**Grace Davie and Religious Literacy: undoing a lamentable quality of conversation**

**Adam Dinham**

Commenting on the Religion and Society Programme’s Westminster Faith Debates, which placed academics, politicians, policy makers and religious leaders in dialogue with the wider public, Grace Davie has observed ‘a constant plea for more work on religious literacy’.[[1]](#endnote-1) This chapter picks up on this theme, taking up the distinctive approach of chapter four (by Matthew Francis), to examine how Grace Davie’s thinking is being taken forward more widely, this time through the idea of religious literacy, which she has done so much to support. In exploring the interaction of Davie’s ideas with my own in this area, the chapter will explore what Davie thinks religious literacy is, as well as why it is needed, concluding that it is a contested, situation-specific notion which might best be understood in contrast to its opposite – as Davie puts it, ‘a debate that is both ill-mannered and ill-informed’.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Davie’s repeated observation in conference papers and in conversation that ‘there is a lamentable quality of conversation about religion, just as we need it most’[[3]](#endnote-3) is a central part of the religious literacy approach which has emerged within the UK’s Religious Literacy Programme. Davie comments that

At precisely the moment that British people need them most, they are losing the vocabulary, concepts and narratives that are necessary to take part in serious conversation about religion.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Thus, more recently she has begun to reference religious literacy in her writing too, noting in the foreword to our my new book with Matthew Francis that “I am deeply committed to the notion of religious literacy as such”.[[5]](#endnote-5)

For Davie the essential question to ask is whether or not it is possible to reverse the decline in religious knowledge that has enveloped British society, and which has became damaging to public discussion. Indeed, in her view, it is not only the recovery of the conversation that matters, but the degree of its urgency.

This chapter aims to draw together Davie’s contributions, not only to the understanding of religions, therefore, but moreover to how they cohere for her as a basis for restoring and developing the religious literacy of a public sphere which has struggled to talk well about them.

**Grace Davie and Understanding Religion in Modern Britain**

It goes almost without saying that Grace Davie has contributed enormously to the understanding of religion in modern Britain. That is, indeed, one of the tenets of this book. The popularity of her concept of ‘believing without belonging’ is, of course, a major landmark in the study of religion, and its uses have, as this volume amply demonstrates, both surprised and frustrated her in equal measure.

More recently her introduction of the idea of vicarious religion has provided a much-needed nuancing in the debate about what is happening to religion and belief.[[6]](#endnote-6) She illustrates this by taking the examples of Princess Diana, and Jade Goody[[7]](#endnote-7), each involving untimely deaths, observing that:

These are moments when the ‘secular’ routines of life are suspended, when – to put the same point in a different way – the abnormal (the articulation of religion in words and actions) becomes at least for a short time normal. For this reason alone they merit careful sociological attention[[8]](#endnote-8)

She thinks these indicate the continuing importance of the presence of religion and belief, even without their regular, committed practices. The spaces are important, just for being there, even if most people don’t know it, most of the time. Indeed, she goes on to quote the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who notes a subtly different kind of ‘vicarious’ presence – and one which has presumably been sometimes unwelcome to him, as a number of unpleasant media run-ins on the matters he refers to suggest. He writes:

It has sometimes been said in recent years that the Church of England is still used by British society as a stage on which to conduct by proxy the arguments that society itself does not know how to handle. It certainly helps to explain the obsessional interest in what the Church has to say about issues of sex and gender.[[9]](#endnote-9)

Davie quietly cautions against over-extending distinctions, and over-operationalizing the ideas, despite the temptations to both. For her, typically, ‘vicarious religion’ identifies a perspective on religious decline which does not seek to explain *everything*, but certainly provides a way of understanding *something*! It enables a perspective which understands that religion can both decline and persist, as well as change shape and shift emphases – layers in the sediment of religious illiteracy which are often overlooked. This gives us an important clue as to what religious literacy *is*: Davies sees it as a reply to a growing religious *illiteracy* rooted in the idea that religiousness is simply in decline.

