

Beliefs about God across Time and Countries

Tom W. Smith

NORC/University of Chicago

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## Introduction

In 1966 the cover of Time magazine (April 8) asked the provocative question, “Is God Dead?” Three years later Time’s cover (December 26, 1969) raised a new query, “Is God Coming Back to Life?” Social scientists have also waivered back and forth about the global state of religion and it likely future (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008). Standard secularization theory has argued that societies become less religious as they develop with education and the rise of science undermining both religious belief and religious practices (Kay, 1997; Voas, 2009). Others, while still finding a shift to secularization with development, have modified standard secularization theory. Norris and Inglehart (2011) argue that development reduces “existential insecurity” and this in turn lessens the demand for (or need for) religion. Others have argued that religion has been undergoing and will continue to undergo a transformation (such as a rise in spirituality alongside a weakening of organized religion, Smith, 2009), but not a clear decline. Still others see little secularizing trends (Greeley, 2003). The so-called supply-side school emphasizes the enduring demand for religion (Stark, 1999; Stark and Finke, 2000).

This paper focuses on one central, but relatively neglected, aspect of secularization and religious change, belief in God (Kay, 1997; Norris and Inglehart, 2012; Smith, 2009; Ziebertz, 2002). The international Social Survey Program (ISSP) has asked three questions focusing on belief in God (Appendix 1). The first covers six levels of belief which can be characterized as 1) atheists, 2) agnostics, 3) deists, 4) waivers, 5) weak believers, and 6) strong believers. The second question asks about changes in belief in God over the life course and consists of consistent atheists, current atheists – but former believers, current believers – but former atheists, and consistent believers. The third question is an agree/disagree item asking about belief in a personal God (i.e. “a God who concerns himself with every human being personally”).

The ISSP Religion studies covered 18 countries in 1991 (counting East and West Germany and Northern Ireland and Great Britain separately), 33 countries in 1998, and 42 countries in 2008. This paper analysis the 30 countries that were in at least two of the three ISSP rounds and appear in the 1991-2008 merged ISSP Religion file created by GESIS.

### Cross-National Rakings of Belief in God

Table 1 shows the rank in 2008 on atheism (listed from high to low) and strong belief in God (listed from low to high). Atheism ranges from 52% in the former East Germany to less than 1% in the Philippines. Strong belief shows largely the reverse pattern falling from 84% in the Philippines to 4% in Japan (and second lowest at 8% in East Germany). Countries with high atheism (and low strong belief) tend to be ex-Socialist states and countries in northwest Europe. Countries with low atheism and high strong belief tend to be Catholic societies, especially in the developing world, plus the United States, Israel, and Orthodox Cyprus. In the case of Poland, it appears that its strong Catholicism trumps the secularizing influence of Socialism. There is also evidence that religious competition and/or religious conflict may stimulate higher belief. Belief is high In Israel which of course has a sharp conflict between Judaism and Islam, in Cyprus which in divided along religious and ethnic lines into Greek/Orthodox and Turkish/Muslim entities, and in Northern Ireland which is split between Protestant and Catholic

communities and shows much higher belief levels than the rest of the United Kingdom. In the United States there is relatively little overt religious conflict, but intense religious competition across both major religions and denominations within Christianity. The one country that shows a low association between the level of atheism and strong belief is Japan. Japan ranked lowest on strong belief, but also in the lower half on atheism (a difference of 18 positions across the two rankings when the average difference in positions was only 2.7 places). Japan is distinctive among countries in having the largest number of people (32%) in the middle categories of believing sometimes and the agnostic, not knowing response. This pattern is consistent with a general Japanese response pattern of avoiding strong, extreme response options (Smith, 2004).

Table 2 shows belief in 2008 about changes in belief in God over time. The first column shows consistent atheists and runs from a high of 59% in East Germany down to 2% in Poland. The second column shows consistent believers ranging from 13% in East Germany to 94% in the Philippines. The reversed rankings are quite similar across almost all countries and closely match the pattern shown about belief in God in Table 1.

Table 3 shows that the percent believing in a personal God (“who concerns himself with every human being personally”) rises from 8% in East Germany to 92% in the Philippines. Once again the rankings closely follow those in Tables 1 and 2.

