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A large-scale survey of British attitudes has been carried out by YouGov–Cambridge (a collaboration between pollsters YouGov and the University of Cambridge’s Department of Politics and International Studies) has some revealing statistics on religion. A representative sample of 64,303 adult Britons aged 18 and over responded.

Some of the results:

Secularity

- 78% (82% of the over-55s) agreed and 12% disagreed that religion should be a private matter and had no place in politics
- 16% agreed and 70% disagreed that Christians and the Church should have more influence over politics in the country – only among the over-55s did the proportion in favour of the proposition scrape above one-fifth

Composition and beliefs of population

- In response to the question “What is your religion?” 40% of adults professed no religion, 55% were Christian and 5% of other faiths – age made a major difference, with only 38% of the 18–34s being Christian and 53% having no religion, whereas for the over-55s the figures were 70% and 26% respectively
- 74% of respondents had been brought up in some religion (including 70% as Christians, implying a net 15% leakage from Christianity over time) and 25% not, the latter figure rising to 39% among the 18–34s
- 35% described themselves as very or fairly religious and 63% as not very or not at all religious – there were no big variations by demographics (even by age), but Londoners (41%) did stand out as being disproportionately religious, doubtless reflecting the concentration of ethnic minorities in the capital
- 34% believed in a personal God or non-intervening gods (ranging from 28% among the 18–34s to 42% of over-55s), 10% in some higher spiritual power, 19% in neither, with 29% unsure or agnostic
- 11% of respondents claimed to attend a religious service once a month or more, 27% less often, and 59% never – non-attendance was higher among the young (62% for the 18–34s) than the old (54% for the over-55s) and among manual workers (62%) than non-manuals (56%), while London had the highest figure for monthly or more attendance (16%)
- 16% claimed to pray daily, 12% several times a week, 4% once a week, 7% several times a month, 4% once a month, 24% less often, and 29% never – men (34%) were more likely not to pray at all than women (24%)

Views on religion

- 79% agreed and 11% disagreed that religion is a cause of much misery and conflict in the world today
- 72% agreed and 15% disagreed that religion is used as an excuse for bigotry and intolerance, with a high of 81% in Scotland where sectarianism has often been rife
- 35% agreed and 45% disagreed that religion is a force for good in the world, dissenters being more numerous among men (50%) than women (41%)
- 61% agreed and 18% disagreed that organized religion is in terminal decline in the UK – the over-55s (67%) were most prone to agree and Londoners were most likely (21%) to disagree
- 40% agreed and also 40% disagreed that the decline of organised religion had made Britain a worse place – the over-55s (54%) were twice as likely to agree as the 18–34s (27%)
- 51% (57% in Scotland) agreed and 32% (37% among men) disagreed that all religions are equally valid
- 34% agreed and 49% disagreed that some religions are better than others, men (39%), the over-55s (38%), and Londoners (38%) being disproportionately likely to agree
- 49% agreed and 29% disagreed that it is good for children to be brought up within a religion – among the 18–34s opinion divided at 36% each (whereas for the over-55s 64% agreed and 22% disagreed)
- 40% agreed (rising to 46% of men and 44% of 18–34s) and 39% disagreed that religion is incompatible with modern scientific knowledge
- 29% agreed and 54% disagreed that there are some things in life which only religion can explain, the over-55s (35%) placing more trust in religion than the 18–34s (24%)

The statistics website [BRIN](#) (British Religion in Numbers) commented: “All in all, these data point to a society in which religion is increasingly in retreat and nominal. With the principal exception of the older age groups, many of those who claim some religious allegiance fail to underpin it by a belief in God or to translate it into regular prayer or attendance at a place of worship. People in general are more inclined to see the negative than the positive aspects of religion, and they certainly want to keep it well out of the political arena.”

[Full tables can be seen here.](#)

And yet more bad news for religious propagandists. An international [survey of mothers](#) by Hygiene Matters asked what is the most important thing in their children’s upbringing. Religion came bottom with only 16.5% of parents nominating it. Personal hygiene came top, with 77 per cent of women saying that keeping their child clean was the most important part of raising them.