She also observes a softening of the environment in which religious literacy needs to be recovered, although this does not necessarily bode well, if it stems from a shoulder-shrugging irrelevance. This perception of irrelevance may be both promising and depressing for religious literacy, and time will tell how spaces and demands for its recovery will play out. And yet there are, she asserts, very pressing reasons why religious literacy is needed. In one example, she points to confusion over blasphemy law. There is much confusion in both Britain and France as to how to deal with those that continue to take religion seriously, whether to dispense with blasphemy laws altogether, or instead to extend them to include minority religions.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Accompanying this insistence on perspective and nuance, Davie also demonstrates a deep commitment to the real and the ordinary. In recent years this has found expression in her interest and support for very practical approaches to facilitating the understanding she has done so much to bring about. She is committed, not only to the understanding itself, but to the ability of broad audiences to *understand the understanding*.

A significant platform for this has been the greatly expanding notion of religious literacy, which I have played a part in developing in a range of settings and sectors, in partnership with many colleagues and friends, Grace Davie leading among them. The exploration of Grace Davie’s work represented in this chapter thus presents a sort of reflexivity of the kind which itself underpins this book: what has this work been for, and what can be done with it next?

**Grace Davie and the Religious Literacy Programme**

In 2009, a government body, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, (HEFCE), engaged in a conversation with a broad group of scholars to address the problem of extremism in university campuses. The outcome was the funding of the Religious Literacy Leadership Programme and I was appointed as its director. I started by arguing for a different way of thinking about this so-called problem.

My first point was that extremism at all is a tiny minority problem, although it is absolutely right to take it very seriously indeed because the consequences can be catastrophic when things go wrong. I also pointed out that extremism on campuses is itself both rare and notoriously hard to judge. Indeed, radicalism and contestation are what universities *should* be for, so where does one draw the line? But most importantly, I felt, an approach based on anxiety about extremism casts religion and belief as a problem first and foremost, and I wanted to argue that this need not be the starting point. I thought it would be much more effective – and much more realistic – to set religion and belief in their proper context and seek engagement *with* it rather than solutions *for* it.

HEFCE accepted these arguments and, with I think great credit to them, took the courageous step of funding the Religious Literacy Leadership Programme, which I’ve been directing since then. Why courageous? The answer to that is to a large degree the answer to the challenge for wider society: how do bodies which lack religious literacy come to think they need it in the first place?

Much of the challenge is rooted in the assumptions of secularity – in its many forms and theories – which were thought to have solidified around the general idea that religion had lost its social significance and would almost certainly diminish altogether over time to an eventual vanishing point. As Peter Berger memorably commented in 1968, “…by the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture” (Berger 1968). And the New Atheists have been especially vocal in their various ways in recent years. As Sam Harris puts it:

“It is imperative that we begin speaking plainly about the absurdity of most of our religious beliefs: while religious people are not generally mad, their core beliefs absolutely are.” (Harris, 2006, pp 48-9)

The British philosopher and humanist, A C Grayling sees it this way:

“The real perfume in the smokescreen lies in the claim that the contemporary Churches, with their charities and their aid for the suffering in the Third World, are models of goodness in action….But this soft face is turned to the world only when the Church is on the back foot: whenever religion is in the ascendant, with hands on the levers of secular power too, it shows a very different face – the face presented by the Inquisition, the Taliban, and the religious police in Saudi Arabia” (Grayling, 2004, p 81)

For Davie – as for me - such positions put flesh on the bones of the religious literacy idea because they are themselves an expression of the religious *illiteracy* which makes the conversation more difficult to have. In this sense, they frame the challenge and therefore the space in which the response can be made. They are examples of what Davie has called the “self-consciously secular” which contribute little, while obscuring much.[[11]](#endnote-11)

For Davie, religious literacy is a key part of the answer. But, as her observations make clear, there are several intellectual challenges. First, there is widespread indifference, sometimes spilling over in to engagement at times of stress or need, as in the example of Princess Diana’s death. Then there is the sort of active hostility, described above. This is certainly disproportionately vocal. It is also disproportionately heard, as a result. Third, Davie draws our attention to the paradox of a generally ‘secular’ context alongside growing demands on and for religious presence. Thus she observes a society which is both more secular and more religious. She identifies the gap between these features as the space in which religious literacy is needed:

On the one hand, Europe is becoming markedly more secular; on the other religion is rising in the public agenda of both the EU as a whole and its member states. These contradictory "forces" are brought about by different things, but have occurred at the same time… The problem, of course, is made worse by the effects of secularisation, one of which is the systematic loss of religious knowledge. It follows that necessarily sensitive debates are very often engaged by people who, literally, do not know what they are talking about – with respect to their own faith, never mind anyone else's. It is little wonder that things get out of hand.[[12]](#endnote-12)

This generates a muddle, which is not only religiously illiterate itself, but is also capable of address only through the application of the religious literacy which is missing in the first place.