Tables 4 and 5 combine the three measures of beliefs about God in one index. Table 4 shows strong, traditionalist believers on all three questions - those certain that God exists who have always believed in God and who strongly agree that there is a personal God. Table 5 shows the opposite group, strong atheists - those who don't believe in God who have never believed in God and who strongly disagree that there is a personal God. Strong believers range from 60% in the Philippines down to 2.5% in East Germany, while strong atheists run from almost none (0.1%) in the Philippines to 46% in East Germany.

#### Changes in Belief in God over Time

Changes in belief in God have generally been modest in magnitude, but belief has tended to diminish over time. As Table 6A shows, the % saying they were atheists increased in 15 of 18 countries from 1991 to 2008 with an average increase of 1.7 percentage points. For 1998 to 2008, atheists grew in 23 of 30 countries for an average gain of 2.3 points. Conversely, as Table 6B indicates, certain belief in God declined in 15 of 18 countries from 1991 to 2008 with an average decrease of 2.4 points and from 1998 to 2008 losses occurred in 23 of 30 countries for a similar average decline of 2.3 points. Likewise, Table 6C shows that never believing in God rose in 14 of 17 countries from 1991 to 2008 for an average increase of 1.6 points and increased in 20 of 29 countries from 1998 to 2008 by an average gain of 2.2 points. As Table 6D indicates, the decline in belief in a personal God was somewhat weaker. From 1991 to 2008 it fell in 10 of 18 countries for an average drop of 0.7 points. For 1998 to 2008 belief in a personal God declined in 19 of 30 countries by an average of 1.9 points.

From 1991 to 2008, Israel, Russia, and Slovenia showed consistent movement towards greater belief (i.e. less atheists, less people never having believed in God, and more agreeing that there is a

personal God). Five countries had a mixed pattern with some measures moving towards and some away from belief (West Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Philippines, and the United States). Ten countries showed consistent decline in belief (Australia, Austria, East Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, and Poland). For 1998 to 2008 five countries (West Germany, Israel, Japan, Russia, and Slovenia) showed consistent growth in belief. Nine countries (Denmark, East Germany, Hungary, the Philippines, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States) had a mixed pattern with movement (mostly small) in opposite directions. Sixteen countries showed decreases in belief on all measures.

While Russia and Slovenia showed consistent movement towards greater belief, counter to some other evidence of a general religious “revival” among ex-Socialist states (Norris and Inglehart, 2011; Smith, 2009), there is no general increase in belief in the former Soviet bloc. Across the four measures of change and eight countries, 12 showed movement in the religious direction and 20 away from belief. Most of the changes in either direction were small.

For Israel the religious shift may reflect the growing size of the orthodox Jewish and right-wing population and the relative decline of the more secular and leftist segment in Israeli society (Rebhun and Waxman, 2004). The original Zionist movement that re-established Israel was of course “religious” since it was a “Jewish” movement, but the movement had a strong secular and Socialist component to it. That orientation seems to have diminished in recent decades and been supplanted by a more overtly religious perspective.

Another way of looking at change over time is to look at the item on consistency in beliefs about God over one’s lifetime. Table 7 compares those shifting towards faith (“I believe in God now, but I didn’t use to.”) with those moving away from belief (“I don’t believe in God now, but I used to.”). In 2008 there was a net gain in belief across the life course in 10 countries and a decline in 19 countries. The gains averaged 4.0 points and the losses -6.8 points for an overall change of -2.8 points.

#### Cross-National Differences across Age Groups

Table 8A shows that in 2008 in 29 of 30 countries certain belief in God increased with age. The average increase from those 27 and younger to those 68+ was 20.0 points. Similarly, Table 8B indicates that in 2008 in 27 of 30 countries never believing in God fell with age. The average decrease was 13.7 points. Likewise, agreeing that there is a personal God increased with age in 2008 in 28 of 30 countries by an average of 15.8 points. Overall, belief increased with age in 83 of 89 comparisons (93%) and averaged +16.5 across the three measures. Only one country, Israel, showed a consistent reversed pattern with belief declining with age by an average of -13.1 points. The Philippines, Russia, and Japan each had a single negative association with age, but across all three measured showed increased belief with age.

