

# Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 88 – January 2023

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## OPINION POLLS

### **After the census results: Christianity in Britain according to Opinium Research**

Immediately after the first results of the 2021 religious census of England and Wales were published on 29 November, Opinium Research ran a module on Christianity in its regular polling for *The Observer*, 2,000 adult Britons being interviewed online between 30 November and 2 December 2022. Of these, 43% professed to be Christian, slightly below the census figure of 46% (which related only to England and Wales but extended to the whole population thereof, including children). The nones in Opinium's survey numbered 46%, one-fifth of whom had formerly been Christian. Weekly or monthly churchgoers amounted to just 8%. When the entire sample was asked about the relative importance of Christianity in particular contexts, a majority (56%) conceded that it was important to an understanding of UK history. However, majorities said that Christianity was *not* important to them personally (64%), to how they identified or described themselves (68%), to their local community (58%), and to life in the UK generally (56%). Only a third (35%) could correctly recall the proportion of Christians in the 2021 census as falling in the 40–49% range, one-quarter guessing a higher and one-quarter a lower amount. Most (52%) did not know whether the decline in professed Christians between the 2011 and 2021 censuses was a 'good' or a 'bad' thing, with 22% regretting and 15% welcoming the decrease. Full data tables are available at:

- <https://www.opinium.com/polling-tables-archive/>

### **YouGov's aspects of Christmas poll—was there still room for Jesus Christ?**

The nation's apparent retreat from Christianity found confirmation in an online poll by YouGov on 8–9 December 2022, in which 1,436 Britons who currently celebrated Christmas were asked about the relative importance which they attached to ten aspects of the festival. Most prized were: spending time with family (95%), giving presents (81%), having time off work (76%), socializing with friends or colleagues (75%), and having a Christmas tree and putting up decorations at home (73%). Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ was ranked ninth (viewed as important by only 35%), just ahead of watching or listening to the King's speech (28%). Indeed, celebrating Christ's birth was actually considered to be *unimportant* by the majority (61%) of respondents, including 73% of under-50s. Full data are available via the blog at:

- <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2022/12/22/which-aspects-christmas-are-most-important-britons>

### **YouGov poll on self-reported observance of childhood Christmas traditions**

Another YouGov poll, conducted online on 1–2 December 2022 among 1,404 adult Britons who currently celebrated Christmas, investigated the observance of nine childhood Christmas traditions, both as a child and later as an adult. Three of the nine had a specifically religious connection: opening an advent calendar, singing carols at a carol service, and singing carols

door-to-door. Regrettably, errors have crept into the wording of the four response options for each of the traditions, which might explain the unexpectedly high numbers of ‘don’t knows’, and this has resulted in confusing presentations of the data, both in the tables and an accompanying article. However, the proportions claiming that they did *not* observe a tradition as a child and do *not* do so now appears to be: 26% for opening an advent calendar, 46% for singing carols at a carol service, and 72% for singing carols door-to-door. Any BRIN reader interested in pursuing this survey should perhaps start with the article, which also includes a link to the tables, at:

- <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2022/12/20/christmas-child-can-be-magical-time-what-kind-chil>

### **Church buildings: Savanta ComRes poll for the National Churches Trust**

The final question in a lengthy online poll for the National Churches Trust, conducted by Savanta ComRes on 9–12 December 2022 among 2,061 UK adults, also shed light on the nation’s Christmas observance. Respondents were asked whether they would be visiting a church, chapel, or meeting house (i.e. a Christian place of worship) over the Christmas period, to which 58% replied in the negative. The characteristically aspirational figure of 42% who indicated they would be visiting over Christmas comprised: 19% for a religious service, 21% for a carol concert, 12% as a tourist, and 1% for another reason (these categories overlapped to an extent). During the course of the previous year, 54% claimed to have visited a church (albeit, for the majority, it was for a non-religious purpose). The remaining 47 tables in this dataset concerned attitudes to the various ‘functions’ of church buildings and potential sources of funding for their repair and maintenance. The statistics demonstrated a fair degree of goodwill towards ecclesiastical buildings, the social capital released through them, and the challenges and expense of their upkeep. Nevertheless, when requested to rank the benefits that churches, chapels, and meeting houses brought to the UK, the provision of space for community activities/services exceeded their value as places of worship. A sceptical 34% agreed that keeping them open only benefited churchgoers. The full tables, with breaks by demographics (including religious affiliation), can be found at:

- <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/published-polls/churches-chapels-and-meeting-houses-poll-national-churches-trust-28-january-2023/>

### **Religious agencies and cost of living crisis: Savanta ComRes poll for Church of England**

Following on from the previous item, and fielded on the same survey, an estimated 2.6 million UK adults sought help from churches or other religious organizations during 2022, as a result of the cost of living crisis, according to a Savanta ComRes poll conducted online for the Church of England between 9 and 12 December 2022. The 2,061 respondents were shown a list of six sources of assistance and asked from which they had sought help through the cost of living crisis. Three-fifths (61%) had not sought help from any source, 24% naming family, 14% friends, 8% a local authority, 7% a charity, and—the least favoured option—5% a church or other religious organization (mostly approached for free or low-cost food). Full data tables, including breaks by religious affiliation, are available at:

- <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/published-polls/cost-of-living-poll-church-of-england-22-december-2022/>

### **Christian mission: Savanta ComRes poll for Operation Mobilisation**

On behalf of Operation Mobilisation, Savanta ComRes conducted an online poll of 2,351 UK adults on 16–18 September 2022 about attitudes to Christian mission. It comprised five questions: frequency of church attendance; the primary purpose of Christian mission work; the importance of Christians sharing their faith; confidence in being able to explain the message of Christianity; and familiarity with the Great Commission. Unsurprisingly, the survey topic meant little to most respondents, with, for instance, three-quarters wholly unfamiliar with the Great Commission. Data tables for this study, with breaks by religion and for active Christians (not defined), are at:

- <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/published-polls/christianity-poll-operation-mobilisation-12-december/>

### **Religion and worldviews: Savanta ComRes poll for Culham St Gabriel's Trust**

During the past five years, since the report of the independent Commission on Religious Education, a head of steam has been building for transitioning the teaching of religious education (which has a diminishing status) to a religion and worldviews approach. According to an online poll by Savanta ComRes for the Culham St Gabriel's Trust, undertaken among 2,000 parents of school-aged children and adolescents in August 2022, parental opinion is broadly in favour of moving towards a school curriculum incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews. Moreover, at least so respondents claimed, religious and philosophical themes are already a talking-point at home between parents and their children. Regrettably, the detailed data tables for this survey have yet to be released by either the pollster or Culham St Gabriel's Trust. It is to be hoped that they will be in the near future, in the interests of full transparency. In the meantime, a press release can be found on the Trust's website at:

- <https://www.cstg.org.uk/activities/campaigns/parent-survey>

### **Same-sex marriage and the Church of England: YouGov poll of public attitudes**

The Church of England's House of Bishops has recently revisited its policy on same-sex marriages, which cannot be conducted by the Church's clergy or in its places of worship. The prohibition on the conduct of same-sex marriage in the Church of England remains, but clergy will now be permitted to bless same-sex unions, following a civil ceremony either for marriage or civil partnership. The day after this news had broken, on 19 January 2023, YouGov polled an online cross-section of British adults to determine whether they thought the Church of England should or should not conduct same-sex marriages. A majority of the public (56%) believed it should, with 24% opposed and 20% undecided. Labour voters constituted the most supportive demographic (72%), followed by Liberal Democrats and Remain voters in the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU (both groups on 71%), and women and 25–49-year-olds (both on 63%). The majority in favour dissolved into a plurality among men (49%), Conservatives (44%), and over–65s (41%). Full data are available at:

- <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/survey-results/daily/2023/01/19/24c7d/1>