Davie also notes a fourth strand in the religious literacy story, which has only emerged in very recent years. She explains that belief and unbelief are two sides of the same coin:

The views of unbelievers – like the adherents of all world faiths – lie along a spectrum. At one end their ideas are barely distinguishable from those of ‘believers’– particularly the ones who remain distanced from institutional religion; at the other can be found a sharpness of expression that borders on aggression.[[13]](#endnote-13)

This is an important aspect because it rejects the binary opposition of religion and the secular which has so often fed the indifference and hostility noted above. Rather, Davie engages with how ‘the religious and the secular are inseparable from each other’.[[14]](#endnote-14) She says:

Those who reject religious belief in this part of the world are rejecting a culturally determined version of this. Many of them, moreover (articulate atheists included), know a great deal about the God in which they do not believe.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Davie adds another crucial layer, encapsulating the institutionalization of religious illiteracy in policy-making contexts. She draws on Modood’s much earlier analysis of a multi-faith Britain, recalling his view that the real danger to multi-faithism does not come from a relatively powerless national church but from

“…a virtually unchallengeable and culturally insensitive secular centre which makes demands on all faiths, but especially on the least Westernised faiths at a time when the minority faiths are asserting themselves as a form of cultural defence”.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Pre-dating the ‘religious literacy’ discourse, Modood’s observation, as recalled by Davie, crucially poses the tension between a public sphere that wants things from faith groups, but has not worked out how to get there without also getting the faith. This is a point in the public sphere where it does not yet know what to think of itself. This is, itself, a task of religious literacy, as I have argued elsewhere.[[17]](#endnote-17) Modood’s comments about the Rushdie affair illustrate the point accordingly:

“…‘the Rushdie affair’ is not about the life of Salman Rushdie nor freedom of expression, let alone Islamic fundamentalism or book-burning or Iranian interference in British affairs. The issue is of the rights of non-European religious and cultural minorities in the context of a secular hegemony. Is the Enlightenment big enough to legitimise the existence of pre-Enlightenment religious enthusiasm or can it only exist by suffocating all who fail to be overawed by its intellectual brilliance and vision of man?”[[18]](#endnote-18)

The answer to that question will determine the quality of the religious literacy conversation which unfolds. The way I have been putting it in recent years is to describe religious activity *as religious activity* in the public sphere and discuss it in its own terms.[[19]](#endnote-19) This, I have argued, is the route to both understanding faith-based public action, and holding it to account. It both requires and would contribute to religious literacy.

It is perhaps inevitable that many people in public roles take one or some of these stances which problematise religion and belief, without engagement. It is often the case that they drift in to such positions. Others are doubtless concerned about what they see as the moral and ethical impositions of religious faith, especially to do with homophobia and sexism and on issues such as adoption, sex and abortion.

Another issue is how deep and distributed this context of suspicion is – how widespread is it and how far does it go? In the Religious Literacy Programme we suspect that it exists primarily in hegemonic discourses, such as are produced and reproduced in universities, and in government models for policy-making. This contrasts with Davie’s conception of vicarious religion, in which she sees a popular majority pleased that religion is there, even if they do not participate actively themselves on the whole. The contrast is with a small class of religiously sceptical public leaders who see it as their role to ‘protect’ the secularity – or at least what they see as the neutrality – of the public sphere.[[20]](#endnote-20) These are themselves both problematic outlooks - nobody starts from nowhere and there is no such thing as neutrality. Recent developments in the public debate about England and Christianity nevertheless provide interesting snapshots in to the dissonance of the conversation.[[21]](#endnote-21) Whether they represent any real or lasting change is yet to be seen.

So liberal elites – and universities and policy-makers amongst them – thought they had set religion aside, relegating it to an intellectually darker age of the past.