Looking at the differences across adjoining age groups shows that the largest increases were most often between the 58-67 year olds and those 68+ (Having biggest difference Lt 28 to 28-37 18.5%; 28-37 to 38-47 9.0%; 38-47 to 58-67 20.2%, and 57-68 to 68+ 42.7%). This suggests that belief in God is

especially likely to increase among the oldest groups, perhaps in response to the increasing anticipation of mortality occurring.

A comparison was also carried out of changes across time with cohort. It showed little clear indication overall of either aging or cohort effects. Across the five cohorts that could be tracked from 1998 to 2008 certain belief in God decreased in 64 instances and increased in 86 cases. Decreases and increases were exactly balanced (50% each) for the three cohorts under age 48 in 1998. Increases then grew to 63% for the 48-57 cohort in 1998, to 73% for the 58-67 cohort in 1998. This interaction further supports the idea that there is an aging effect in which belief increases as the anticipation of mortality rises. But there is also some evidence of a cohort effect. Comparison of the entering cohorts (less than 28) in 1998 and 2008 indicates lower belief in 2008 than in 1998 in 77% of the countries; an average decline of 2.5 points. This suggests that new cohorts are starting adulthood with lower belief than earlier entering cohorts, perhaps due to growing secularization over time.

It is noteworthy that of the only three countries that had increases in overall belief on all three measures (Israel, Russia, and Slovenia), they were also the only countries that had increases in belief across all cohorts.

## Conclusion

Belief in God has decreased in most countries, but the declines are quite modest especially when calculated on a per annum basis. It is only the repetition of the modest declines across measures and countries that makes the case for a general diminution in belief in God. This is further illustrated by the situation in the United States. Belief in God remains high, but has slowly eroded from the 1950s to the present (Chaves, 2011; Smith, 2009 & 2012). If the modest, general trend away from belief in God continues uninterrupted, it will accumulate to larger proportions and the atheism that is now prominent mainly in northwest Europe and some ex-Socialist states may spread more widely. But it is also possible that the pro-belief “exceptions” (Russia, Slovenia, and Israel) may become more widespread and belief may make more of a general rebound perhaps in response to a growth in “existential insecurity,” from a nationalistic, in-group growth in religious identity (e.g. Arab, Islamic movements, Hindu nationalism, etc.), or from some other societal impetus.

While the age-group differences suggest the possibility of changes across cohorts that represent larger, more widespread, and longer-term declines in belief in God, these figures confound cohort and aging effects and the analysis suggests that a substantial component of the age-group differences results from aging effects rather than from changes across cohorts. This is supported by earlier analysis of church attendance and religious identification that indicates aging/life-cycle effects (Smith, 2009).

While there is a modest, general shift away from belief in God, there is enormous variation across countries in the level of believers, atheists, and intermediate groups. Certitude that God exists ranges from 84% in the Philippines to 4% in Japan and conversely atheism rises from less than 1% in the Philippines to 52% in the East Germany. Similarly, strong believers run from 60% in the Philippines down to 2.5% in East Germany, while strong atheists rise from nearly zero in the Philippines to 46% in East

Germany. Even within the former Socialist states, the range is enormous with East Germany of course anchoring the secular pole and Poland near the top for believers .

Thus, while there is a drift towards lesser belief in god consistent with secularization theory the changes are modest in magnitude and mixed in scope. Countries have shown and are likely to continue to show huge differences in levels and trends about belief in God and a homogenization of belief (or disbelief) is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future.

