The final 14% were unsure. This seems a difficult topic to explore in a snap poll, and it remains unclear how much significance to attach to the results. The topline statistics only are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/10/23/sexual-bullying-women-pupils-wearing-clothing-poli/>

Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments inform the role of Christianity in national and personal life, so it was interesting to see YouGov running an online poll of the extent to which these teachings are still perceived as ‘important principles to live by’, among a sample of 1,680 adult Britons on 10-11 October 2017. It transpires that six of the Ten Commandments (the most ‘social’ ones) are seen to have continuing relevance by the majority, not least ‘you shall not commit murder’ (93%), ‘you shall not steal’ (93%), and ‘you shall not bear false witness against other people’ (87%). However, the remaining four (precisely the ones with the most ‘religious’ character) are sitting in the doldrums, especially ‘remember to keep the Sabbath day holy’ (which 73% judge no longer significant), ‘you shall not take the Lord’s name in vain’ (an injunction rejected by 68%), and ‘you shall have no other God before me’ (also irrelevant for 68%). Breaks by religious affiliation reveal that the same pattern of broad acceptance of six of the Ten Commandments and rejection of the other four also holds good for religious nones, although, murder and theft apart, their majorities were a little smaller than average. Professing Christians were somewhat more likely than the norm to see all the Commandments as pertinent to modern life, but even they seemed to doubt the value of Sunday observance, which was important for 29% of Protestants and 44% of Catholics. A news report (incorporating a link to the data table) and reactions to it can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/10/25/most-brits-only-think-six-ten-commandments-are-sti/>

Difficult decisions

Asked where they looked for help when making major or difficult decisions, friends and family (77%) and online search engines or websites (51%) were by far and away the most favoured of the maximum of two sources which a sample of Britons was able to choose. Relatively few people turned to the supernatural for assistance, just 6% citing prayer, 2% a religious source such as a minister or holy book, and 1% a spiritual but not religious source like a clairvoyant or horoscope. The survey was commissioned by journalist Ruth Gledhill and conducted online by ComRes among 2,076 adults on 4-5 October 2017. Data tables can be found at:

http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Ruth-Gledhill_Public-opinion_Data-Tables_October-17.pdf

Dates

It has been reported in the media that schools across England are abandoning the dating conventions of BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini) in favour of the BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) formats. The trend arises from concerns that BC and AD might offend non-Christians. Asked, in an app-based poll by YouGov which was reported on 4 October 2017, whether they thought the move was a good idea or not, 69% of Britons deemed it a bad idea and only 19% a good one, with 12% undecided. The topline result only is at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/10/04/christ-or-common-era-animal-racing-editing-social/>

Abortion

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Abortion Act 1967. In connection with research for a commemorative programme the BBC had commissioned from Raw TV, on 26-29 May 2017 ICM Unlimited carried out an online survey of attitudes to abortion among 2,002 Britons aged 18 and over. Ten questions about abortion were asked, the answers to each of which were analysed by a range of socio-demographic variables, including religious affiliation and differentiating self-identified practising and non-practising members of each faith. Space precludes a full discussion of the findings here, but it is worth noting that, when given a list of 13 possible scenarios which might justify a woman having an abortion, hardly anybody subscribed to the morally absolutist position that abortion is never acceptable under any circumstances: 6% of practising Catholics (notwithstanding the implacable opposition to abortion of the Roman Catholic Church), 3% of practising mainline Protestants, 12% of other practising Christians, 1% of practising non-Christians, 2% of non-practising religious, and 2% of religious nones. On the other hand, there are particular situations, such as abortion on the grounds of the gender of the foetus, in which a majority of members of all religious faiths and none is still agreed that abortion should not be permitted. Data tables are available at:

<https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/OIOm-Abortion-Documentary-v2.pdf>

Gay rights

On behalf of Stonewall, YouGov has investigated discrimination and crime on the basis of sexual orientation which was experienced by 5,375 lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) adult Britons, who were interviewed online between 16 February and 11 April 2017. Replies to each question were disaggregated by religious affiliation. Reflecting their younger than average profile, 66% of LGBTs professed no religion, with 24% being Christians and 9% non-Christians. During the previous year, 28% of those who had attended faith services or otherwise visited places of worship said they had felt discriminated against because of being LGBT. Among the avowedly religious, there were also mixed reactions to the statement 'my religious community is welcoming to LGB people', 39% agreeing, 27% disagreeing, and 34% being undecided. Data tables are located at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/etsbnlnngh/YG-Archive-140217-StonewallResults.pdf

