

# Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

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## OPINION POLLS

### **European Union Parliamentary election: Lord Ashcroft's post-voting poll in Britain**

Lord Ashcroft has conducted online interviews (probably via the YouGov panel) with 10,280 British adults on 23-24 May 2019, immediately after they had voted (in person or by post) in the European Parliamentary elections on 23 May. Religious affiliation was one of the background variables that he used in the survey, with the results disaggregated by Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jew, Sikh, Buddhist, other, none, and prefer not to say. The Excel data tables appended to his blog show percentages to the nearest whole digit, rather than raw numbers, which somewhat limits the scope for secondary analysis. However, professing Christians, who formed 51% of the whole population, were disproportionately to be found among those whose vote in the European Parliamentary election went to the Brexit Party (61%) or the Conservative Party (66%). By contrast, the 43% with no religion were overrepresented among voters for the Green Party (58%) and for the nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland. These preferences are likely to have been especially influenced by age (Christians tending to be older and religious nones younger than average). Voting by each religious group was also recorded for the 2017 general election, the 2016 referendum on European Union membership, and (as anticipated) at the next general election. Lord Ashcroft's blog and tables can be found at:

<https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2019/05/my-euro-election-post-vote-poll-most-tory-switchers-say-they-will-stay-with-their-new-party/#more-15953>

### **YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project: favourability towards world religions**

Findings from the YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project have begun to appear this month. It represents a partnership between the YouGov-Cambridge Centre for Public Opinion Research at Cambridge University, the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at Cambridge University, and *The Guardian*. Online fieldwork was undertaken by YouGov in 23 countries during February and March 2019, including Great Britain, where 1,949 adults were interviewed between 28 February and 7 March. One question asked respondents whether they held favourable or unfavourable opinions of 10 world religions. The British results are tabulated below, from which it will be seen that approximately one-third of interviewees expressed neither favourable nor unfavourable sentiments; and that a significant number (around one-half for four religions) were don't knows (or, much more rarely, preferred not to say what they felt). Taking the 'big six' faiths (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism), it will be further noted that Christianity and Buddhism were most favourably viewed, the latter rating perhaps informed by the positive image of the Dalai Lama recorded in other British polling, with Islam least well regarded. Islam also received by far the highest unfavourable score of all 10 faiths. Topline data only are available at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/9bf3vt1iqu/Globalism2019\\_%20Guardian\\_Various\\_1.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9bf3vt1iqu/Globalism2019_%20Guardian_Various_1.pdf)

% across	Favourable	Neither	Unfavourable	Don't know etc.
Baha'ism	3	28	11	58
Buddhism	35	36	11	19
Christianity	39	32	18	11
Confucianism	6	31	10	53
Hinduism	20	43	14	23
Islam	9	33	41	18
Jainism	4	29	10	57
Judaism	19	43	15	22
Sikhism	21	41	13	25
Taoism	8	33	11	49

### **YouGov tests level of public understanding of the month of Ramadan, just as it starts**

YouGov seized the opportunity presented by the start of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, to ask 2,414 of its panellists online on 7 May 2019 how they assessed their level of understanding of the month. Just over one-third (37%) of respondents considered they had a very good (4%) or fairly good (33%) understanding, this being especially true of Londoners (52%), reflecting the large number of Muslims living in the capital. Almost half (47%) of the whole sample regarded their level of knowledge as not very good, while 13% admitted to having none at all, albeit virtually nobody claimed never to have heard of Ramadan (the most in any demographic sub-group, 2%, among under-25s). The residual 3% were don't knows. Full results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/afb52966-70a9-11e9-a6e1-b5cec2f1902f>

