

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

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OPINION POLLS

Religious or spiritual wellbeing as a source of happiness: Ipsos Global Advisor poll

Just 10% of approximately 1,000 Britons aged 16–74 interviewed online as part of an Ipsos Global Advisor poll in July-August 2020 claimed that their religious or spiritual wellbeing did or could give them greatest happiness. This was 5% down on the comparable figure for May-June 2019, as well as being the lowest proportion of any of the 27 countries surveyed in 2020, placing Great Britain behind Germany, Hungary, Japan, and Sweden, all on 11%. The worldwide mean was 27%, with highs of 54% in Malaysia, 55% in South Africa, 58% in Brazil, and 70% in Saudi Arabia. A further 29% of Britons in 2020 said that religious or spiritual wellbeing did or could give them some happiness, while 61% reckoned that it did not or could not make them happy or that it did not apply. Topline findings only are available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/global-happiness-study-2020>

Religious attitudes to climate change: Savanta ComRes polling for Christian Aid

On behalf of Christian Aid, Savanta ComRes interviewed an online sample of 500 black Christians in Britain on 7–19 August 2020 in order to determine their attitudes to, and engagement with, the climate justice movement. The sample was recruited through a combination of the Savanta ComRes panel and Christian Aid's networks, and the resulting data were not weighted, although they were disaggregated by several religious variables (such as church diversity and the frequency of attending services, Bible reading, and prayer). A sub-set of the questions was also put by Savanta ComRes to an online sample of 2,138 adult Britons on 21–23 August 2020, including an analysis by religious affiliation. The proportion of people who are very or somewhat concerned about the impact of climate change is: entire population, 67%; all Christians, 68%; black Christians, 77%; non-Christians, 56%; and religious nones, 69%. Concern about racism and racial inequality was expressed by 58% of all adults, 57% of all Christians, 90% of black Christians, 53% of non-Christians, and 61% of religious nones. Detailed tables are available at:

<https://comresglobal.com/polls/christian-aid-black-christians-views-on-climate-justice/>

Christian Aid has published a 15-page report on the two surveys, highlighting the (self-declared) above average knowledge of climate change among black Christians and their greater propensity to make lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon footprint and engage in campaigns or protests. Written by Joe Ware and Chine McDonald, *Black Lives Matter Everywhere: A Study of Public Attitudes towards Race and Climate Change* can be downloaded at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/Black-Lives-Matter-Everywhere.pdf>

Attitudes to Sunday trading laws in England and Wales: latest YouGov tracker

YouGov's ninth poll of 2019–20 on public attitudes to the Sunday trading laws in England and Wales, conducted among 1,665 adults on 18 October 2020, continued to show that half the population wants shops to be allowed to open for as long as they want on Sundays, with just over one-quarter content with the current maximum of six hours for large shops, and one in six or seven against any shop opening at all on Sundays. The full series can be seen at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/legal/trackers/sunday-opening-hours>

Coronavirus chronicles: not so happy holidays—Ipsos MORI poll of public expectations

The Covid-19 pandemic is causing Britons to manage their expectations when it comes to marking traditional autumn and winter festivals this year, according to an online survey by Ipsos MORI of 1,098 adults aged 18–75 conducted on 23–24 September 2020. They were asked whether (a) they normally celebrated, and (b) anticipated doing so in 2020, four holidays: Halloween (All Hallows' Eve in the Christian calendar), Bonfire Night (which commemorates an unsuccessful 'Catholic' plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605), Christmas (denoting the birth of Christ), and the New Year. In each case, fewer than normal said that they would be celebrating in 2020. For Halloween, the drop was from 36% to 28%; for Bonfire Night, from 45% to 21%; for Christmas, from 95% to 85%; and for the New Year, from 78% to 66%. Religious practice at Christmas is also likely to be affected, with the proportion expecting to go to church or a religious service reduced from 13% to 6%, and to attend a carol concert or service down from 12% to 3%. For the New Year, 4% of respondents claimed they normally frequented a church or religious service, but just 2% thought they would be doing so at the turn of 2020–21. The likelihood of each holiday going ahead as normal in 2020 was rated as 20% for Halloween and Bonfire Night, 46% for Christmas, and 31% for the New Year. A slide pack of the topline data is available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/its-all-trick-no-treat-britons-celebrating-halloween-year-coronavirus>

Coronavirus chronicles: religious correlates of Christmas planning during a pandemic