Hospices

Interviewed online by ComRes on behalf of Hospice UK on 7-8 August 2017, 80% of 2,120 British adults thought that hospices either currently provide (55%) or should provide (36%) spiritual care (for example, through chaplaincy). This was a higher proportion than anticipated that hospices did or should offer complementary therapy (77%) or rehabilitation (74%). The spiritual care total increased with age, from 73% of under-25s to 88% of over-65s. Data tables are at:

http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Hospice-UK_Public-Perceptions_Data-Tables_October-17.pdf

Ethical champions and the £20 note

News that the Bank of England will be launching a replacement £20 note in 2020 prompted the UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association (UKSIF) to commission YouGov to ask a sample of 2,128 UK adults on 24-25 September 2017 which of 15 individuals they would suggest should appear on the note as an 'ethical champion' (the intention being to remind the public to be ethical in how they spend their money). The current Archbishop of Canterbury (Justin Welby, a campaigner against poverty) was one of the names on the list and received 3% of the overall votes (and no more than 5% in any demographic sub-group), which put him in a respectable joint fifth position. The popular choice, by a mile, was the conservationist David Attenborough, with 40%. Data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/mls98m3t56/YG%20-%20UKSIF%20Results%20-%2020250917.pdf

Meeting the Pope

Asked to imagine they had been invited to meet the Pope in the Vatican, 51% of 1,615 adult Britons interviewed online by YouGov on 4-5 October 2017 said they would accept the invitation, including a surprisingly high proportion (65%) of under-25s; 38% thought they would decline the invitation, while 11% were undecided. The hypothetical invitation was also extended to visit Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace (73% being disposed to accept), Prime Minister Theresa May at 10 Downing Street (54%), Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin (38%), and US President Donald Trump at the White House (36%). Full data are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/0zuc2tbscb/InternalResults_171005_InvitationQs.pdf

Superstition

Britons have a reputation for clinging to various superstitions but not, apparently, when money is at stake. So one might deduce from an app-based poll by YouGov released on 27 September 2017. Asked which of two identical flats they would prefer to buy, one on floor 13 and costing £250,000 and the other on floor 12 and costing £255,000, 75% of respondents opted for the cheaper one on floor 13 and just 25% for floor 12. The topline result only is at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/09/27/crimes-committed-university-days-marriage-today-su/>

Paranormal

With Halloween just around the corner, BMG Research polled the British public about their intentions to observe the festival in 2017 (56% had none, five points up on 2016) and their attitudes to trick or treating by children (which were divided), but also included a couple of prefatory questions about the paranormal. The sample comprised 1,347 adults aged 18 and over interviewed online on 17-20 October 2017. Asked whether they believed in ghosts, ghouls, spirits, or other types of paranormal activity, a plurality (46%) replied in the negative, 33% in the affirmative, while 21% had not made up their minds. Belief was higher among women than men, younger than older people, and manual than non-manual workers. The believers and the uncertain were then asked whether they had seen or felt the presence of paranormal activity in the past, 40% saying they had, 24% they might have had, and 36% they had not. A blog about the survey, with a link to full data tables, is at:

<http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/bmg-halloween-poll-third-brits-believe-ghosts-spirits-types-paranormal-activity/>

Scottish religious affiliation

An online survey of 1,010 Scots by ComRes for campaign group Be Reasonable between 21 September and 2 October 2017 included a question about religious affiliation: ‘which of the following, if any, do you consider yourself to be?’ In reply, 51% declared they were Christian (rising to 70% of over-65s) and 7% non-Christian, with 39% professing no religion (peaking at 54% for those aged 25-34) and 2% preferring not to say. The results appear as table 5/1 in the full data report, but it should be noted that religion is not used therein as a variable to analyse the answers to the main questionnaire, which concerned children and families, with particular reference to the vexed issue of smacking. The data report is at:

[http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Be-Reasonable -Survey-of-Scottish-Adults -Data-Tables.pdf](http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Be-Reasonable-Survey-of-Scottish-Adults-Data-Tables.pdf)