Table 1

## Countries Ranked on Atheism and Strong Belief in God (2008)

Country	% I don't believe in God.	Country	% I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it.
Germany (East)	52.1	Japan	4.3
Czech Republic	39.9	Germany (East)	7.8
France	23.3	Sweden	10.2
The Netherlands	19.7	Czech Republic	11.1
Sweden	19.3	Denmark	13.0
Latvia	18.3	Norway	14.8
Great Britain	18.0	France	15.5
Denmark	17.9	Great Britain	16.8
Norway	17.4	The Netherlands	21.2
Australia	15.9	Austria	21.4
Hungary	15.2	Latvia	21.7
Slovenia	13.2	Hungary	23.5
New Zealand	12.6	Slovenia	23.6
Slovakia	11.7	Australia	24.9
Germany (West)	10.3	Switzerland	25.0
Spain	9.7	New Zealand	26.4
Switzerland	9.3	Germany (West)	26.7
Austria	9.2	Russia	30.5
Japan	8.7	Spain	38.4
Russia	6.8	Slovakia	39.2
Northern Ireland	6.6	Italy	41.0
Israel	6.0	Ireland	43.2
Italy	5.9	Northern Ireland	45.6
Portugal	5.1	Portugal	50.9
Ireland	5.0	Cyprus	59.0
Poland	3.3	United States	60.6
United States	3.0	Poland	62.0
Chile	1.9	Israel	65.5
Cyprus	1.9	Chile	79.4
The Philippines	0.7	The Philippines	83.6

Table 2

## Belief in God Over Time (2008)

Country	I don't believe in God and I never have.	Country	I believe in God now and I always have.
Germany (East)	59.4	Germany (East)	13.2
Czech Republic	51.2	Czech Republic	19.7
Sweden	32.0	Japan	25.0
Latvia	29.5	Sweden	25.5
Japan	27.2	France	28.9
Norway	25.5	Norway	35.6
The Netherlands	24.7	Latvia	36.1
Denmark	24.3	Denmark	36.5
France	24.3	Great Britain	36.7
Hungary	23.1	Russia	37.3
New Zealand	21.1	New Zealand	37.9
Australia	20.6	Hungary	39.0
Great Britain	20.0	Australia	39.1
Slovenia	19.1	The Netherlands	39.8
Slovakia	14.2	Switzerland	47.8
Switzerland	12.4	Slovenia	47.9
Russia	10.9	Slovakia	51.4
Germany (West)	9.2	Germany (West)	54.2
Israel	8.6	Spain	67.4
Spain	8.4	Ireland	70.6
Italy	7.4	Northern Ireland	71.4
Portugal	5.5	Italy	72.1
Northern Ireland	4.6	Israel	73.2
United States	4.4	Cyprus	76.5
Ireland	3.3	Portugal	78.9
Cyprus	2.4	Poland	80.2
The Philippines	2.1	United States	80.8
Chile	2.0	Chile	87.9
Poland	1.9	The Philippines	93.5



Table 3

Believing in a Personal God (2008)

	% Agreeing
Germany (East)	8.2
Czech Republic	16.1
France	18.7
Sweden	19.1
Japan	24.0
The Netherlands	24.4
Norway	25.7
Great Britain	26.9
Slovenia	26.9
Austria	27.4
Denmark	28.2
Australia	28.5
Hungary	30.9
Germany (West)	32.0
New Zealand	34.2
Latvia	38.1
Spain	39.1
Russia	40.8
Switzerland	45.0
Slovakia	51.0
Italy	54.0
Cyprus	55.8
Portugal	58.1
Northern Ireland	59.5
Poland	59.6
Ireland	64.1
Israel	66.5
United States	67.5
Chile	71.8
The Philippines	91.9

Table 4

Strong Believers in God, 2008<sup>a</sup>

The Philippines	60.2
Israel	38.0
United States	35.0
Cyprus	30.5
Chile	29.0
Slovakia	28.4
Northern Ireland	25.8
Poland	23.6
Portugal	18.9
Ireland	17.8
Italy	16.7
New Zealand	16.7
Russia	16.4
Australia	15.9
Spain	13.2
Denmark	12.7
Norway	11.2
Switzerland	11.2
The Netherlands	11.0
Germany, West	10.9
Great Britain	10.3
France	9.9
Hungary	9.6
Slovenia	7.9
Sweden	7.1
Latvia	6.9
Czech Republic	5.8
Japan	3.3
Germany, East	2.5

<sup>a</sup>=% Certain God exists; Always believed in God; and Strongly agree there is a personal God