In this, they are but one example of a pressing need for religious literacy, as well as exemplifying in microcosm all or most of the religious literacy dilemmas which face wider society.

**Religious Literacy and the Fluidity of ‘Religion’**

There is another key dimension which deeply inflects the religious literacy conversation, and this is represented in a further paradox identified by Davie: in the same period when we have been talking about it least, religion itself has been changing most. As Davie commented in her address to the annual conference of the Religious Literacy Programme in 2011, “This leaves us ill-equipped for the conversation now”.[[22]](#endnote-22)

Indeed, as I have commented elsewhere, and we often highlight in the Programme, we find ourselves in a tricky position because there is a real religious landscape and one imagined by policy makers and publics, and there is a growing gap between them. Yet there is in fact no shortage of data. Davie rightly singles out the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society programme[[23]](#endnote-23) as interesting in three ways: it signalled a step-change on the part of the academic establishment; it aimed to ‘inform public debate’; and it used ‘creative methodologies’ to ask questions in new ways.[[24]](#endnote-24)

The 2011 Census is also helpful on this, though of course by no means the only source, nor the definitive one. The headlines are that, despite falling numbers, Christianity remains the largest religion in England and Wales (33.2 million people or 59.3 per cent of the population. This is down from 71.7 per cent in 2001). Muslims are the next biggest religious group and have grown in the last decade (2.7 million people or 4.8 per cent of the population. This is the most increasing group from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent). Meanwhile the proportion of the population who reported they have no religion has now reached a quarter (14.1 million people. This is an increase from 14.8 per cent to 25.1 per cent).

We know that there is also hugely more religious diversity in general. In 2011, London was the most diverse region with the highest proportion of people identifying themselves as Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish. The North East and North West had the highest proportion of Christians, and Wales had the highest proportion of people reporting no religion. Knowsley was the local authority with the highest proportion of people reporting to be Christians at 80.9 per cent and Tower Hamlets had the highest proportion of Muslims at 34.5 per cent (over 7 times the England and Wales figure). Norwich had the highest proportion of the population reporting no religion at 42.5 per cent.

But as Davie reminds us, the data are hugely debatable and other sources say different things. Nevertheless, she says, one cannot doubt that the trends “point downwards”.[[25]](#endnote-25) At the same time, they point to how religious forms have been changing in this period, as well as the religious mix and the mix of religion and non-religion.

According to other sources and other questions, what we believe has changed too. A key point of religious literacy, which picks up from such change, is how very important are the gaps between the reality of religion and understandings of it. This is likely to affect how policy-makers seek to shape services and practice, and how publics encounter one another.

Another is to understand conceptually what might be going on. This demands a turn to the sociological material, as a basis for religious literacy. One key account is of course Davie’s idea of ‘believing without belonging’, as the chapter sets out at the beginning. Another is with Woodhead, who says that “…it is a wrongly fundamentalising interpretation to say that *real* dogmatic religion is declining, leaving people with a muddled and fuzzy residue”.[[26]](#endnote-26) She thinks the exact opposite is true. Seeing it the right way round is to recognise that “real religion – which is to say everyday, lived religion – is thriving and evolving, whilst hierarchical, dogmatic forms of religion are marginalised”.[[27]](#endnote-27)

Davie reminds us, however, that we must get the reality in to perspective. It may be tempting, for example, to over-imagine the plurality, secularity and the religiosity of the country. She is commited therefore to highlight the changes that have taken place since the 1990s, taking care to set these in a longer term perspective”.[[28]](#endnote-28) One key aspect of this is in itself to remember that, while religion and belief plurality are crucially important to grasp, the minority traditions remain very small in number, and we should not allow panicky media discourse to *panic us* in to believing that they represent any sort of cultural threat, at least on the basis of numbers.

She also notes that the availability of material, including statistical data, has increased hugely in recent decades. Asking why this is so constitutes an important part of the discussion, she feels.[[29]](#endnote-29)

So we have this complicated story. The relationship between religion and the secular has not gone as was expected. And religion and belief have changed dramatically precisely in the period when secular theory was at its height and we were therefore thinking about it least. There is much more religious plurality. And forms of religious belief have shifted from the institutional to the personal. It turns out that society is neither simply secular nor simply religious but complexly both. But the period in which we didn’t talk well – or much - about religion – the 20th century, the period of secular dominance - leaves us precarious on the subject now in practically every walk of life.

