

New research: 49% have no religion, Anglican Church collapse continues, Islam increases ten-fold since 1983

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New findings by the National Centre for Social Research have confirmed the long-term collapse in affiliation with the Church of England and the huge increase in non-belief.

Strikingly, the research also found that there had been a ten-fold increase in those identifying with Islam in the past 32 years. In 1983, Islam represented around half a percentage point of Britain's population but in 2014 it had reached 5%, the research found.

"The proportion of people saying that they are Anglican has fallen quite dramatically in the last ten years, coinciding with a rise in people saying they are not religious," NatCen noted.

The percentage of non-religious people has increased from 31% in 1983, to 49% in 2014. Conversely, the share belonging to the Church of England has fallen from 40% to 17% over the same time period.

This means that by-far the single largest group of people is the non-religious. Based on estimates from the Office of National Statistics, there are 24.7 million non-believers in the UK. The next single-highest group is Anglicans on 8.6 million. However, according to the NatCen figures, the "nones" have outnumbered Anglicans since at least 1994- when there were over 2 million more non-believers.

The picture is different for non-Anglican Christians however. Roman Catholics have dropped by only 2 percentage points, from 10% of the population in 1983 to 8% last year.

Immigration is thought to be propping up numbers of non-Anglican Christians. Naomi Jones, Head of Social Attitudes at NatCen Social research explained, "Members of other Christian and non-Christian religions have remained relatively constant and even increased.

"The numbers of Catholic and non-Christian people in Britain may have been supplemented by migrants with strong religious beliefs.

"We know from recent NatCen research that people are less likely than in previous years to see being Christian as an important component of being British. Therefore, fewer British people may feel that the Church of England is an important part of their identity nowadays."

NSS spokesperson Stephen Evans commented on the research, "new findings emerge almost every month confirming just how irreligious UK society is. This obviously strengthens the case for a secular UK. At the very least it goes to show how nonsensical it is to speak of the UK as a 'Christian country'- as NatCen point out.

"The collapse in affiliation with the Church of England continues to make its role as an Established church untenable and wrong. It would be better for both church and state if they parted company."

Other research, surveys and polling have found similarly high levels of non-belief. In April 2015, the National Secular Society criticised the Prime Minister for his claim that the UK was "[still a Christian country](#)" after polling from YouGov found that 62% of Britons said they were not religious.

The NatCen data can be seen [here](#)

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