

# Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources  
Number 48 – September 2019

© Clive D. Field, 2019

## OPINION POLLS

### **Trust in clergy and other professions: Ipsos Global Advisor survey in 23 countries**

Only 24% of the approximately 1,000 Britons aged 16-74 interviewed online by Ipsos MORI in October 2018, for an international survey of trust in 18 professions, viewed clergy/priests as trustworthy, while 37% regarded them as untrustworthy, giving a net trustworthiness score of -13%; the remainder of respondents were neutral or undecided. In Britain, clergy/priests were ranked eleventh for trustworthiness, a long way behind doctors (67%), scientists (62%), and teachers (58%) but well ahead of pollsters, government ministers, and politicians in general (all three groups on 11%) and advertising executives (9%). The global trustworthiness score for clergy/priests was -21%, eight points worse than Britain, plunging to -40% in Italy, -43% in Argentina, -44% in Poland, and -61% in Spain – all predominantly Roman Catholic countries. By contrast, it was in China that clergy/priests were judged most trustworthy (48%), this being one of only four nations with a positive net trustworthiness score for them, albeit of just 4%. A slide presentation about the study is available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/its-fact-scientists-are-most-trusted-people-world>

### **Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: Ipsos Global Advisor survey in 27 countries**

In another Ipsos Global Advisor poll, conducted online in 27 countries between 19 April and 3 May 2019, Britons did not accord spirituality/religious faith importance as an attribute in making either a woman or a man seem beautiful. Given a list of 19 possible attributes of beauty, and asked to rate their importance on a 10-point scale, just 13% of the British sample of 1,000 said that spirituality/religious faith was an important (scale points 8-10) feature in defining female beauty and 13% in defining male beauty, compared with, respectively, a global average of 30% and 32%. Women in Britain were less likely than men to regard spirituality/religious faith as an important characteristic of beauty in either sex. Of the nations surveyed, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and India returned majorities stating that spirituality/religious faith was an important attribute of beauty, and the populations of Sweden, France, and Spain were least likely to do so. A slide presentation about the study is available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/beauty-more-skin-deep-according-new-global-poll>

### **Friendships formed through churches or other religious communities**

One in seven (15%) of the 2,149 UK adults interviewed online by YouGov on 15-16 August 2019 recalled that they had met a friend through their church or other religious community. The proportion was highest among women (18%), over-55s (19%), retired (21%) and widowed (31%) people, and residents of London (20%), Northern Ireland (21%), and Wales (22%). A further 13% could not remember or did not know whether they had a friendship formed through

their church or religious community, while 72% were certain that they had never had such a friendship. Full data tables are available at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/dro93313yl/YouGov%20-%20Loneliness%20Results.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/dro93313yl/YouGov%20-%20Loneliness%20Results.pdf)

### **Children's participation in harvest festivals: ComRes survey for the Church of England**

As we approach the harvest festival season, the Church of England has commissioned ComRes to survey 4,051 British adults online on 21-25 August 2019. Almost three-quarters (73%) recalled celebrating harvest festival in one way or another during their own childhood, but there was a clear differential between the youngest and oldest age cohorts (62% of 18 to 24-year-olds and 81% of over-65s) and between Christians (80%), non-Christians (57%), and religious nones (68%). Overall, 55% had attended a harvest service and 64% had either done that or sung hymns or said prayers. Of those who had participated in harvest festival as a child, 65% had liked the experience, 28% were neutral about it, and 5% had disliked it. Two-thirds (67%) of all respondents thought there was still value in children observing harvest festival, yet among parents just 49% admitted that their children usually took part in harvest festivals. Full data tables can be found at:

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/OmHarvest\\_Festival-Church%20of%20Eng\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/OmHarvest_Festival-Church%20of%20Eng_FINAL.pdf)