We find ourselves anxious about religion on the one hand; muddled on the other - about how to have the conversation, and whether it is legitimate to try in the first place. What we risk in this milieu is knee-jerk reactions. Whereas what we *need* is a much better quality of conversation about religion which is thoughtful, well-informed and supported.

**Grace Davie and Three Arena of Religious Literacy: Universities, Schools, and Welfare**

Davie helps bring this down to earth in at least three key arena. The Religious Literacy Programme started its work in the universities, as noted, with Davie’s active encouragement and practical support as a member of the programme’s advisory board, and a participant in its workshops and conferences. As I have argued elsewhere, “they have a special role and a special problem because they are perpetuators of a particular post-religious epistemology”.[[30]](#endnote-30) In this context, The Religious Literacy Programme is interested in understanding the place of universities in contemporary society. This is pressing for the reasons already set out, above. There are more conceptual imperatives too. First, universities are places of peculiarly intense encounter, especially but not exclusively between young people. Second, universities are often even more plural and mixed than the rest of society around them, though sometimes the precise opposite is true – which brings a different set of problems. How is this engaged with? And third, universities are precisely designed to encourage debate about interesting and difficult issues. We have become better at discussing race, gender and sexual orientation for example. What about religion? Indeed, law on these matters has been extended to protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. This adds a further imperative to the religious literacy demand. Davie comments in this context that “…knowledge of the law and new legal rights remains imprecise, and once again there is an inevitable slippage between subjective perceptions of unfair treatment and its legal interpretation” (Davie 2014 c9 px). This too applies to universities and yet again they both prove to be highly interesting microcosms of wider society on matters of religion and belief, and more concentrated in their conceptualisations, including hostilities, indifferences and secularities, as set out above. At the same time, Davie asks whether religion really had returned, or if in fact the social sciences had simply begun to notice it.[[31]](#endnote-31)

The answer to this will determine the way we teach students – including those preparing for the professions, and on current evidence, this almost entirely neglects religion, except in Theology and Religion departments.[[32]](#endnote-32) This risks leaving students ill-equipped to grapple with the challenges posed by religion in their subsequent careers and as it re-emerges as a serious aspect of the modern, plural democracy. It will also determine the way in which universities *host* students: that is how they provide spaces for the broadest formation through all aspects of the university experience. As places of hospitality, the religion and belief dimension will no doubt be increasingly important.

So it turns out to matter very much what universities think about religion, even though they may have thought of themselves as secular and therefore neutral on the matter. This clearly matters in schools too. Davie does not attempt a full discussion of post-war education, but she does say that religious education deserves our full critical attention, since in a society with declining religious observance, the education system is the only place where a large proportion of the population will learn about religion.[[33]](#endnote-33)

We take our cue from her, and the Religious Literacy Programme has since undertaken research on religious literacy in schools and its relationship to school Religious Education in particular. Here, we have noted that:

“RE is in crisis. It’s required in schools, but not in the national curriculum. Funding for RE teacher training has been slashed. Yet despite its omission from the EBacc, RE remains a popular subject in schools. Nevertheless it remains often questioned in terms of its status and academic seriousness. This all reflects a wider muddle about religion more generally. In short, there is a lamentable quality of conversation about religion and belief, which calls in to question practically every aspect of its public presence, including in school RE”.[[34]](#endnote-34)

We also observe that, “In recent years, RE has increasingly - and largely accidentally - been populated by themes like citizenship and cohesion, especially within the UK” (ibid). And we conclude that:

“These are important concerns, no doubt, and they should certainly be addressed somewhere, somehow. But why in the RE space? And how far has it been thought through, consciously and thoroughly, by the RE community itself? Part of RE is the development of skills and understanding which equip young people to engage positively with ideas and concepts different from, and sometimes challenging to their own, and this can aid good relations across difference. The notion that RE can help produce citizens who are tolerant of all religions and none is seductive, to be sure. But we already know that understanding is not a guarantee of tolerance and respect. And in any case, on its own, it presents a hollowed out version of the RE idea. It misses the wider opportunities for simple, wide-eyed enrichment. And it colludes with an idea of religion as the opposite – as a threat to cohesion about which something must be done”.[[35]](#endnote-35)

In this context, and in that of the universities, Davie reminds us of the consequences of failing to engage with religious literacy across the education spectrum. She doubts that either university or school personnel have the literacy to deal with their responsibilities to equality and diversity.