Table 5  
Strong Atheists, 2008<sup>a</sup>

Germany, East	46.1
Czech Republic	26.2
France	19.3
Sweden	18.4
Denmark	16.7
Norway	15.9
The Netherlands	15.3
Hungary	12.6
Great Britain	11.2
Slovenia	10.5
Australia	9.7
Slovakia	8.6
New Zealand	8.5
Latvia	8.2
Japan	7.6
Russia	6.4
Germany, West	4.9
Spain	3.6
Switzerland	3.6
Israel	3.3
Northern Ireland	2.6
Portugal	2.5
Ireland	1.9
Italy	1.7
United States	1.2
Cyprus	1.1
Chile	0.6
Poland	0.5
The Philippines	0.1

<sup>a</sup>% Don't believe in God; Never believed in God; and Strongly disagree there is a personal God

Table 6

## Changes in Belief in God over Time

A. % Atheist	1991-2008	1998-2008
Australia	+ 7.3	+ 6.4
Austria	+ 5.1	+ 2.0
Chile	----	+ 0.1
Cyprus	----	+ 0.3
Czech Republic	----	+18.4
Denmark	----	+ 3.4
France	----	+ 5.6
Germany (East)	+ 3.4	- 1.7
Germany (West)	+ 0.1	- 1.9
Great Britain	+ 7.8	+ 8.1
Hungary	+ 2.9	+ 1.0
Ireland	+ 3.0	+ 2.4
Israel	- 9.6	- 1.8
Italy	+ 3.2	+ 1.7
Japan	----	- 1.8
Latvia	----	+ 9.1
The Netherlands	+ 3.7	+ 2.6
New Zealand	+ 4.9	+ 4.8
Northern Ireland	+ 5.1	+ 3.0
Norway	+ 7.9	+ 5.8
The Philippines	+ 0.3	+ 0.1
Poland	+ 1.3	+ 1.0
Portugal	----	+ 2.7
Russia	- 11.7	- 11.7
Slovakia	----	+ 0.7
Slovenia	- 5.2	- 0.3
Spain	----	+ 1.2
Sweden	----	+ 2.6
Switzerland	----	+ 5.2
United States	+ 0.7	- 0.1

Table 6 (continued)

## B. % Certain that God Exists

	1991-2008	1998-2008
Australia	- 5.1	- 1.6
Austria	- 6.5	-10.6
Chile	----	- 1.0
Cyprus	----	- 6.0
Czech Republic	----	- 6.8
Denmark	----	- 0.4
France	----	- 5.8
Germany (East)	- 1.4	- 1.5
Germany (West)	- 0.6	+ 3.3
Great Britain	- 6.4	- 4.7
Hungary	- 7.0	- 2.9
Ireland	- 15.4	- 0.7
Israel	+23.0	+ 6.7
Italy	- 10.5	- 6.7
Japan	----	+ 0.4
Latvia	----	- 1.1
The Netherlands	- 3.3	- 5.0
New Zealand	- 2.5	- 4.0
Northern Ireland	- 15.2	- 4.9
Norway	- 4.7	- 3.5
The Philippines	- 2.2	+ 5.5
Poland	- 5.0	- 5.5
Portugal	----	- 9.4
Russia	+17.3	+ 6.9
Slovakia	----	- 1.3
Slovenia	+ 2.7	+ 1.7
Spain	----	- 7.0
Sweden	----	- 2.0
Switzerland	----	- 1.6
United States	- 0.8	+ 0.2

Table 6 (continued)

## C. % Never Believed in God

	1991-2008	1998-2008
Australia	+10.3	+ 8.9
Austria	----	----
Chile	----	+ 0.0
Cyprus	----	+ 1.5
Czech Republic	----	+ 18.6
Denmark	----	- 1.6
France	----	+ 3.3
Germany (East)	+ 9.9	+ 3.1
Germany (West)	+ 0.1	- 3.5
Great Britain	+ 8.4	+ 6.8
Hungary	+ 2.7	+ 1.4
Ireland	+ 2.7	+ 2.1
Israel	- 9.7	- 3.8
Italy	+ 3.5	+ 3.5
Japan	----	- 1.5
Latvia	----	+10.6
The Netherlands	+ 4.2	+ 3.8
New Zealand	+ 8.8	+ 8.5
Northern Ireland	+ 3.3	+ 0.6
Norway	+ 8.3	+ 5.9
The Philippines	+ 0.2	- 0.8
Poland	+ 1.1	+ 0.4
Portugal	----	+ 2.0
Russia	- 25.5	- 16.7
Slovakia	----	- 0.1
Slovenia	- 3.1	- 0.7
Spain	----	- 0.1
Sweden	----	+ 4.2
Switzerland	----	+ 4.9
United States	+ 2.6	+ 1.8