Christian charity Samaritan's Purse UK commissioned Savanta ComRes to undertake an online survey of 2,123 UK adults on 9–12 October 2020 to gauge their views on the celebration of Christmas during a time of pandemic. Respondents were asked nine questions about gift-giving and other aspects of Christmas, the answers to each of which were disaggregated by religious affiliation, albeit only the unweighted sub-samples of 951 Christians and 825 religious nones were sufficiently large to be robust. Christians were slightly more likely than average, 46% against 43%, to say that they expected to spend Christmas without seeing their family this year, as a consequence of Covid-19, with 37% among nones; this pattern perhaps reflected an age effect. Full data tables are available at:

<https://comresglobal.com/polls/samaritans-purse-christmas-during-covid19-survey-2020/>

Conspiracy theories: public knowledge of, and support for, QAnon in Great Britain

QAnon is a conspiracy theory, originating with the US far-right in 2017, which alleges that US President Donald Trump is waging a secret war against a cabal of powerful satanic paedophiles

who are supposedly kidnapping, torturing, and even cannibalizing children on a vast scale. QAnon has subsequently grown exponentially on social media platforms (some of which are now taking action to remove content related to the theory) and in web forums. Anti-Semitic tropes have become an integral part of the theory, which—in less US partisan versions—is now spreading across the world. According to polling by Hanbury Strategy on 8–11 September 2020, QAnon has yet to penetrate the British mainstream, with only 19% of the 2,000 adults interviewed having heard of the theory, albeit 6% claimed to be QAnon supporters and broader conspiratorial notions forming part of the QAnon worldview were more widely endorsed. For instance, 25% agreed with the statement that ‘Secret satanic cults exist and include influential elites’, while 17% believed ‘Jews have disproportionate control of powerful institutions, and use that power for their own benefit and against the good of the general population’. This suggests that there is potential for QAnon to spread in Britain, especially among the young, who are more open to conspiracy theories generally. The poll was commissioned by Hope Not Hate and its findings are reported on pp. 27–31 of *QAnon in the UK: The Growth of a Movement* by David Lawrence and Gregory Davis, published by the Hope Not Hate Charitable Trust at:

<https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/qanon-in-the-uk/>

The Religion Media Centre website also has a useful blog on QAnon, with links to other resources, at:

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/bizarre-qanon-conspiracy-theories-take-hold-in-the-uk/>

Conspiracy theories: have humans made contact with aliens?

On behalf of YouGov@Cambridge and *The Guardian*, YouGov has undertaken online polling into popular belief in conspiracy theories in twenty-one countries between 30 July and 24 August 2020. Ten of the theories related to Covid-19, while eight were more general, including the notion that ‘humans have made contact with aliens and this fact has been deliberately hidden from the public’. In Britain, where 1,383 adults were interviewed, 20% considered this proposition to be definitely or probably true (representing a sizeable increase on the 8% recorded in 2018 and 13% in 2019), with 62% saying it was definitely or probably false and 18% undecided. Multinational topline data are available at:

<https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/msvke1lg9d/Globalism2020%20Guardian%20Conspiracy%20Theories.pdf>

Perceptions of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as problems in the UK

For the fifth consecutive month, the Savanta ComRes political tracker has asked its respondents whether they regarded anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as problems in the country. Online fieldwork was undertaken on 16–18 October 2020 among 2,274 UK adults, 48% of whom said that anti-Semitism was a problem (seven points less than the month before) and 52% Islamophobia (also down by seven points), with, respectively, 14% and 20% thinking they were big problems. Data tables are available at:

<https://comresglobal.com/polls/savanta-comres-political-tracker-october-2020/>

Labour Party and anti-Semitism: Jeremy Corbyn's suspension as a party member

On the morning of 29 October 2020, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published the report of its investigation into allegations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, especially during the period of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership (2015–20). The EHRC ruled that the party had breached the Equality Act 2010 in respect of anti-Semitism. Corbyn's public reaction to the report was judged by the party's new leadership to be less than a glowing endorsement of its findings and recommendations, and, by lunchtime that same day, Corbyn had been suspended as a party member. YouGov conducted two online polls in the wake of this suspension.