### **The Bible as holiday reading: survey by Stena Line**

The ferry company Stena Line UK recently commissioned a survey of over 1,000 people in the UK and Ireland to ascertain what 'their ultimate holiday reads' were. The Bible was ranked second overall, in the top ten reads, sandwiched between J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series in first place and *50 Shades of Grey*, the adult fantasy novel by E. L. James, in third position. This was also the top three ranking for women, but for men the Bible headed the list, displacing J. K. Rowling into second spot, and with *50 Shades of Grey* not in the top five. It is possible, of course, that the Bible's prominence owes much to the fact that it is frequently still placed in hotel rooms. Stena Line has a blog about the survey, omitting any details of methodology, at:

<https://blog.stenaline.co.uk/explore/the-top-10-holiday-reads-of-all-time-as-voted-by-the-uk-public/#.XY5Is3dFxpw>

### **Extra-terrestrials: Survation poll for the University of Oxford**

How should humanity respond to scientists receiving an unambiguous message from extra-terrestrials on a distant planet? That was the question posed by Survation on behalf of the Department of Physics at the University of Oxford in an online poll of 2,017 UK adults on 2-5 September 2019, the findings of which were announced at the British Science Festival. The commonest answer (39%) was that a team of scientists should determine how humanity responds to the message, with 15% preferring elected representatives to assume the role, 11% wanting a planet-wide referendum on the issue, and 11% seeing it as the preserve of a citizens' assembly. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 23% were unable to choose from this list of options and registered as don't know. Asked, in a supplementary question, whether, in the event of a planet-wide referendum being held about the message from extra-terrestrials, a majority (56%, including 65% of men) said they would vote to initiate contact with the alien species, while

13% would not, and 31% either would not vote or were undecided. Data tables from this survey are available at:

<https://www.survation.com/archive/2019-2/>

**Labour Party and anti-Semitism: another YouGov survey of the views of party members**

Two-thirds of 1,185 Labour Party members do not consider that their party has a serious problem with anti-Semitism within the membership, according to an online survey by YouGov on 17-20 September 2019, conducted on behalf of Mainstream UK, a new cross-party campaign group combating political extremism and led by former Labour MP Ian Austin. Just 23% of party members acknowledge that the party does have a serious problem with anti-Semitism, while 11% are undecided. Blame for the accusations that the party has faced over anti-Semitism were most likely to be laid at the door of political opponents who want to undermine Jeremy Corbyn, the party’s leader (37%), followed by a small minority of party members with anti-Semitic views (29%), the mainstream media (17%), and the party leadership (13%). A majority (56%) of members was opposed to doing a post-Brexit trade deal with Israel, with 31% in favour. The survey also covered the perceived source of blame for Islamist terrorist attacks in Britain over recent years; 29% attributed blame to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Islamic State, 28% to the foreign policies of the British government and its Western allies, and 40% to both equally. Full data tables can be found at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/agtju43jkj/MainstreamUK\\_190920\\_LabMembers.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/agtju43jkj/MainstreamUK_190920_LabMembers.pdf)

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

**The UK’s favourite hymn, 2019: BBC *Songs of Praise* special**

*Jerusalem*, based on a poem of 1803 by William Blake and set to music in 1916 by Sir Hubert Parry, has been voted the UK's favourite hymn, in an online poll held by BBC One's *Songs of Praise*, the results of which were announced in its broadcast of 29 September 2019. In the survey, members of the public chose from the 100 hymns that have featured most on the programme over the past five years. The 2019 top ten, with comparative positions supplied by BRIN for 2013 (the last time the exercise was undertaken by the BBC) is:

2019 rank	Hymn	2013 rank
1	<i>Jerusalem</i>	11
2	<i>How Great Thou Art</i>	1
3	<i>In Christ Alone</i>	2
4	<i>Dear Lord and Father of Mankind</i>	4
5	<i>Abide with Me</i>	7
6	<i>I Vow to Thee My Country</i>	17
7	<i>Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer/Jehovah</i>	8
8	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	16
9	<i>Be Still for the Presence of the Lord</i>	3
10	<i>I, the Lord of Sea and Sky</i>	5

The BBC press release is at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49871456>