Middle East

The British Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM) commissioned Populus to conduct two online surveys of representative samples of Britons about their attitudes towards Israel and related Middle East topics. The first poll was on 6-8 October 2017 with 2,021 adults, the second on 9-10 October 2017 with 2,041 adults; the two questionnaires were slightly different. BICOM has been testing British public opinion in this area since 2010, and its press release on the 2017 enquiries highlighted some modest improvement in perceptions of Israel, in terms of the warmth expressed towards the country and lessening of the willingness to support boycotts of Israeli goods and produce. Even so, there were mixed views about the wisdom of the British government in committing in 1917 to the principle of creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine (only 38% judged it to have been right). In 2017, there is significant negativity towards the Jewish state which eventually emerged, Israel receiving a below average mean score (on a feelings thermometer scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being very warm and favourable) of 3.82 and Israelis one of 4.13. The saving grace for the Israeli cause is that mean scores for some of Israel’s neighbours in the Middle East conflict are even lower, especially those for Hamas and Hezbollah, while Islamic State (IS) comes rock bottom, feelings towards it being very cold and unfavourable. Also on the brighter side, a plurality regards Israel as an important ally (49%) and post-Brexit trading partner (37%) of Britain. A majority (51%) does

not believe that criticizing Israel is anti-Semitic; however, 46% agree it is anti-Semitic to express hatred of Israel and question its right to exist. Both sets of data tables are accessible at:

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

Islamic State

YouGov has recently run three questions in three separate surveys touching on Islamic State (IS). In an app-based poll reported on 24 October 2017, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the assessment of a Foreign Office minister that the only way of dealing with Britons who had joined IS was, in almost every case, to kill them. A majority of respondents (53%) supported the minister's views, 35% opposed them, and 12% were unsure. Topline results only have been posted online at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/10/24/should-britons-who-joined-be-killed-housing-limiti/>

Another app-based poll, reported on 25 October 2017, enquired whether people should be given the name 'Jihad', as one family in the French city of Toulouse had done for their baby (and been challenged by the authorities). The term 'jihad' is usually now associated with violent Islamist extremism, although in the original Arabic it can simply mean self-denial or an individual battle against sin. Two-thirds (65%) of adults thought Jihad should not be allowed as a personal name, while 21% were relaxed about it being so, and 13% were undecided. Topline results only are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/10/25/phones-and-laptops-prison-inmates-allowing-jihad-n/>

A third app-based poll, conducted on 25 October 2017 with 3,398 adults, asked whether it was appropriate to prosecute, on their return, Britons who had gone out to the Middle East to fight *against* IS. A plurality (48%) deemed it inappropriate, with 22% favouring prosecution and 30% uncertain. Results, with breaks by standard demographics, are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/243906e4-b962-11e7-8ec9-470a65cd0043>

Anti-Semitic remarks

Labour politician and former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone continues to be haunted by his 2005 indiscretion in likening a Jewish reporter to a concentration camp guard, compounded by his subsequent unwillingness to apologize for the comment. The affair resurfaced in a recent online poll by YouGov among 1,526 Britons on 26-27 October 2017, conducted in the wake of revelations about Jared O'Mara's controversial statements about several groups prior to his election as a Labour MP. YouGov reminded its respondents of sundry politically incorrect incidents involving senior politicians in the past, one of which was the Livingstone outburst (albeit he was not actually named in the question). In two half-samples, 95% and 94% described the analogy with a concentration camp guard as inappropriate, with 63% and 55%, respectively, thinking the matter serious enough to warrant the politician's resignation. Full data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/8zsm9kh12w/Results_171027_OMaraQs.pdf

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Churches Together in England

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative research underpinned an external review of Churches Together in England, undertaken by Theos between September 2016 and June 2017, including evidence derived from 63 interviews and 44 questionnaires. It is reported in Natan Mladin, Rachel Fidler, and Ben Ryan, *That They All May Be One: Insights into Churches Together in England and Contemporary Ecumenism* (London: Theos, 2017, 61pp., ISBN: 978-0-9956543-1-0), which is freely available at:

<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/CTE%20final%20report.pdf>

What is mission?