The first poll was undertaken during the afternoon of 29 October, when 3,890 Britons were asked whether they thought Corbyn's suspension had been the right or wrong decision. A clear majority (58%) considered that it had been the correct thing to do, even including a plurality (41%) of Labour voters; the figure was highest among the over-65s (75%) and Conservatives (80%). Just 13% dubbed it the wrong decision, peaking at one-quarter of under-25s and Labour supporters, while 29% were undecided. Full data are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/10/29/most-britons-think-labour-was-right-suspend-jeremy>

The second survey was conducted on 29–30 October 2020 among a sample of 1,891 adults. The same question was asked about the correctness of the Labour Party's action in suspending Corbyn from membership, with similar results to the first poll; 56% judged it the right decision, 13% the wrong one, and 31% were unsure. Three-quarters (76%) of respondents assessed that Corbyn had badly handled the issue of alleged anti-Semitism in the party (compared with 22% who thought the same about Sir Keir Starmer, his successor as leader, 39% rating the latter as having dealt with it well), and 32% considered that Corbyn was personally anti-Semitic. Three people in ten agreed that the Labour Party was institutionally anti-Semitic (including 14% of Labour voters at the 2019 general election), four points more than the 26% who said the Conservative Party was institutionally Islamophobic (38% denying this claim). Full data tables are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/10/30/labours-favourability-drops-although-starmer-seen->

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Economic and social value of church buildings: *The House of Good* report

The UK's 40,300 churches generate at least £12.4 billion in economic and social value each year, according to research undertaken by State of Life on behalf of the National Churches Trust (NCT). This total, calculated on the basis of NCT surveys in 2010 and 2020 and some third party data, and in accordance with the approach adopted in HM Treasury's *The Green Book*, sub-divides between £2.4 billion market value and replacement cost and £10 billion non-market (social and wellbeing) value. The two main elements in the latter figure are £8.3 billion of wellbeing value to individuals benefiting from community good and £1.4 billion wellbeing value of weekly church attendance. Full details of the complex methodology and estimates can

be found in the 68-page *The House of Good: The Economic and Social Value of Church Buildings to the UK—Key Findings and Technical Report*, which is available at:

<https://www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GADS1468-%E2%80%93NCT-full-Exec-Summary-and-Technical-Report-V14-WEB.pdf>

Coronavirus chronicles: YourNeighbour’s *The Church in Lockdown* report

YourNeighbour.org, a network of 1,165 churches and 40 denominational and Christian charity partners in the UK created within six weeks of the start of lockdown, has published a report, edited by Dom Llewellyn and Lindsey Donoghue, on *The Church in Lockdown: Celebrating Church Action and the Work of Your Neighbour*, showcasing the organization’s achievements, activities, and future plans. Its three main aims are to strengthen communities, equip churches, and connect to government. According to a survey of churches, the average UK church has helped over 100 beneficiaries during the pandemic, with 90% supporting the vulnerable, 58% providing emergency food, 57% offering befriending to the elderly or isolated, and almost half starting a new community engagement initiative. The report also estimates that UK churches have been supplying more than five million meals a month to those in need. It is available at:

<https://yourneighbour.org/the-church-in-lockdown>

Coronavirus chronicles: more findings from ‘Coronavirus, Church, and You’ survey

‘The Coronavirus, Church, and You’ study, devised by Andrew Village and Leslie Francis, has featured in *Counting Religion in Britain* on several occasions during recent months. The main survey, chiefly promoted through the *Church Times*, was conducted online among a self-selecting sample of UK churchgoers between early May and mid-July 2020 (when places of worship were closed by government decree). There were also separate investigations of Roman Catholics in the UK (for which see the September 2020 edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*) and of churchgoers on the whole island of Ireland. The preliminary results from the main survey were published on 26 June, and that report is now being followed by a series of more focused articles analysing the final total of responses, from 6,736 clergy and laity, 79% of them from the Church of England.

The first article, ‘Coping with the Crisis’, examines how people in the Church of England had been impacted psychologically and emotionally by being in lockdown as a consequence of the pandemic. Stress and psychological wellbeing were unevenly distributed, with younger individuals and working clergy feeling most stressed, and Anglo-Catholics and inner-city dwellers recording more ‘negative affect’ (lack of excitement, unhappiness, boredom, and frustration). Most Church of England informants judged they had coped well or very well with the lockdown, those who had coped less well tending to be the more stressed, but being well supported, especially at home, seemed to mitigate some of the pressures and increased the sense of coping. The full text of the article can be found in the reports section of the project’s website at:

<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/coronavirus-church-and-you/>