### **Attitudes to Jews and Muslims: Savanta ComRes poll for Voice4Change**

On behalf of Voice4Change, Savanta ComRes undertook online polling about attitudes to race in 2022. Wave 2 of this research, fielded between 14 June and 14 July, included questions about Jews, Muslims, and other racial minorities, 7,561 adults aged 18 and over being interviewed in England and 4,313 in Scotland. Topics included agreement/disagreement that attempts to give equal opportunities to Jews and Muslims had gone too far, Jews are as fully British as any other

person, Jews get rich at the expense of others, Islam is compatible with British values, Islam is a negative force in Britain, and racism negatively impacts Jews and Muslims. Full data tables, with breaks by demographics and religious affiliation, are available at:

- <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/published-polls/reframing-race-voice4change-15-december-2022/>

### **Science and religion: more findings from the Theos/Faraday Institute research project**

In December 2022, Theos published a further briefing paper from their research project into science and religion with the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, for which 5,153 UK adults were interviewed online by YouGov between 5 May and 13 June 2021: Hannah Waite and Nick Spencer, *Science and Religion: Does Gender Matter?* The answer is given in the affirmative: ‘There is a noticeable gender difference between how men and women respond to questions regarding science, religion, and science and religion. Men are consistently more likely than women to view science and religion as incompatible.’ Three main reasons are advanced for these gender differences in attitudes. The briefing paper is available at:

- <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2022/12/14/science-and-religion-does-gender-matter>

### **Changing beliefs in God across the generations: Ipsos MORI survey**

On 21–22 September 2022, as part of a survey designed to build a profile of the members of Gen Z and determine what influences them, Ipsos MORI polled an online sample of 2,246 British adults aged 16–75. In one section of the interview, respondents were asked to say when they had last changed their minds about believing in a God (as opposed to saying whether they currently believed in God or not). Among Baby Boomers (61%), Gen X (55%), and Millennials (51%), majorities replied that they had never changed their minds about believing in a God, and, in the first two of these cohorts, only small proportions (2% and 4%) had changed their minds in the past year. However, with Gen Z, as many as 22% had changed their minds about believing in a God during the past year (probably in the net direction of disbelief), with 44% reporting they had never changed their minds. The findings are noted on pp. 59–60 of a summary report on the wider study, with the gloss that ‘Generation Z’s views are still in flux to a greater extent than those of older generations’. See the blog and link at:

- <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/generation-z-do-they-exist-and-what-influences-them>

### **YouGov poll on self-reported frequency of reading horoscopes**

Interviewed online by YouGov on 30 December 2022, a majority (56%) of 3,122 British adults self-reported that they never read their horoscope. This majority held good across all demographic groups except for women and the under-25s, among whom the proportions never reading their horoscope dropped to, respectively, 43% and 42%. Overall, 8% of respondents claimed to read their horoscope very or somewhat often, but the figure rose to 12% for females, with a further 44% of women acknowledging they read their horoscope but not very often (which was double the number of men doing so). One in eight (12%) of under-25s also read their horoscope very or somewhat often, with 41% doing so but not very often. Full data are available at:

- <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/survey-results/daily/2022/12/30/0b4f1/2>

### **YouGov poll on prevalence of superstitious beliefs**

YouGov has recently reported on the prevalence of old and new superstitious beliefs in Britain, based on an online poll of 2,212 adults aged 18 and over on 24–25 November 2022. One-third of Britons still considered themselves to be very (4%) or somewhat (30%) superstitious. As in former days, women (43%) and the under-25s (40%) were the most superstitious of all the demographic groups. Individual superstitious beliefs sometimes commanded the support of one-quarter or more of the population. For example, omens of bad luck were considered to include: opening an umbrella indoors (26%), walking under a ladder (29%), and broken mirrors (30%). Among things believed to bring good luck were: crossing your fingers (25%), a bride wearing ‘something borrowed, something blue, something old, and something new’ (25%), seeing a shooting star (28%), making a wish when blowing out birthday candles (28%), finding a penny (29%), four-leaf clovers (32%), and touching wood (33%). A surprising 14% of respondents even thought that getting p\*\*ed on by a bird brought good luck—a conspiracy theory if ever there was one! Full data tables are available at:

- <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2023/01/24/which-superstitions-are-britons-most-likely-believ>

## FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

### **Christmas church services in 2022: Bible Society survey for Ecclesiastical**

More in-person Christmas worship and events and fewer online services were planned in 2022 than took place in 2021, according to a survey of 583 churches conducted by the Bible Society on behalf of Ecclesiastical insurance between 31 October and 14 November 2022. No media release was ever posted to Ecclesiastical’s website, but there was a brief report of the study in the *Church Times*, 16 December 2022, p. 6, also available online at:

- <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/16-december/news/uk/fewer-online-christmas-services-as-in-person-worship-returns-survey-finds>

### **Church of England’s state of readiness to welcome the public at Christmas**

The day before Christmas Eve, the Church of England posted an upbeat assessment of its prospects for welcoming people to Christmas services and events at its places of worship in 2022, fully open for the first time in three years, and based on a range of digital metrics. See the press release at:

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/number-christmas-services-surges-parishes-welcome-public>

### **Church of England Statistics for Mission, 2021**

The Church of England Data Services team has published *Statistics for Mission, 2021*, by Ken Eames, hard on the heels of the first release of the religion data from the official census of population for England and Wales, whose significantly reduced showing for professed Christians has reawakened calls for the Church’s disestablishment. Its own latest annual statistics will do little to relieve the Church’s woes, notwithstanding the explanation offered by Eames that 2021 was another ‘anomalous’ year on account of the coronavirus pandemic, even if the impact on worshipping life was less severe than in 2020. Most performance indicators remained well down on pre-Covid-19 levels. The trend was notably manifest in the Church’s

all age average weekly in-person attendance (Sunday and mid-week), which was 854,000 in 2019, 345,000 in 2020, and 605,000 in 2021. Church at Home services, mostly delivered online, extended the Church's reach, albeit the proportion of churches offering them fell from 71% in October 2020 to 58% in October 2021. Another key metric, worshipping community (designed to capture monthly or more attenders), which now includes regular Church at Home worshippers, was also down: 1,113,000 in 2019, 1,031,000 in 2020, and 966,000 in 2021. Nevertheless, Eames anticipates 'further bouncing back' in 2022. As ever, the 29-page report contains a wealth of data, expertly presented; it is available at:

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/system/files/private%3A//2022-12//2021StatisticsForMission.pdf>

### **Church of England Carbon Emissions Report, 2021**

The Church of England has published its *Carbon Emissions Report, 2021: Tracking Progress Using the Energy Toolkit*, by Tom Wood, and extending to 27 pages. Based on data from two-fifths of the Church's buildings, the Church's net carbon footprint in 2021 was estimated at 410,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. This represented a slight reduction on the 2020 figure, but more so in church buildings (including cathedrals) than in church schools. The report is available at:

- [https://churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Energy%20Toolkit%20Report%202021\\_final.pdf](https://churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Energy%20Toolkit%20Report%202021_final.pdf)

### **United Reformed Church statistics in its 2023 Yearbook**

BRIN is once more deeply indebted to Martin Camroux for providing a detailed briefing on United Reformed Church (URC) statistics, largely based on his analysis of data in the URC *Yearbook* for 2023. As ever, the picture is mostly one of decline across a range of performance indicators. The number of churches is now 1,242, 3.3% fewer than for 2022 and 8.3% less than immediately before the Covid-19 pandemic. Stipendiary ministers amount to 316, equivalent to just 0.25 per church, with recruitment increasingly problematical and even suspended (because of revenue constraints) in several URC regional synods. Church membership in 2023 is 36,986, 7.6% down on 2022 and 17.4% below the pre-pandemic figure. Average congregations amount to 35,844, a reduction of 13.8% over 2022 and of 28.4% over 2020. Factoring in digital congregations (presently 14,391) provides some offset, but even these have decreased by 28.9% between 2022 and 2023. Camroux notes that, on current trends, it has been suggested the URC, the Methodist Church, and the Church of Scotland are on track to be extinct by about 2038—which is just fifteen years away!