Table 6 (continued)

## D. Agrees That God Personally Concerned with People

	1991-2008	1998-2008
Australia	- 9.1	- 7.7
Austria	- 9.3	- 4.7
Chile	----	- 1.6
Cyprus	----	-11.5
Czech Republic	----	- 5.0
Denmark	----	- 8.3
France	----	- 7.8
Germany (East)	- 2.6	- 4.0
Germany (West)	+ 0.7	+ 0.9
Great Britain	- 5.5	- 2.2
Hungary	+ 3.7	+ 4.0
Ireland	- 7.4	- 7.7
Israel	+20.4	+ 2.8
Italy	+ 0.8	- 1.3
Japan	----	+ 2.7
Latvia	----	- 2.7
The Netherlands	- 3.4	- 4.4
New Zealand	- 4.1	- 2.5
Northern Ireland	- 14.2	- 2.1
Norway	- 5.8	- 1.1
The Philippines	+ 2.9	+ 3.7
Poland	- 3.7	+ 0.5
Portugal	----	- 16.2
Russia	+19.1	+ 9.3
Slovakia	----	+ 0.1
Slovenia	+ 3.6	+ 3.0
Spain	----	- 0.7
Sweden	----	- 1.3
Switzerland	----	+ 8.0
United States	+ 2.0	+ 2.3

Table 7

Changes in Belief in God (2008)

“I believe in God now, but I didn’t use to.”

Minus “I don’t believe in God now, but I used to.”

Australia	- 12.0
Chile	+ 0.1
Cyprus	+ 0.2
Czech Republic	- 5.5
Denmark	- 6.1
France	- 11.3
Germany (East)	- 6.9
Germany (West)	- 5.4
Great Britain	- 10.1
Hungary	+ 1.0
Ireland	- 0.9
Israel	+ 2.6
Italy	- 2.7
Japan	- 1.5
Latvia	+ 11.9
The Netherlands	- 14.0
New Zealand	- 4.0
Northern Ireland	- 1.0
Norway	- 11.0
The Philippines	+ 0.8
Poland	- 1.8
Portugal	+ 0.6
Russia	+ 16.0
Slovakia	+ 5.6
Slovenia	- 8.5
Spain	- 12.4
Sweden	- 5.5
Switzerland	- 8.2
United States	+ 1.4