During the summer of 2017 the Church Mission Society (CMS) conducted a survey about attitudes to mission among a self-selecting sample of British Christians attending Christian events or by means of a questionnaire on its website. Some 2,000 responses have been received to date (the survey is still open, at the time of writing). An article about the initial results appeared in *Church of England Newspaper*, 20 October 2017, p. 9 with a shorter digest available on the CMS website at:

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/mission-survey-results>

Church of England mission statistics

The Church of England's 51-page report on *Statistics for Mission, 2016* has a rather familiar ring to it. The long-term and gradual decline in the Church's constituency continues across a broad range of performance indicators, with few redeeming signs of even absolute (still less relative) growth. The figures for all-age Average Sunday Attendance and Usual Sunday Attendance (the most long-running churchgoing index) always attract a disproportionate amount of interest, both in the Church itself and among the media; in 2016, they fell to, respectively, 780,000 and 739,000 persons. The worshipping community, representing those who come to church once a month or more, numbered 1,139,000 (equivalent to a miniscule 2% of the population), one-fifth of whom were aged under 18. Christmas attendance reached 2,580,000, slightly up on 2015, an improvement which doubtless reflects the fact that Christmas Day fell on a Sunday in 2016 (a coincidence which always boosts congregations). The most striking feature of recent Anglican decline, however, is less to do with churchgoing than participation in the rites of passage, with Church of England infant baptisms in 2016 equating to just 10% of live births and funerals to 28% of deaths. The report, which includes a special one-off section on visitors to churches, is available at:

<https://churchofengland.org/media/4038454/2016statisticsformission.pdf>

Church of England parish finances

An 18-page report on *Parish Finance Statistics, 2015* has also been published by Church of England Research and Statistics. This reveals that between 2006 and 2015 the income of parishes increased by 24% and expenditure by 23%. Except for 2009-11, income exceeded expenditure each year, with a surplus of £54.4 million in 2015. Planned giving remains the main source of income but it has declined in real terms during recent years. The report is available at:

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/4037778/2015_ropfreport.pdf

Church of England digital impact

On a more upbeat note, the Church of England has announced that it is steadily building capacity in cyberspace through its three-year digital transformation project (funded by the broader Renewal and Reform Programme). It claims that each month 1.2 million individuals are being reached on social media and 1.5 million via the Church's various websites. The Church's #JoyToTheWorld Christmas campaign in 2016 reached 1.5 million people and its #LiveLent campaign in 2017 2.5 million. These and other headline statistics can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/4039027/digital-reach.pdf>

West Midlands Anglicans

The Saint Peter's Saltley Trust and Church Urban Fund have collaborated to fund a project and produce a 24-page report on *Christians in Practice: Connecting Discipleship and Community Engagement* (Saltley Faith & Learning Series, 3), with Simon Foster as lead author. It stems from research undertaken in the Church of England Dioceses of Birmingham and Lichfield, principally through questionnaires completed by 1,082 worshippers in a stratified random sample of 32 Anglican congregations, supplemented by 30 interviews in six churches. Allowing for constraints of time and health, a high level of personal involvement with the community was revealed, both short-term and long-term, formal and informal, past and present, and church-based or not. Respondents also mostly identified a broad connection between their community activities and their faith and felt the latter had been enriched by the former, albeit sharing faith with the community posed challenges to some. The report is at:

<https://www.cuf.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=4a604f1a-c770-4a03-9fe8-8e82c47138a2>

Welsh Nonconformity

The present state and missional approaches of evangelical Welsh Nonconformist churches (Baptist, Paedobaptist, Pentecostal, Conservative Evangelical, and New Church/Charismatic) are reviewed by David Ollerton in his *A New Mission to Wales: Seeing Churches Prosper across Wales in the Twenty-First Century* (Pwllheli: Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, 2016, 278pp., ISBN: 9781859948187, paperback, £9.99). The data principally derive from a survey

undertaken by Waleswide in 2012-15, particularly from questionnaires fully (283) or partially (103) completed in 2012 by 386 of the 588 Nonconformist ministers who were invited to take part. It is suggested that respondents probably came disproportionately from growing congregations. Factoring in that churches without ministerial oversight, as well as churches of other denominations, were not contacted, the questionnaires perhaps paint an over-optimistic picture of the condition of organized Christianity in Wales. They were supplemented by direct interviews (in 2013-14) and regional soundings (in 2015). The analysis in the text and the appendix of charts focuses on the differential effectiveness of six alternative approaches to mission, as revealed by the questionnaires and interviews and in the light of the religious, geographical, ethnic, linguistic/cultural, social, and political contexts of Wales. The research is more fully reported in Ollerton's 'Mission in a Welsh Context: Patterns of Nonconformist Mission in Wales and the Challenge of Contextualisation in the Twenty First Century' (PhD thesis, University of Chester, 2015), which can be freely downloaded from:

<http://chesterrep.openrepository.com/cdr/handle/10034/611381>

Methodist decline

The Methodist Church Statistics for Mission Triennial Report, 2017, presented to the annual Methodist Conference (and featured in the June 2017 edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*), revealed a picture of ongoing net decline across a range of performance measures. The October meeting of the Methodist Council has now received: (a) the responses to the report made by District discussion groups at the Conference; and (b) a paper offering some corporate reflections on the responses. Districts were asked a series of questions arising from the statistics, including the perceived strengths and challenges of their own District, observations on the figures for another District, and suggestions for a way forward. The two papers can be found at:

http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/2795075/counc_MC17_DP1_Statistics_for_Mission_Oct_2017.pdf

http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/2795081/counc_MC17_DP2_Statistics_for_Mission_2017_Initial_reflections_on_collated_responses_Oct_2017.pdf

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Hate crimes

Police forces in England and Wales recorded 5,949 religious hate crimes in 2016/17, 35% more than in 2015/16 and about four times the number in 2011/12 and 2012/13. The increase in 2016/17 was particularly associated with the outcome of the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union and the March 2017 terror attack on Westminster Bridge. A report and data tables on the statistics of all forms of hate crime for 2016/17 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2016-to-2017>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Secularization

In his latest book, *Secular Beats Spiritual: The Westernization of the Easternization of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xiii + 199pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-880568-7, hardback, £25), the prolific sociologist of religion Steve Bruce reasserts the secularization thesis through a critique of those who argue that religion has not really declined, it has simply changed in nature and form. His title is ‘a slightly tongue-in-cheek reference’ to Colin Campbell’s 2007 work *The Easternization of the West*. Bruce investigates, with special reference to Britain, the ‘popularity’ of the New Religious Movements and the New Age cultic milieu which have emerged since the late 1960s. He concludes that their appeal to indigenous populations has been numerically limited and nowhere near enough to fill the void left by the decline in conventional religions, notably Christianity. Moreover, the most enduring innovations have been the least ‘religious’ ones or survived only by becoming more ‘this-worldly’, while the influence of eastern religions and eastern religious themes has been significantly altered in a secular direction. Statistics are drawn upon, where available, and there is a 33-page chapter devoted to the issue of ‘counting the spiritual’, which estimates that less than 1% of people practice ‘novel expressions of religious or spiritual interest’. The book’s webpage is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/secular-beats-spiritual-9780198805687?cc=gb&lang=en&>

Religion in public life

A new report by Grace Davie, *Religion in Public Life: Levelling the Ground* (London: Theos, 2017, 96pp., ISBN: 978-0-9956543-2-7), is based upon her Edward Cadbury Lectures delivered in the University of Birmingham in 2016. It examines the role of religion in public life from the perspective of three levels: local (comprising case studies of Exeter and the South-West, the author’s home, and London), national (focusing on the debates surrounding the Church of England’s report on *Faith in the City* and Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*), and global (deriving from Davie’s participation in the International Panel on Social Progress). A conclusion pulls together the cross-cutting themes which run through the report. Use of statistical evidence is relatively light, perhaps appropriately for an essay which is primarily conceived as a contribution to an ongoing conversation in the public square, and is at its strongest in the chapter on London. The report is available at:

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Reportfiles/RELIGION.PDF>

Religious nones

In the published version of her 2016 Paul Hanly Furfey Lecture, Linda Woodhead summarizes her YouGov-based research into the swift rise and demographic profile of religious nones in Britain and also makes what she describes as her ‘first serious attempt to explain this profound cultural transition’. She stresses that ‘no religion’ has an ambiguous status as at once like and unlike religion, religious nones largely rejecting the dogmatism of religion rather than religion *tout court*. She identifies the central commitment of ‘no religion’ as ‘each and every human being should be free to decide how best to live his or her own life even if it involves bad choices’. Democratization, cultural and religious diversity, and marketization and consumerization are among the social changes Woodhead believes help account for the growth

of no religion. Access options to ‘The Rise of “No Religion”: Towards an Explanation’, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 78, No. 3, Autumn 2017, pp. 247-62 are outlined at:

<https://academic.oup.com/socrel/article-abstract/78/3/247/4079669/The-Rise-of-No-Religion-Towards-an-Explanation?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