### **Catholic Education Service's annual census of Catholic schools and colleges**

The Catholic Education Service (CES) has released the 'digests', extending to (respectively) 54 and 29 pages, of the 2022 census data for Catholic schools (state-funded and independent) and colleges in England and Wales. A wide range of statistics is presented about schools and colleges, their pupils, and their staff, with the headlines (in accompanying press releases) emphasizing the above average diversity of Catholic schools and colleges relative to other institutions. Not all pupils at state-funded Catholic schools are themselves Catholic; in England, the proportion is 60%. The CES claims to be the largest single provider of secondary school education in the country and the second largest provider (after the Church of England) of primary school education. The digests are available at:

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

### **British Sikh Report, 2022**

After a gap of one year, arising from the coronavirus pandemic, publication of the annual *British Sikh Report* resumed in 2022. As usual, the sample was a self-selecting one, recruited by snowballing techniques and social media, and thus may not be fully representative of the Sikh community in the UK. As well as standard questions on demographics, identity, and observances, the particular focus in 2022 was the impact on the Sikh community of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. The primarily online fieldwork for the survey was completed in early 2022, before the worst excesses of the latter crisis had hit the nation, although an introductory essay by Jagbir Jhutti-Johal provides an update to September 2022, likening it to a ‘tsunami’. The report is available at:

- <https://britishsikhreport.org/british-sikh-report-2022/>

Additionally, Jagdev Singh Virdee, editor of *British Sikh Report*, has produced a five-page digest of *Sikhs in England and Wales: Census of Population, 2021, England and Wales*. He is of the opinion that most of those who wrote in Sikh under the ethnicity question are likely to have ticked Sikh under the religion question, too. This census summary is available at:

- <https://britishsikhreport.org/sikhs-in-census-2021-summary-special/>

### **Hindus and Christians in the workforce: Pearn Kandola reports**

Pearn Kandola’s *Religion at Work: Experiences of Hindu Employees*, published in October 2022, reported on a survey of US and UK Hindus, based on qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative study, undertaken in 2021, encompassed 1,061 Hindus, including 527 in the UK, who completed a questionnaire created on Survey Monkey and distributed via Prolific and various faith groups. The two topics covered were celebrating religious festivals and wearing religious dress in relation to the workplace. The sample was self-selecting and thus potentially unrepresentative. Findings of the UK quantitative survey are presented on pp. 7–8, 11–15, and 29–32. The report is available at:

- <https://pearnkandola.com/app/uploads/2022/11/Hinduism-Report-Final.pdf>

Pearn Kandola’s comparable report on Christians was published in December: *Religion at Work: Experiences of Christian Employees*, based on 1,042 respondents, including 523 in the UK, and with similar scope and limitations as for Hindus. UK-specific statistics are again presented on pp. 7–8, 11–15, and 29–32. The report is available at:

- <https://pearnkandola.com/app/uploads/2022/12/Christianity-Report-Final.pdf>

## OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### **UK armed forces biannual diversity statistics, October 2022**

As at 1 October 2022, 58.6% of the UK’s regular armed forces professed to be Christian, a decrease of 1.5% in a mere six months, while 37.2% self-identified as having no religion, up by 1.1% over the half-year. The proportion of nones was 42.9% in the Royal Navy and 40.2% in the Royal Air Force but 33.6% in the Army. Full details, which also cover the reserve armed forces, are available at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-october-2022>

### **Diversity and inclusion of Scottish Government workforce, 2021: religion**

The Scottish Government has published a report and data on *Diversity and Inclusion of the Scottish Government Workforce, 2021*. In respect of religion, it notes, inter alia, that Christians are underrepresented among joiners and overrepresented among leavers but feel more included and treated more fairly than their peers. For further information, go to:

- <https://data.gov.scot/workforce-diversity-2021/>

### **Police-recorded hate crime in Scotland during 2020–21 and 2021–22**

The Scottish Government has published *An Updated Study into the Characteristics of Police Recorded Hate Crime in Scotland*, based upon data for 2020–21 and 2021–22. The overview of the characteristics of religion aggravated crime will be found on pp. 29–31, with additional detail available in a linked Excel workbook. During 2021–22, the total of hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland was 6,927, of which 478 had a religion aggravator, down from 578 in 2020–21. The report can be found at:

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/updated-study-characteristics-police-recorded-hate-crime-scotland/>

### **Religious census of England and Wales, 2021 (1): expert reactions to the topline data**

There has been continued coverage in the media of the headline results from the official religious census of England and Wales in 2021, published on 29 November 2022, but, as yet, little elucidation of them. Perhaps wisely, most observers are waiting for more detailed breakdowns of the data before attempting estimates of the religious ‘flows’ between the 2011 and 2021 censuses. Of those who have commented since BRIN’s round-up of media reactions in the December 2022 edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*, particularly important are the reflections of David Voas, BRIN’s co-director and prominent religious demographer, on ‘Christian Decline: How it’s Measured and What it Means’ on the BRIN website at:

- <http://www.brin.ac.uk/christian-decline-how-its-measured-and-what-it-means/>

and two articles by Peter Brierley, ecclesiastical statistician, in *Church of England Newspaper*, 20 January 2023, pp. 9–10 (‘Making Sense of the Faith and the Census’) and *FutureFirst*, No. 85, February 2023, pp. 1–2 (‘Making Sense of the Census’); the latter can be requested from:

- [peter@brierleyres.com](mailto:peter@brierleyres.com)

### **Religious census of England and Wales, 2021 (2): age and sex breaks**

On 30 January 2023, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the second of its reports on religion in the 2021 census of England and Wales, comprising an article and associated datasets analysing the distribution of religious profession by age (in single years), sex, and age and sex. The already unusual length of this edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*, and the closeness of the timing of the ONS release to BRIN’s monthly publishing schedule, have meant that we cannot do full justice to this latest batch of census statistics at the moment. However, we will note a few headlines. **Age:** Among the major groupings, Christians had the oldest median age (51 years, up from 45 years in 2011), compared with a national average of 40 years, while Muslims had the youngest (27 years), followed by religious nones (32 years). The decrease in the number of persons identifying as Christian between the 2011 and 2021 censuses was particularly notable in the younger age groups. Nones now outnumber Christians across the entire population under retirement age (41.2% versus 40.8%), with a wide gap among those aged 25 and under (45.5% nones and 33.5% Christians). **Sex:** Females accounted for a higher proportion of people responding ‘other religion’ (56.1%), followed by Buddhist (55.7%) and



Christian (54.6%), compared with a figure of 51.0% females in the population as a whole. Of persons identifying as nones, 52.9% were males. For the article and data, go to:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/religion-by-age-and-sex-england-and-wales-census-2021>

## ACADEMIC STUDIES

### **Religion and occupational structure in early nineteenth-century Wales**

In ‘Missing from Parish Records: Anglican and Nonconformist Occupational Differences and the Economy of Wales, c.1817’ (*Continuity and Change*, Vol. 37, No. 2, August 2022, pp. 165–97), Frances Richardson demonstrated the distorting effects that can arise by relying upon Anglican baptismal records alone as a proxy for occupational structure in the early nineteenth century. Her case study of Wales, where she analysed one-seventh of all baptisms, including the quarter of children born to Nonconformist fathers, found that Anglican data underestimated employment in mining and the woollen textile industry, in which Nonconformists were particularly active, but overestimated the proportion of labourers and workers in the tertiary sector. The article is available at:

- <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/continuity-and-change/issue/312787D0E9B05D9801E414C196E3C472#>

### **Places of worship in Great Britain and Ireland, c.1829–c.1929**

Paul Barnwell’s ‘Conclusion: Christian Plurality and the Building of Many Mansions’, in *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 1829–1929*, edited by Paul Barnwell and Mark Smith (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2022), pp. 287–346 contains appendices (at pp. 333–46) of select national and local statistics of places of worship in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland between c.1830 and c.1930. Some obvious primary and secondary sources are missed.