This links to a third arena addressed by Davie in her work, and which we have since picked up in relation to Religious Literacy. Davie observes a narrative which contains the idea that the welfare state replaces religion.[[36]](#endnote-36) This is something I have expanded upon elsewhere, to argue that religion never abandoned the welfare field, and state never provided it all: indeed, a complex blend of state and faith-based provision has been the case throughout the welfare period.[[37]](#endnote-37) Davie agrees and thinks there is something in the position that ‘the welfare state in a certain sense replaced religion’, but provides caution, pointing out that even at the height of the welfare state, religious groups played a key role in the provision of welfare services.[[38]](#endnote-38)

Here is yet another imperative for the religious literacy endeavour. Davie also draws on two pan-European welfare research projects, of which she was a part: Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective (WREP) and Welfare and Values in Europe (WaVE). The first focused on the historic churches; the second on minority faiths’ engagement in welfare provision. Based on these studies, she observes an ‘evident relationship between the dominant theology – or more precisely ecclesiology – historically present in the society and the welfare state which subsequently evolves’.[[39]](#endnote-39)

An understanding of the relationship between religion and the contemporary welfare landscape is, for her – and us – another significant part of religious literacy therefore. Davie notes that religion has an increasing presence in welfare, mainly due to a lack of money coupled with increased demand.[[40]](#endnote-40)

Likewise the Religious Literacy Programme is framed by this observation, which makes the endeavour compelling as religious presence persists and grows, while the ability to engage with it well, flat-lines (see Dinham 2009; 2012).

Alongside, Davie draws attention to public anxiety about whether or not it is appropriate for religion to be involved in welfare. Again, Davie has picked this up ‘off the page’ in support of recent work with the Religious Literacy Programme on a new large-scale research project on religious literacy in health and social care. Our proposed new research hypothesises that the relationship between religion and healthcare go largely uncommented on in most practice, and the educational preparation of professions for it[[41]](#footnote-1). There is a pressing need, the project argues, for a step-change in the education of health and care professionals, and in the policies and regulations which guide them.

**The Future of Religious Literacy**

So where are we now? We’ve observed a lamentable quality of conversation about religion and belief; at the same time, a pressing need for a better quality of conversation in order to avoid knee jerk reactions which focus only on bad religion and its all too tangible outcomes. In universities there is even more debate, plurality, and encounter than in wider society, but also more solidified ideas and assumptions about religion – on both sides of the fence. Universities know they have got to get better at providing really excellent student experience. Other sectors and settings are waking up to this too.

What is starting to emerge alongside is a bigger debate about the role of religion in how we think and practice in a whole range of public spheres, as Davie explores. This all reflects a crucial contention in the rest of society about the re-emergence of religious faith as a public category at all. Is society and its institutions secular or sacred, or complexly both? To what extent should religion be private or public? Can we leave religious identity at the door? In which case, which door?

Davie suggests that there is an important research agenda before us on all of these issues. Where it meets the Religious Literacy Programme, likewise an agenda for policy-making, and the practices which result in service settings, emerges. Thus, religious literacy challenges us to ask how well equipped are we to approach religion in the public realm, in a whole range of sectors and settings, and regardless of our own religious stance, or none. There is an urgency to this, as Davie suggests:

“Nobody pretends…that the historic churches are able to discipline the beliefs and behaviour of British people in the twenty-first century – indeed the very idea is offensive. They remain none the less important points of reference…” (Davie 2014 px I CAN DO NOTHING WITH THIS OTHER THAN WAIT FOR THE PAGE NUMBER OR DELETE THE POINT).

For Davie, as for the Religious Literacy Programme, religious literacy “…is not a case of one size fits all. It is rather a question of finding exactly how to address the difficult questions that arise with respect to religion in a particular institution or profession” (Davie 2014, foreword, DITTO, ABOVE). Therefore, “Religious literacy must be engaged in context: getting it right can make all the difference; getting it wrong can make a tricky situation even worse” (ibid).