A shortened version of this article was also published as ‘The Emotional Toll of Covid-19’ in the *Church Times* for 16 October 2020 (p. 11) at:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/16-october/comment/opinion/the-emotional-toll-of-covid-19>

Church of England Statistics for Mission, 2019 and Digital Report, 2020

The Church of England has press released the annual reports of its Statistics for Mission (for 2019, from Research and Statistics, based on an 89% response from parishes) and of its digital presence (for 2020, from the Renewal and Reform programme), leading on the latter, which presents the more positive news story. It notes that more than 17,000 online services and events are being provided by parishes following the introduction of lockdown and restrictions on public worship earlier this year, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, there have been more than three million views of the Church's national online weekly services, broadcast on Sundays and shared on Facebook and YouTube, one-fifth of their 'congregation' said to be infrequent churchgoers or non-attenders. Official Church apps have been used more than seven million times so far this year (representing an annual increase of 40%), and its social media posts have been seen 86 million times, almost double (92% more than) the 2019 figure. Over four thousand church leaders have been on a digital training webinar in 2020.

The press release's coverage of the Statistics for Mission headlines the Church's involvement in social action and community outreach, running or supporting 35,000 projects before the pandemic, two thousand more than in 2017; these included 8,000 food banks, which were hosted by nearly three-fifths of places of worship. Indicators of religious practice were less encouraging, continuing a pattern of gradual decline, with average weekly attendance and usual Sunday attendance both down by 2% over 2019, and regular monthly or more churchgoing down by 1%. As in previous years, by far the largest congregations were recorded at Christmas (2,330,000) and during Advent (5,420,000), collectively nearing eight million. Proportionate to total population, the reach of the Church of England was 1.2% on a usual Sunday, 1.5% in an average week, 1.9% in an average month, 2.0% at Easter, and 4.1% at Christmas. Demand for occasional offices (aka rites of passage) has decreased again, with the Church of England now performing infant baptisms for just 13% of live births and funerals for 23% of deaths. The press release, with embedded links to the full texts of the two reports, can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/more-17000-online-services-and-events-provided-church-england-parishes>

According to the October 2020 edition of *Statistically Speaking*, the online newsletter of the Research and Statistics team, changes have been made to the form to be used to generate the Statistics for Mission for January-December 2020, reflecting the impact of Covid-19 on local church life. Some questions have been deleted that do not apply under current circumstances, while new ones have been added, especially to measure provision of, and engagement with, 'church at home' services.

Church of England Living Ministry research: summative report—*How Clergy Thrive*

Living Ministry is a longitudinal research project investigating the wellbeing and flourishing of Church of England clergy ordained deacon in 2006, 2011, and 2015 and ordinands commencing ministerial training in 2016 (for additional information, see the entry in the BRIN source database, ID 3938). A summative report has now been published on wave 1 (2017–18) of the study: Liz Graveling, *How Clergy Thrive: Insights from Living Ministry* (London: Church House Publishing, 2020, 67 pp., ISBN: 978-1-78140-213-9, £2.99, paperback). Drawing together the reflections, through online surveys, interviews, and focus groups, of nearly 800 clergy and ordinands on five areas of their lives (spiritual and vocational wellbeing; physical and mental wellbeing; relationships; financial and material wellbeing; and

participation in the life of the Church), the booklet is designed as a tool both for ministers themselves and for those responsible for supporting the wellbeing of ministers. From the quantitative and qualitative data, six principles are identified that have consistently contributed to wellbeing across varying people, roles, and circumstances (pp. 54–7). A digital copy of the report can be downloaded from:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry/ministry-development/living-ministry/living-ministry-resources#na>

Coronavirus chronicles: survey of Baptist Union churches during lockdown

The (online only) *Baptist Times* for 25 September 2020 included a feature by Mike Lowe and Carmel Murphy about an email survey of Baptist Union churches conducted during June. The article incorporates a link to a fuller report. Recipients of the survey comprised a pre-existing panel maintained by the Baptist Union’s Faith and Society team, and the majority of the 398 respondents were local ministers and church secretaries or treasurers. The questions explored communications and contacts of churches during lockdown at three levels: local, within the congregation and with the wider community; regional, with other churches and the regional Baptist Association; and national, with specialist teams in the Baptist Union. At local level, 87% of churches said that they had hosted something online during lockdown, mostly live services and prayer meetings, but only 29% had kept parts of their premises open, primarily for their food bank or for food distribution. The article can be accessed at:

https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/588862/A_really_helpful.aspx