### **Charitable donations to religious causes: findings from the 2019 UK Giving report**

*UK Giving*, an annual survey from the Charities Aid Foundation since 2004, is described as 'the largest study of giving behaviour in the UK'. The 2019 report is based upon online interviews with 13,277 UK adults aged 16 and over in 2018, conducted in 12 monthly waves of approximately 1,000 each. Fewer people were found to have given money to charity than in previous years, but those who claimed to have done so had given larger amounts. This was especially true of donors who gave directly to charitable religious causes, where the mean donation during the previous four weeks rose to £74 from around £60 in 2016 and 2017. Reflecting the pattern in 2017, religious organizations received 19% of the money donated to charity in 2018, the biggest share of any genre of charitable cause, but from only 12% of donors. Although over-65s were still more likely to have given to religious organizations than average, the proportion doing so had declined from 22% in 2016 and 2017 to 16% in 2018. Regionally, more individuals donated to religious causes in Northern Ireland (21%) than in the UK as a whole, albeit this had fallen from 27% in 2017. The report can be downloaded from:

<https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2019-publications/uk-giving-2019>

### **Spiritual/religious preparations left out of readiness to die planning, ComRes finds**

Spiritual or religious preparations are considered the least important of eight possible elements in preparing to die, in the (hypothetical) event of having just 12 months left to live. So discovered ComRes in an online poll of 2,025 Britons on behalf of Dying Matters and Hospice UK on 12-14 April 2019. Faced with the prospect of imminent death, just 6% said they would devote time and energy to making relevant spiritual or religious preparations, and the

proportion never rose beyond 11% in any demographic sub-group (and that was in London). Top priorities were attending to financial and practical matters (56%) and going on a trip or having a long sought after experience (54%). Data tables are available at:

<https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/hospice-uk-dying-matters-are-we-ready-april-2019-survey/>

### **London's skyline: Londoners express appreciation of St Paul's Cathedral**

Seven in ten of 1,134 Londoners questioned online by YouGov on 15-18 April 2019 considered that St Paul's Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren's iconic building from the late seventeenth century, has changed London's skyline for the better, with only 1% saying the opposite; the remainder thought it had not made much difference (17%) or were undecided (12%). Far fewer judged the construction of five new buildings since the Millennium had altered (or, in one instance where planning permission has recently been given, would alter) the capital's skyline for the better, 51% saying this about 'the Shard', 43% about 'the Gherkin', 37% about 'the Tulip', 22% about 'the Walkie-Talkie', and 19% about 'the Cheesegrater'. Data tables, with breaks by demographics, are at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/05qk9mzfqo/YouGov%20-%20London%20Skyline.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/05qk9mzfqo/YouGov%20-%20London%20Skyline.pdf)

### **Anti-Semitism and the Labour Party: YouGov polling for the *Jewish Chronicle***

Accusations about anti-Semitism in the Labour Party simply will not go away. Matters have now reached such a state that the Equality and Human Rights Commission announced on 28 May 2019 that it had launched a formal (statutory) investigation 'to determine whether the Labour Party has unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised people because they are Jewish'. But the party is also in trouble on the matter in the court of public opinion, as the latest polling, by YouGov for the *Jewish Chronicle*, reveals. Based on online interviews with 5,180 Britons aged 18 and over on 14-17 May, the questions mainly replicated those from a survey for the Jewish Labour Movement three months earlier. Public awareness of the news coverage of the accusations has risen during this period, now standing at 80%. One-half the population considers that the Labour Party has a problem with anti-Semitism, seven points more than in February, and including one-quarter of solid Labour voters. Party leader Jeremy Corbyn is widely blamed for his handling of the controversy, 65% labelling it as incompetent and 60% as lacking in honesty and transparency; moreover, 36% judge Corbyn himself to be anti-Semitic. Three-fifths believe it unlikely that Labour under Corbyn can address and solve the issue of allegations of anti-Semitism in the party, although 62% of solid Labour voters are confident it can. Meanwhile, 27% of all adults perceive the row has increased the hostility which Jewish people in Britain experience. Full data tables are available at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/p1q32gkyk4/JewishChronicle\\_190517\\_AntisemitismResults\\_w.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/p1q32gkyk4/JewishChronicle_190517_AntisemitismResults_w.pdf)

## FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

### **Church Commissioners for England annual report for 2018**

The Church Commissioners, who contribute 15% of the running costs of the Church of England through their endowment income, have published their annual report for 2018. Their total return on investments was 1.8%, well below both the target for the year and the thirty-year and ten-year average returns. This relatively weaker performance was attributed to continuing uncertainty and volatility in the macro-economic environment, with particular challenges in the equities markets. The total value of the Commissioners' funds currently stands at £8.2 billion. For the report, see:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/church-commissioners/publications>

### **Scottish Episcopal Church statistics for 2018**

The 36th annual report of the Scottish Episcopal Church includes, at pp. 63-70, a return of diocesan statistics for the year ending 31 December 2018. There were 28,647 persons of all ages belonging to the congregations (7.3% fewer than in 2017); 19,983 persons on the communicants roll (down 9.5%); and 12,430 in attendance at services on the Sunday next before Advent (down 0.6%). The report is available at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/36th-Annual-Report-Final-2.pdf>

### **Methodist Church of Great Britain statistics for 2018**

The Methodist Church has published its annual membership and attendance statistics as at October 2018, the first of its slimmed-down connexional counts agreed at the Church's 2018 Conference. Methodist membership was returned as 172,632, a decline of 3.8% on 2017. This total excludes 30,941 members in local ecumenical partnerships in which Methodism participates, less than one-third of whom are Methodists. There were 6,527 membership gains during the year, comprising 2,253 new members, 3,353 in-transfers (from other circuits, Churches, and countries), and 921 other gains. These were offset by 13,695 membership losses, consisting of 6,041 deaths, 3,381 out-transfers, and 4,273 other losses. Although in- and out-transfers are broadly in balance, the remaining losses are three times more than the remaining gains. The average attendance at the typical Sunday or mid-week service is given as 140,287, equivalent to four-fifths of membership (albeit many worshippers will be young people and other non-members). Summary data are available at:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/statistics-for-mission/2018-statistics-reports/>

### **Baptist Union of Great Britain statistics for 2018**

The Baptist Union of Great Britain has released the statistics of its membership and community as at 31 December 2018, revealing a picture of ongoing decline. Numbers are reported for churches, members, children, young people, and (believer's) baptisms. Two versions of the figures are given, one for churches (mostly in England and Wales) in membership of the Baptist Union and/or one of the regional Baptist Associations, the other for churches in membership of the Baptist Union alone. An explanatory note states: 'Not every church completed an annual

return and some have not done so for many years. Where a church hasn't completed their return we have used the last known figures.' However, this procedure has not been applied to baptisms since 2014, where actuals only are given. There is also a separate return, first introduced in 2015, of the average attendance at the main weekly service of worship in 2018. More than one-fifth of churches failed to supply this information, so, as well as the table of raw data, there is a scaled-up calculation, based on the average attendance per church in each Association. Total attendance in 2018 was 148,695, compared with 115,567 members, 66,011 children, and 26,635 young people. The age distribution of worshippers was: 14% children (aged 0-11), 8% young people (aged 11-18), 7% young adults (aged 18-30), 40% aged 30-65, and 32% aged 65 and over. Full details, and time series since the Millennium, are available at:

<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/277439/Statistics.aspx>

### **Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain tabular statement for 2018**

In advance of the recent Yearly Meeting, held in London, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain published a 12-page report on *Patterns of Membership, including the 2018 Tabular Statement*, which has been produced annually since 1862, based on information provided by area meetings and collated by the Recording Clerk. The Society's constituency is measured in terms of members and non-member attenders, each sub-divided between adults and children. The pattern of slow decline since the Millennium persists, with a combined total of 21,575 members and attenders in 2018, down by 3.7% on 2017 (2.1% for members and 5.8% for attenders). Although there were 271 new members during the year, there were 325 deaths, a net loss of 17 on transfers, and the membership of 155 adults was terminated. There were 475 local meetings. The report is available at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents>