Proximity effect of cathedrals

The presence of an Anglican or Catholic cathedral or cathedral-like parish or abbey church in an area seems to heighten the chance of individuals living in the vicinity self-identifying as Christian, after social demography is controlled for. So suggest Andrew Village and Judith Muskett in their analysis of religious affiliation data in the 2011 population census for 6,712 English wards situated within 30 km of 105 cathedrals or greater churches: ‘Flagships in a Sea of Unbelief? Christian Affiliation around Big Church Buildings in England’, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 32, No. 3, October 2017, pp. 479-93. However, the proximity effect was small, in the order of 1%, and the findings are open to several different interpretations. It is also conceded that census data constitute a ‘rather blunt instrument’ for measuring proximity effect. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13537903.2017.1362891>

Religious experience

The predisposition of certain psychological types to undergo and admit to religious experience is validated in a recent article by Leslie Francis and Andrew Village: ‘Psychological Type and Reported Religious Experience: An Empirical Enquiry among Anglican Clergy and Laity’, *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2017, pp. 367-83. Using data from a self-selecting sample of 4,421 practising Anglicans (disproportionately Anglo-Catholic or Broad Church) who responded to an online and postal questionnaire promoted in the *Church Times* in 2013, the authors revealed the perceiving process to be fundamental to individual differences in openness to religious experiences, which were more likely to be reported by intuitive types than sensing types. Their single-item measure of religious experience, rooted in a sociological tradition, thus accorded with previous research based on multi-item scales, and rooted in the psychological tradition. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13674676.2017.1328404>

Scotland’s Muslims

In *Scotland’s Muslims: Society, Politics, and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, 304pp., ISBN: 9781474427234, hardback, £80), editor Peter Hopkins brings together a team of leading and emerging scholars from a range of disciplines who have undertaken research with Muslims in Scotland over the last decade. After his own introduction, there are twelve thematic chapters exploring, by means of quantitative and qualitative evidence, Muslim health, education, political participation, gender and migration, sexuality, young people, generational relations, heritage, multiculturalism, media, representation, and integration. The book’s webpage is at:

<https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-scotland-039-s-muslims.html>

Youth and the Churches

In *Young People and Church since 1900: Engagement and Exclusion* (London: Routledge, 2018, ix + 196pp., ISBN: 978-1-4724-8978-4, hardback, £105), Naomi Thompson charts the transition from Sunday schools to Christian youth work in twentieth-century England, with particular reference to the history of the Birmingham Sunday School Union, and with a focus on three time periods: 1900-10, 1955-72, and the present day. This is a mixed methods work, which draws upon interviews, both oral history and contemporary. There is also a certain amount of statistical content, mainly extracted from the annual reports of the National Sunday School Union between 1898 and 1972, which is displayed in the form of graphs and tables. The webpage for the book (which is already available, notwithstanding the imprint year) is at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Young-People-and-Church-Since-1900-Engagement-and-Exclusion/Thompson/p/book/9781472489784>

First World War

The outbreak of the First World War seems to have led to a surge in the number of sermons preached from Old Testament texts, as ministers turned to the prophets and the history of Israel for inspiration and comfort in Britain's own hour of danger and need. This is suggested by an analysis of the texts of contemporary sermons published in *Christian World Pulpit* over 60 years, tabulated on p. 71 of Stuart Bell's *Faith in Conflict: The Impact of the Great War on the Faith of the People of Britain* (Solihull: Helion & Company, 2017, 240pp., ISBN: 978-1-911512-67-7, hardback, £25). Between July 1913 and June 1914, 36% of sermons took an Old Testament text, but the proportion rose to 47% in July-December 1914 before falling away throughout the war, standing at 29% in 1918 and 26% in January-June 1919. It climbed again, to 36%, during a challenging period in the Second World War, from July 1940 to June 1941. Otherwise, the book is relatively short on statistical content.

PEOPLE NEWS

David John Bartholomew (1931-2017)

Emeritus Professor David Bartholomew, the eminent statistician, died at his home on 16 October 2017, aged 86 years. Educated at Bedford Modern School and University College London, he held academic appointments at, successively, the University of Keele, Aberystwyth University, the University of Kent, and the London School of Economics. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1987 and was President of the Royal Statistical Society in 1993-95. An active Methodist (including as a local preacher for over 60 years), Professor Bartholomew was periodically engaged by the Methodist Church to prepare forecasts and analyses of ordained and lay ministry and membership. Among his extensive portfolio of publications were three books blending statistical theory with theology: *God of Chance* (SCM Press, 1984), *Uncertain Belief: Is it Rational to be a Christian?* (Clarendon Press, 1996), and *God, Chance and Purpose* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). A complete list of his writings is available at:

<http://www.djbartholomew.com/>