Coronavirus chronicles: round-up of the Jewish experience of Covid-19

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) has published the second and third in its reports on the impact of Covid-19 on the UK’s Jewish community, based on an online survey of a self-selecting sample of 6,984 Jews conducted on 9–31 July 2020. The second paper is *Hidden Effects: The Mental Health of the UK’s Jewish Population during the Covid-19 Pandemic*, by David Graham, Carli Lessof, and Jonathan Boyd. Using scales derived from eight subjective indicators of mental wellbeing, the authors demonstrate that 65% of Jews claimed a deterioration, at least to some extent, in their mental wellbeing during the first four months of the coronavirus crisis, with almost half feeling more frustrated and/or more anxious than before it began. Among Jewish sub-groups, young people, women, and persons who had lost their jobs or been furloughed were disproportionately affected. The document is available at:

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=17593>

The third of JPR’s Covid-19 titles is *Acute Disadvantage: Where are the Needs Greatest?* by Jonathan Boyd, Carli Lessof, and David Graham. Asked how the pandemic had affected the financial position of their households, 48% reported no change, 22% that they were better off, and 30% that they were worse off (7% much worse and 23% a little worse off). Jewish households that were already economically disadvantaged before Covid-19 have been the hardest hit by its detrimental effects. The proportion of households categorized as ‘acutely disadvantaged’ at the time of interview was 7% (measured by a basket of four indicators—use of food banks, reduced meal sizes, struggling to pay bills, and borrowing money or using credit). The strictly Orthodox, householders in their forties, and single parent households were most likely to be in this acutely disadvantaged group. An additional 15.5% of households were

assessed as being vulnerable to future acute disadvantage, in that they were already using savings to cover living costs or were unable to save as usual. The report is available at:

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=17633>

Meanwhile, the Board of Deputies of British Jews has continued to monitor the number of UK Jews who have died from Covid-19 and who subsequently received a Jewish burial. The most recent death toll figures are: 513 on 25 September, 520 on 2 October, 526 on 16 October, and 534 on 23 October.

European Jewish population trends and estimates

Another new publication from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, on behalf of the European Jewish Demography Unit, is Sergio DellaPergola and Daniel Staetsky, *Jews in Europe at the Turn of the Millennium: Population Trends and Estimates*. The report's 84 pages offer a comprehensive overview, retrospective and current, of the size of the European Jewish population, and include data for every country in the continent, as well as consideration of methodological issues (such as the definition of Jewishness and the mechanisms of demographic change in Jewry). In the case of the UK, the authors estimated (Table A1 on pp. 68–70) the core Jewish population as of 1 January 2020 at 292,000, which rose to 330,000 when persons who self-declared as partly Jewish or who had a Jewish parent were included. Factoring in all other non-Jewish household members raised the total to 370,000, while application of the principles in the Law of Return (Israel's distinctive legal framework for the acceptance and absorption of new immigrants) took it to 410,000. The document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=17623>

Perceived threat to secular education: new National Secular Society research report

In a new 20-page report, *Power Grab: Academisation and the Threat to Secular Education*, the National Secular Society 'highlights how academisation and the development of mixed multi-academy trusts has enabled religious groups to increase their influence over all schools, including gaining influence in those with no religious character. With little public attention or debate, large swathes of the education system have come under religious governance, at a time when secular oversight has diminished.' More specifically, it is shown that 48% of all non-faith academies in multi-academy trusts are in trusts with religious governance; 6% of former community schools which are now academies in multi-academy trusts have acquired an official faith designation or ethos; and 71% of former voluntary controlled schools now in multi-academy trusts are in trusts where a majority of trustees are appointed on religious grounds. The full findings, which relate to the situation in England as at 7 April 2020, are presented (with a note of caution on data ambiguities) on pp. 14–15 of the report, which is available at:

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/power-grab-academisation-and-the-threat-to-secular-education.pdf>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Home Office annual report on hate crime in England and Wales, 2019/20