### **British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists statistics for 2008-18**

The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which was first organized in 1902 and reorganized in 1920, has published its final membership statistics for 2018, together with trend data back to 2008. The Conference has 294 churches spread across all four UK home nations, the Republic of Ireland, and islands in the British seas. Membership in December 2018 stood at 38,594, a modest net increase (of 677 or 1.8%) on the December 2017 figure, with an annual gain of 1,349 outweighing yearly losses of 672. Membership has risen by 37.3% since January 2008, the principal source being baptisms, which surpassed 1,000 in 2009, 2011, and 2014. The table can be found at:

[http://adventist.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/83067/BUCAnnualMembershipReports2008to2018.pdf](http://adventist.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/83067/BUCAnnualMembershipReports2008to2018.pdf)

### **Hymns drop out of the top 10 funeral play list, according to Co-operative Funeralcare**

Hymns have dropped out of the top ten of music requested for funeral services for the first time, according to the latest in a series of surveys (begun in 2002) by Co-operative Funeralcare, and based on an analysis of 100,000 funerals that its branches have arranged during the previous twelve months. In 2016, when the chart was last compiled, three hymns still made it to the top ten: *The Lord is My Shepherd*, *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, and *Abide with Me*. Three years later, there were none in the top ten, their places taken by pop songs, with Ed

Sheeran and Westlife making their debut appearances. The top three choices of music in 2019, as in 2016, were *My Way* by Frank Sinatra, *Time to Say Goodbye* by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman, and *Somewhere over the Rainbow* by Eva Cassidy. The trend away from hymns at funerals reflects a declining preference for funerals of a religious nature and/or conducted by a religious celebrant, exemplified in the substantial fall since the Millennium in the number of funerals at which Church of England clergy have officiated. Co-operative Funeralcare's press release about the survey, incorporating charts for ten individual music genres (including hymns), is available at:

<https://www.co-operative.coop/media/news-releases/funeral-music-chart-2019-my-way-or-the-highway>

### **Child sexual abuse in religious contexts: IICSA report from the Truth Project**

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published the first thematic report from its Truth Project: *Child Sexual Abuse in the Context of Religious Institutions*. It is based upon the experiences of 183 victims and survivors who were sexually abused as children in religious contexts between the 1940s and 2010s, and who came to the Truth Project between June 2016 and November 2018. Quantitative data tables can be found in Appendix A (pp. 68-79) of the report which is available at:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/11687/view/truth-project-thematic-report%3A-child-sexual-abuse-context-religious-institutions-full-report.pdf>

## ACADEMIC STUDIES

### **Catholic lapsation since Vatican II: Britain and the United States compared**

Forty-four years ago, Catholic sociologist Tony Spencer caused something of a furore by publishing, in the English Jesuit periodical *The Month*, a data-rich article on the 'Demography of Catholicism' which, among other things, computed indices of religious perseverance that showed widespread drop-out from the Catholic Church in England and Wales by the early 1970s, with an 'alienated population' estimated at 2,599,000 in 1971. Half a century later, Stephen Bullivant has brought the story up to date with his *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America since Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 336pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-883794-7, £25, hardback). Disaffiliation is here measured through sample surveys, as the difference between a person describing their religion of upbringing as Catholic but their current affiliation as other than Catholic. The principal data, introduced in Chapter 2 on 'The Demographics of Disaffiliation' (pp. 25-55), derive from the British Social Attitudes Surveys and the United States General Social Surveys for 2012-16, which yielded sub-samples of, respectively, 2,376 and 2,526 cradle Catholics. In Britain, 56% of these cradle Catholics continued to profess Catholicism at the time of interview, which was a better retention rate than for Protestant groupings, but 38% claimed to have no religion, while 5% had become other Christians and 1% non-Christians. However, just 13% of these individuals raised as Catholics still attended Mass weekly. The remainder of the book seeks to understand why disaffiliation has occurred and, in particular, what role the Second Vatican Council may have played in triggering the process, alongside contextual factors such as secularization. An appendix records Mass attendance statistics in England and Wales, Scotland, and selected American dioceses from 1958 to 2017. The book's webpage can be found at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/mass-exodus-9780198837947?cc=gb&lang=en&>