### **Churchgoing in Cheltenham in 1882**

Although the national official religious census of attendance and accommodation in 1851 was never repeated, in 1881–82 a large number of local censuses of religious provision were carried out, mostly in England and Scotland, through the agency of local newspapers. One of the more interesting of these was undertaken in Cheltenham by the *Cheltenham Examiner* on two consecutive Sundays during winter (and thus outside the summer ‘season’, when there were many visitors) and in different weather conditions. It is written up by Alan Munden, ‘Church and Chapel Attendance in Cheltenham in 1882’, *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal*, No. 38, 2022, pp. 45–55. On the wet Sunday (29 January), total attendances equated to 39.6% of the population, but on the dry Sunday (5 February) the proportion was 48.5%.

### **Mass Observation, religion, and the Second World War**

Clive Field’s ‘Mass Observation, Religion, and the Second World War: When “Cooper’s Snoopers” Caught the Spirit’, in *British Christianity and the Second World War*, edited by Michael Snape and Stuart Bell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2023), pp. 99–116, offers a broadly chronological overview of qualitative and quantitative research projects undertaken by the social research organization Mass Observation during the Second World War that touched on religion on the home front in Britain, as reflected in the surviving documentation preserved in the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex. Included is an account of the first major (albeit imperfect) sample survey on British religion, fielded in Hammersmith, London in 1944–45, and eventually published as *Puzzled People* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947).

### **British Methodism's engagement with sociology during the long 1960s**

Clive Field's 'British Methodism's Engagement with Sociology During the Long 1960s', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Spring 2023, pp. 3–14 mostly summarizes Methodism's sociological interactions at the connexional level, especially focusing upon the repurposing of the official statistics of the Methodist Church by the Church Membership Sub-Committee, and the efforts of the Methodist Sociological Group and the Inter-Churches Research Group to plan a wider and more ecumenical programme of quantitative research on religion in Britain to coincide with the 1981 population census. However, the article also briefly addresses the contribution of the late David Martin, the most celebrated Methodist sociologist of religion of his generation, albeit he was lost to Methodism in 1979 when he was confirmed into the Church of England, subsequently being ordained as deacon and priest. Any BRIN reader interested in seeing this study is invited to contact the author at:

- [c.d.field@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.d.field@bham.ac.uk)

### **Recent changes in British Methodism as reflected in two surveys of presbyters**

BRIN readers should not be deceived by the apparent publication date of John Haley and Leslie Francis, 'The Changing Face of British Methodism between 1997 and 2008: A Study in Empirical Theology', *Holiness: An International Journal of Wesleyan Theology*, Vol. 7, No. 2, December 2021, pp. 91–9. The article was not actually published online until October 2022. It derives from a comparison of findings from two postal surveys of Methodist presbyters (ministers) in Britain conducted in 1997 and 2008, completed (respectively) by 1,339 and 951 respondents. From their analysis of the replies given to 225 short Likert-style questions in both years, the authors have identified nine principal areas of change between these dates. The article is available on an open access basis at:

- <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/holiness-2021-0011>

### **Coronavirus chronicles: wellbeing of Anglican clergy and laity during third lockdown**

In 'Psychological Wellbeing and Sources of Support for Church of England Clergy and Laity during the Third National Covid-19 Lockdown' (*Rural Theology*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2022, pp. 72–90), Andrew Village and Leslie Francis analysed data for 1,847 Church of England clergy and laity gathered as part of the 'Covid-19 and Church-21' survey in January-July 2021. Respondents were self-selecting, and disproportionately drawn from the readership of the *Church Times*; thus, they comprised a convenience sample which may not necessarily have been representative of any particular target populations. Clergy exhibited poorer psychological wellbeing compared with laity, with full-time parish-based clergy the most seriously harmed by the pandemic, notwithstanding improvements made in Church-based support for clergy. The article is available at:

- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14704994.2022.2120972>

### **Microsimulation of 'fuzzy fidelity': cohort effect explanation of secularization**

A microsimulation conducted across nine waves of the European Social Survey, and encompassing data from fifteen countries, has concluded that 'a cohort effect, based on weakened transmission of religiosity as a function of the social environment, appears to be the best explanation for secularization in the societies studied, both for the population as a whole and for the proportions of religious, fuzzy, and secular people.' For the full methodology and argument, which are quite complex, see Ivan Puga-Gonzalez, David Voas, Lukasz Kiszkiel, Rachel Bacon, Wesley Wildman, Konrad Talmont-Kaminski, and LeRon Shults, 'Modeling Fuzzy Fidelity: Using Microsimulation to Explore Age, Period, and Cohort Effects in

Secularization', *Journal of Religion and Demography*, Vol. 9, Nos. 1–2, October 2022, pp. 111–37, available at:

- [https://brill.com/view/journals/jrd/9/1-2/article-p111\\_3.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jrd/9/1-2/article-p111_3.xml)

**Spirituality in northern Europe: International Social Survey Program data**

Isabella Kasselstrand's 'Secularization or Alternative Faith? Trends and Conceptions of Spirituality in Northern Europe' (*Journal of Religion in Europe*, Vol. 15, Nos. 1–4, 2022, pp. 27–55) utilizes data from the 2008 and 2018 waves of the International Social Survey Program, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted in Scotland and Sweden in 2012, to probe levels and conceptions of spirituality in seven northern Protestant European nations (including Great Britain). Statistics and confidence intervals are calculated for each of the nations as well as in the aggregate. Kasselstrand's evidence provided no support for the notion that religion is not declining but simply changing. Rather, she found that there had been movement over the decade away from both religiosity *and* spirituality, rather than any significant shift from the former to the latter, and that many individuals who self-identified as 'spiritual but not religious' increasingly espoused atheism or agnosticism. The article is available, on open access, at:

- [https://brill.com/view/journals/jre/15/1-4/article-p27\\_2.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jre/15/1-4/article-p27_2.xml)

APPENDIX  
KEYWORDS/TAGS

Alan Munden, Andrew Village, anti-Semitism, armed forces, Bible Society, Boydell Press, British Sikh Report, carbon emissions, carol singing, Catholic Education Service, celebrating birth of Jesus Christ, census of population, Cheltenham, Cheltenham Local History Society Journal, Christian mission, Christianity, Christians, Christmas, church attendance, Church of England, Church of England Newspaper, Church Times, clergy, Clive Field, cohort effects, Continuity and Change, coronavirus, cost of living crisis, Covid-19, Covid-19 and Church-21, Culham St Gabriel's Trust, David Martin, David Voas, diversity and inclusion, Ecclesiastical Insurance, England and Wales, European Social Survey, Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Frances Richardson, FutureFirst, fuzzy fidelity, Gen Z, God, Great Commission, Hannah Waite, hate crimes, Hindus, Holiness, horoscopes, importance of Christianity, International Social Survey Program, Ipsos MORI, Isabella Kasselstrand, Islamophobia, Ivan Puga-Gonzalez, Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, Jagdev Singh Virdee, Jesus Christ, Jews, John Haley, Journal of Religion and Demography, Journal of Religion in Europe, Konrad Talmont-Kaminski, LeRon Shults, Leslie Francis, Lukasz Kiszkiel, Martin Camroux, Mass Observation, Methodism, Methodist Church, Muslims, National Churches Trust, Nick Spencer, Nonconformity, Office for National Statistics, Operation Mobilisation, Opinium Research, Paul Barnwell, Pearn Kandola, Peter Brierley, places of worship, presbyters, Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, psychological wellbeing, Rachel Bacon, religion and worldviews, religious affiliation, religious census, religious education, religious festivals, religious prejudice, repair and maintenance, Roman Catholic Church, Rural Theology, same-sex marriage, Savanta ComRes, schools and colleges, science, Scotland, Scottish Government, Second World War, secularization, Shaun Tyas, social capital, sociology, spirituality, superstition, superstitious beliefs, The Observer, Theos, Tom Wood, United Reformed Church, Voice4Change, Wales, Wesley Wildman, workplace, worshipping community, YouGov