The Home Office's bulletin on *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019/20* contains statistics of hate crime offences from two sources, (a) as recorded by the police in England and Wales, excluding Greater Manchester (GMP, where implementation of a new IT system meant that no data were available for 2019/20), and (b) as estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), a face-to-face victimization study. Omitting GMP from the comparisons, religious hate crimes recorded by the police fell by 5% between 2018/19 and 2019/20, to 6,822 offences, which was the first decrease since 2012/13. Information on the targeted religion was provided in 91% of offences recorded by the police, 50% being directed against Muslims, 19% against Jews, 9% against Christians, and 12% against other faiths. As with all hate crimes, estimated incidents of religious hate crimes (both personal and household) derived from the CSEW for 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20 were higher than the police figures, amounting to 42,000, much the same as during the two previous triennia. The bulletin and data tables are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Revisiting secularization in modern Britain: Steve Bruce's latest book

In *British Gods: Religion in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, xv + 282 pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-885411-1, £25, hardback), Steve Bruce vigorously restates the case for the secularization of modern Britain and, in a final chapter, explains why (in his opinion) this process is unlikely to be reversed. The argument draws less heavily on the classical theory of secularization (tracing its origins to modernization) than some of Bruce's earlier work. Rather, it highlights a selection of the empirical evidence lying behind his claim that 'Religion in the UK has been steadily declining in power, popularity, and plausibility for 150 years.' This evidence is presented in a series of ten chapters, which combine reports of local case studies with explorations of national-level themes. In order of their introduction, the latter comprise: the demise of local religious paternalism; the relationship between religiosity, internal community cohesion, and external isolation; the social roles and status of the clergy; Christian ecumenism and divisions over gender equality and gay rights; the charismatic movement (New Churches); migrant Christians; Muslims and Islamophobia; folk religion and superstition; Spiritualism and contemporary spirituality (New Age); and religion and politics. Although some material may be familiar from the author's other publications, it is mostly synthesized, repackaged, and updated in this book. However, there are also several new topics discussed. BRIN readers will find there are statistics cited throughout the volume, especially taken from sample surveys or from Bruce's innovative restudies of localities originally investigated by other scholars in the post-war years. The monograph, a companion to the same author's award-winning *Scottish Gods* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), is bound to stimulate fresh debate about the contested subject of secularization. Its webpage can be found at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/british-gods-9780198854111?cc=gb&lang=en&>

Islam and Muslims on British university campuses

Further to the trailer in the July 2020 edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*, the definitive output from the SOAS-hosted and AHRC/ESRC-funded research project in 2015–18 into Islam on campus has now been published: Alison Scott-Baumann, Mathew Guest, Shuruq Naguib, Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, and Aisha Phoenix, *Islam on Campus: Contested Identities and the Cultures of Higher Education in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 288 pp., ISBN: 978–0–19–884678–9, £75, hardback). Drawing on a large-scale survey of students and focus groups of staff and students, ‘the book explores university life and the ways in which ideas about Islam and Muslim identities are produced, experienced, perceived, appropriated, and objectified. The volume considers the role universities and Muslim higher education institutions play in the production, reinforcement, and contestation of emerging narratives about religious difference. This is a culturally nuanced treatment of universities as sites of knowledge production, and contexts for the negotiation of perspectives on culture and religion among an emerging generation.’ The book’s webpage is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/islam-on-campus-9780198846789?lang=en&cc=at>

Residential patterns of Strictly Orthodox Jewish communities in Britain

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the residential dynamics of four Strictly Orthodox (haredi) communities in Britain are investigated by Shlomit Flint Ashery in *Spatial Behavior in Haredi Jewish Communities in Great Britain* (Cham: Springer, 2020, xiii + 154 pp., ISBN: 978–3–030–25857–3, £74.99, softcover). They are the Litvish communities of Golders Green and Gateshead and the Hassidic communities of Stamford Hill and Canvey Island. The author reveals and analyses powerful mechanisms of residential segregation acting at the apartment-, building-, and near-neighbourhood levels. The book’s webpage is at:

<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030258573>

Coronavirus chronicles: UCL study of Covid-19’s effects on religious worship

Doctors and engineers at University College London (UCL) are collaborating on a research study, led by Laurence Lovat of the Research Department for Targeted Intervention at the Medical School, to investigate how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the practice of religious worship in the UK. They also want to understand how much aerosol (droplets) is generated when speaking, chanting, or singing during worship, and how much that changes when a person wears a face mask. Volunteers are being sought to complete an online questionnaire concerning the pandemic’s effects on their spirituality and involvement in communal worship, with Londoners also being invited to visit UCL to participate in experiments involving them speaking and singing in front of a camera, with and without wearing a face mask. More information about the research, which is entitled CONFESS (The COvid aNd FacE maSkS study), can be found at:

<https://www.confess-study.co.uk/>