1. Notes

   Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion: A Critical Review* (Sage: London, 2014), xii [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid, xii [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See for example the *Religious Literacy Programme Annual Conference*, 2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, xii [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Grace Davie Foreword to Adam Dinham and Matthew Francis, *Religious Literacy*, forthcoming 2015 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid, 77 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. A UK ‘reality’ television celebrity, first coming to the public attention through her appearance in the Channel 4 programme, ‘Big Brother’. Her larger than life personality caught the public imagination and became compellingly fascinating for large numbers when she was diagnosed, and died of, cancer in her 20s, an experience which was heavily documented in magazines and other media as it happened. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, 130 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Rowan Williams, *Time for us to challenge the idols of high finance*, November 1, 2011, accessed August 30, 2014, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a561a4f6-0485-11e1-ac2a-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3BmNqjvM8 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A memory mutates* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 132 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Grace Davie, “Religion in Europe in the 21st century: The factors to take into account”, *European Journal of Sociology*, 47 no.2 (2006), 288 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Grace Davie, “Christian, but not as we know it”, *Guardian*, June 1, 2009, accessed August 30, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/01/europe-christianity-religion [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Grace Davie, “Belief and unbelief: Two sides of a coin”, *Approaching Religion*, 2 no. 1 (2012), 6 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid 5 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid 3 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Tariq Modood, ‘The End of a Hegemony: The Concept of "Black" and British Asians', in B. Drury & J. Rex (eds), *Ethnic Mobilisation in a Multi-Cultural Europe*, (Gower, 1994) [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Adam Dinham, *Faith and Social Capital After the Debt Crisis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012) [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. (Modood 1990 p160). Tariq Modood, ‘Muslims, race and equality in Britain: Some post-Rushdie affair reflections, *Third Text*, vol 4 issue 11 p132 (1990) Taylor Francis ≈ [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Adam Dinham and Martha Shaw, “Measurement as Reflection in Faith Based Social Action, *Community Development Journal*, 47 no.1 (2011) [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. See Adam Dinham and Stephen Jones, “Religion, Public Policy and the Academy: Brokering Public Faith in a Context of Ambivalence?” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 27 no.2 (2012) [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. The UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, said in an interview with the Church Times that Britain is a Christian country, prompting first an angry letter to a national right-leaning newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, asserting England’s ‘secularity’, then a significant number of responses from journalists in other media, the consensus of which was that England is indeed a culturally Christian country, and a fact which ought to be practically self-evident. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See Religious Literacy Programme Annual Conference, London, 2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) and ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) UK, provided £12million of funding for a large scale programme of research called the Religion and Society Programme, directed by Professor Linda Woodhead, from Lancaster University, UK. This programme funded 75 projects over 5 years and is widely thought to have had enormous impact. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, xi [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid, 45 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Linda Woodhead, *Religion in Britain has changed, our categories haven’t*, accessed August 30, 2014, <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1335118113_Woodhead-FINAL-copy.pdf>, 1 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid 1 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Grace Davie, “Thinking sociologically about religion: Implications for faith communities”, *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 54, no. 3 (2012), 273-289 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. See Thinking sociologically about religion: A step change in the debate, *ARDA Guiding Paper Series*, State College, PA: The Association of Religion Data Archives at The Pennsylvania State University, 2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Dinham and Jones, Religion, Public Policy and the Academy [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Grace Davie Foreword to Adam Dinham and Matthew Francis, *Religious Literacy*, forthcoming 2015 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Adam Dinham and Matthew Francis, *Religious Literacy*, forthcoming 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Britain*, forthcoming 2014, p [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. See Adam Dinham and Martha Shaw, “What’s RE for?”, *RE Online*, April 14 2014, accessed August 30 2014, http://www.reonline.org.uk/supporting/re-matters/news-inner/?id=23867 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Anders Backstrom and Grace Davie, Foreword to Anders Backstrom et al. (eds.), *Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe. Volume 2: Gendered, Religious and Social Change*, ix [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. (see Dinham 2015) [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Britain*, forthcoming 2014, p [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
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    [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. This project is not yet confirmed for funding at the time of writing, but the conceptualisations framing the proposal will become part of the public domain as publications in various formats in due course, regardless of the outcome of the proposal. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)