## Terms and conditions of salaried children, youth, and families workers in UK churches

Ahead of Youth Work Sunday (22 September 2019), the Church of England’s lead bishop for lay ministry, Martyn Snow, released the findings of an investigation into the terms and conditions of salaried children, youth, and families workers in UK churches. A total of 637 such workers (55% full-time and 45% part-time, 67% from Church of England parishes and 33% employed by other denominations) participated in the survey, which was conducted during January and February 2019 by Ali Campbell, a youth and children’s ministry consultant. Turnover appeared to be high, with 53% of respondents in post for less than three years, even though 74% expressed a life-long calling to the role. A ‘huge discrepancy’ in pay was found between roles with similar hours. Further details of the study can be found at:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/news/news-stories-1915.php>

## Church of England ministry statistics, 2018

The Church of England’s Research and Statistics Department has published a 56-page report on *Ministry Statistics, 2018*, incorporating 23 figures and 26 tables. Although the focus is primarily on ordained clergy, lay ministry and religious communities are also considered. The Church has almost 20,000 active clergy, but only 39% of them are stipendiary (their mean age being 52.4 years), with nearly as many (36%) being retired clergy who continue to serve (mean age 74.7 years). The report, including a link to diocesan statistics, is at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics/key-areas-research#ministry-statistics>

## Church in Wales annual report on membership and finance for 2018

The Governing Body of the Church in Wales has published its annual report on membership and finance for 2018. Trend data on membership indicators from 2010 have been compiled by BRIN from this and previous reports and are tabulated below. The 2018 report is available at:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/cinw/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Membership-Finance-2019.pdf>

	Electoral roll	Easter communicants	Christmas communicants	Attendance over 18 Sundays	Attendance under 18 Sundays	Baptisms	Confirmations
2010	57,165	62,436	45,938	34,717	5,075	7,795	1,510
2011	56,146	60,671	58,877	33,657	6,250	7,642	1,321
2012	55,185	56,063	55,007	32,187	6,776	7,497	1,458
2013	53,262	51,352	52,662	30,972	6,084	7,275	1,212
2014	47,086	52,021	51,284	30,556	6,158	6,782	1,036
2015	46,580	51,435	49,827	28,958	5,789	6,707	1,101
2016	45,727	48,112	50,458	28,185	5,906	6,115	871
2017	44,875	48,986	48,186	27,448	5,420	5,351	546
2018	42,441	46,163	46,052	26,110	5,385	4,996	712

## Safeguarding in the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales in 2018

The National Catholic Safeguarding Commission, which was formed in 2008 and covers the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, has published its annual report for 2018. Safeguarding data for the year will be found in Appendix 2 (pp. 28-39), including tables and

charts (with trends from 2013/14) relating to parish safeguarding representatives; DBS criminal record check applications and certificates; safeguarding plans; allegations of abuse against children and adults; and reporting to statutory authorities. The document is available at:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/09/NCSC-Annual-Report-2018.pdf>

### **Holy Alliances: Demos report on Church-secular partnerships**

The think-tank Demos has published a 26-page report by David Barclay and Sacha Hilhorst entitled *Holy Alliances: Church-Secular Partnerships for Social Good*, being the outcome of a research project funded by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust. Through a small-scale survey of church leaders (whose methodology is unclear), ten expert interviews, and twelve case study interviews, Demos investigated partnership working in local communities between religious and secular (voluntary and state-funded) organizations. Such partnerships were most commonly focused on food poverty (19%), poverty (13%), mental health (11%), and loneliness (10%). Key drivers for the engagement of churches in these partnerships included access to greater finance, support, and training which they brought. The report is available at:

<https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Holy-Alliances-digital-final-.pdf>

### **Unrequested assignment of children to faith schools: National Secular Society research**

More than 20,600 children were sent to faith schools in England in September 2019 contrary to the express preferences of their parents, according to data obtained by the National Secular Society (NSS) from the Department for Education under a Freedom of Information request. The number represented an increase on the 18,000 in 2017 and 19,500 in 2018. There were 12,311 pupils who were assigned to faith secondary schools and 8,333 pupils assigned to faith primary schools in 2019 despite their parents asking for non-faith schools as their first choice during the application process. This meant that 21% of those who put a non-faith secondary school as their first choice and 14% of those who put a non-faith primary school as their first choice were allocated a place in a faith school. About 21% of the 20,600 pupils were sent to faith schools which had not been included in any of the parental choices. The NSS press release is at:

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/09/20000-children-sent-to-faith-schools-against-parental-preferences>

### **NATRE survey into provision of religious education in English state secondary schools**

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) has published the findings of its eighth survey into the provision of religious education (RE) in English secondary schools, with particular reference to the impact of Government policy (including accountability measures and the English Baccalaureate) on RE and student opportunity to study the subject at GCSE level. The enquiry was conducted online, during the spring term of 2019, via a number of teacher networks, with responses gathered on the Survey Monkey platform. Replies were received from 663 teachers. The sample may not be representative of all schools. The report revealed that many schools were failing to meet their legal or contractual obligation to provide RE to all students, especially at Key Stage 4 (14 to 16-year-olds) when 59% in Year 10 and 64% in Year 11 received no RE. One-quarter of schools indicated that the amount of RE being

taught in 2018/19 had decreased since 2017/18, presumably in consequence of the 28% reduction in RE specialist staff. In three-quarters of schools, some RE was being taught by teachers who spent most of their timetable teaching another subject. NATRE's press release, with a link to the full report, can be found at:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20EBacc%20Survey%202019%20FINAL%20v3.pdf>

## ACADEMIC STUDY

### **Political realignment of British Jews: towards an explanation**

In 'Political Realignment of British Jews: Testing Competing Explanations', Andrew Barclay, Maria Sobolewska, and Robert Ford demonstrate, in line with other studies, that the historical association of British Jews with the Labour Party is a thing of the past, and that a large majority now support the Conservatives. However, by means of descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis, they also test out three possible explanations for this realignment. Two of them are that Jewish voters identify a lot more as middle class and do not believe that anti-Semitic prejudice holds them back in society; both these factors make Labour less appealing to Jews than is the case for other minority groups. The authors additionally find that current Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is disliked by Jews more than by non-Jews, irrespective of how they feel towards Labour generally. The article, which is principally based on a bespoke cross-sectional telephone survey of 512 Jewish voters by Survation in December 2017, is published in *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 61, October 2019 (in progress), and access options are outlined at:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379419300721>

Barclay and Sobolewska also had a two-page spread about the research in the *Jewish Chronicle* for 13 September 2019 (pp. 12-13), which is freely available at:

<https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/debunked-the-myths-about-jewish-disgust-with-labour-1.488574>

## NEW DATASET

### **UK Data Service, SN 8402: Scottish Referendum Study, 2014**

The Scottish Referendum Study was undertaken by YouGov on behalf of a consortium of the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Essex. Online fieldwork was carried out in three waves between 22 August 2014 and 15 October 2015, the first wave before the referendum vote, and the second and third after it. The questionnaire for wave 1 (for which there were 4,849 respondents aged 16 and over resident in Scotland) asked about the frequency of attending religious services (apart from rites of passage), while details of religious affiliation should have been available from YouGov's standard demographic profile for each panellist. Therefore, it will be possible to investigate the religious correlates of political opinions about the referendum, with a particular focus on the impact of the referendum campaign. A description of the dataset is available at:

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8402>

PEOPLE NEWS

**Church growth specialist Revd Dr David Goodhew returns to Anglican parish ministry**

In July 2019, David Goodhew, one of the country's leading experts in church growth, left Cranmer Hall, St John's College, Durham University, where he had taught since 2008, to become Vicar of St Barnabas Church, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough. At Cranmer Hall, he was Director of Ministerial Practice but also oversaw the establishment (in 2013) and operation of the Centre for Church Growth Research (CCGR). Academically, these years in Durham were very fruitful, his publications including a series of edited books: *Church Growth in Britain, 1980 to the Present* (2012); *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (2015); *Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion, 1980 to the Present* (2017); and *The Desecularisation of the City: London's Churches, 1980 to the Present* (2019). BRIN wishes David well in his new appointment. He will be retaining his links with CCGR, where Anthony-Paul Cooper has become co-director.