

New data from Britain: 53 percent of adults say they have ‘no religion’

MANCHESTER, England — More than half of the people in Britain say they no longer belong to a religion, said data released Sept. 5 by NatCen Social Research.

Fifty-three percent of nearly 3,000 adults interviewed for the British Social Attitudes survey said they had “no religion,” NatCen reported.

That figure, covering 2016, is up from 48 percent in 2015. The center said in a statement that the data reveals the proportion of people in Britain who describe themselves as having no religion is at its “highest-ever level.”

The proportion of nonbelievers has increased gradually since the survey began in 1983, when 31 percent of those surveyed said they had no religion.

Most of the decline in religious affiliation has been among people who previously belonged to the Church of England.

The survey found that 15 percent of people in Britain consider themselves to be Anglican, compared to about 30 percent in 2000.

The proportion of people who say they are Catholic has remained consistent, however, at about 10 percent for the past three decades.

About 6 percent belong to non-Christian religions, an increase of 2 percent since 1983.

Seventy-one percent of people ages 18-24 said they had no religion, up from 62 percent in 2015.

Roger Harding, head of public attitudes at NatCen, said the increase in nonbelievers “follows the long-term trend of more and more of us not being religious.”

“The differences by age are stark and, with so many younger people not having a religion, it’s hard to see this change abating any time soon,” he said.

He said although the decrease in “those belonging to the Church of England are the most notable ... these figures should cause all religious leaders to pause for thought.”

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