Additionally, Bullivant has contributed introductory articles about the volume to the Catholic press at:

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/magazine/vatican-ii-was-meant-to-be-the-laitys-coming-of-age-so-what-went-wrong/>

and

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/letters/8/16087/vatican-ii-a-failure->

### **Student chaplaincy in UK universities**

The Church of England has published a 141-page report of original research into university chaplaincy, financed through the Church Universities Fund, and undertaken in 2017 by academics from three institutions: Kristin Aune, Mathew Guest, and Jeremy Law, *Chaplains on Campus: Understanding Chaplaincy in UK Universities*. The authors first conducted a national mapping exercise, via structured telephone interviews with 374 Christian and non-Christian chaplains (including 99 'lead' chaplains), and then a series of local case studies at five universities (four in England and one in Scotland) involving interviews with stakeholders and a survey of the minority of students who used chaplaincy services (58% of them weekly or more often). These data are thoroughly analysed, with quite a few figures and tables, and contextualized by reference to existing literature on university chaplaincy. There is a detailed summary of findings in chapter 7 (pp. 119-22). University chaplaincy is shown to be moving towards a multi-faith model, with a reducing proportion of Christian chaplains (approximately 60%, down from 70% in 2007), but not yet to have fully arrived at this destination. The full range of chaplaincy contribution to university life is illuminated, with a plea that it should be further encouraged and resourced, 13 recommendations being made for its future development. The report is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Chaplains%20on%20Campus%20Full%20Report.pdf>

### **British Academy probe into future of theology and religious studies in UK universities**

The British Academy, the country's national academy for the humanities and social sciences, has sounded a warning bell about the future of theology and religious studies in UK universities. It has found that there were one-third (or 6,500) fewer students on degree courses in these disciplines in 2017-18 than six years previously. The decline in enrolments, which is linked to the increase in annual tuition fees of up to £9,000 for full-time undergraduates, has resulted in the closure or downsizing of several theology departments. Significant gender imbalances are also highlighted, with 64% of students on first degree programmes in theology and religious studies in 2017-18 being women but only 35% of doctoral students and 37% of academic staff (16% less than in comparable humanities departments). The average age of such staff is rising. The report, *Theology and Religious Studies Provision in UK Higher Education*, is available at:

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/The-British-Academy-Theology-Religious-Studies-Provision-UK-Higher-Education.pdf>

PEOPLE NEWS

**Professor Ernest (Kopul) Krausz (1931-2018), pioneering Jewish sociologist**

Ernest Krausz was an émigré to Britain from Romania immediately after the Second World War. In the 1960s, he became a pioneer of Jewish community studies, employing sample surveys and statistical techniques in investigations of the Jewish communities of Leeds and Edgware, which were the subjects, respectively, of his MSc (1960) and PhD (1965) theses. The first study was published as *Leeds Jewry: Its History and Social Structure* (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1964), while the second was serialized in the *Jewish Journal of Sociology* (1968-69). Krausz will also be remembered for his books, at about the same time, on *Sociology in Britain: A Survey of Research* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1969) and *Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971). Having taught at various higher education institutions in London, he relocated to Israel in 1972 where he held chairs at, successively, Bar-Ilan University and Netanya Academic College. An obituary by Rivka Goldberg was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 10 May 2019 (p. 55) and is available at:

<https://www.thejc.com/news/obituaries/obituary-professor-ernest-kopul-krausz-1.483903>