Table 8

## Differences by Age by Country in 2008

## A. % Certain God Exists

Country	Less Than 28	28-37	38-47	48-57	58-67	68+	68+ - LT 28
Australia	14.7	21.1	27.9	23.0	29.7	36.7	+ 22.0
Austria	7.7	22.8	16.4	22.2	33.3	31.9	+ 24.2
Chile	66.1	77.6	80.7	85.7	85.3	92.8	+ 26.7
Cyprus	47.8	47.8	58.2	69.0	74.3	89.4	+ 41.6
Czech Rep.	6.0	6.5	7.2	11.4	12.7	26.4	+ 20.4
Denmark	8.1	11.1	10.7	11.5	14.6	22.3	+ 14.2
France	7.9	12.2	12.4	14.7	19.8	25.7	+ 17.8
Germany (East)	0.0	6.8	6.8	8.9	8.3	12.7	+ 12.7
Germany (West)	17.8	25.2	29.2	27.0	26.2	36.4	+ 18.6
Great Britain	9.2	19.5	16.7	14.5	17.9	22.3	+ 13.1
Hungary	15.9	17.2	16.3	22.4	30.7	40.4	+ 24.5
Ireland	29.5	31.1	42.1	42.7	65.2	70.1	+ 40.6
Israel	69.1	66.1	66.0	68.0	64.9	52.7	- 16.4
Italy	35.8	29.0	35.7	37.1	42.5	63.5	+ 27.7
Japan	2.0	2.7	3.2	4.8	4.1	7.8	+ 5.8
Latvia	11.7	20.7	14.4	23.8	29.4	38.9	+ 27.2
The Netherlands	20.8	16.4	18.2	14.8	23.0	34.3	+ 13.5
New Zealand	18.8	23.3	27.7	29.9	31.6	30.2	+ 11.4
Northern Ireland	35.3	33.5	40.2	41.5	57.2	70.6	+ 35.3
Norway	8.5	12.6	15.9	13.3	21.1	18.3	+ 9.8
The Philippines	76.4	85.8	85.0	85.1	85.2	85.9	+ 9.5
Poland	48.4	58.4	62.6	66.4	66.3	79.3	+ 30.9
Portugal	41.4	38.8	41.8	56.9	55.5	75.4	+ 34.0
Russia	28.2	29.0	31.4	23.8	26.8	41.8	+ 13.6
Slovakia	34.5	33.8	31.1	37.3	48.9	60.7	+ 26.2
Slovenia	17.6	22.8	20.9	20.3	23.1	39.1	+ 21.5
Spain	21.8	28.9	30.0	36.1	48.3	65.4	+ 43.6
Sweden	8.4	9.3	10.0	11.5	8.2	14.9	+ 6.5
Switzerland	15.6	23.3	21.1	27.4	19.9	42.2	+ 26.6
United States	53.8	59.4	55.0	63.8	69.0	66.0	+ 12.2

Table 8 (continued)

## B. % Never Believed

Country	Less Than 28	28-37	38-47	48-57	58-67	68+	LT 28 – 68+
Australia	26.8	35.4	20.3	19.3	8.8	8.1	+ 18.7
Chile	4.3	1.7	0.9	0.9	2.1	0.6	+ 3.7
Cyprus	3.9	3.6	3.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	+ 3.9
Czech Rep.	68.1	60.6	54.4	55.5	40.5	21.2	+ 46.9
Denmark	29.2	27.9	25.4	24.1	23.9	15.5	+ 13.7
France	34.6	34.9	25.0	22.3	15.7	12.1	+ 22.5
Germany (East)	71.6	63.6	72.6	62.2	49.0	42.7	+ 28.9
Germany (West)	15.3	15.3	7.5	9.8	4.4	5.8	+ 9.5
Great Britain	33.0	23.9	25.6	16.1	8.4	11.5	+ 21.5
Hungary	28.5	31.8	26.7	25.0	15.3	8.3	+ 20.2
Ireland	4.9	5.5	3.2	2.0	1.6	0.4	+ 4.5
Israel	8.0	8.2	7.3	5.4	9.5	16.8	- 8.8
Italy	12.0	14.1	4.7	10.6	4.6	0.5	+ 11.5
Japan	31.4	28.8	35.4	26.3	27.5	17.2	+ 14.2
Latvia	42.6	24.0	32.1	29.1	23.5	17.6	+ 25.0
The Netherlands	34.2	36.1	29.5	24.9	16.7	11.3	+ 22.9
New Zealand	28.7	26.2	21.2	19.8	15.4	11.4	+ 17.3
Northern Ireland	5.8	8.3	3.5	4.5	5.4	0.0	+ 5.8
Norway	41.1	30.5	26.0	25.1	17.6	9.6	+ 31.5
The Philippines	3.2	1.4	1.2	1.9	3.1	1.3	- 1.9
Poland	3.5	2.4	2.5	1.3	1.0	0.0	+ 3.5
Portugal	13.1	5.3	5.6	4.4	1.5	2.9	+ 10.2
Russia	5.9	9.3	12.2	12.0	17.7	14.3	- 8.4
Slovakia	19.0	18.3	19.4	11.3	8.7	3.5	+ 15.5
Slovenia	27.5	21.7	13.9	18.3	21.0	11.2	+ 16.3
Spain	17.5	10.2	10.9	5.5	5.0	1.4	+ 16.1
Sweden	42.1	37.6	38.1	31.3	24.6	17.4	+ 24.7
Switzerland	21.1	13.8	14.9	10.4	11.0	4.3	+ 16.8
United States	6.7	5.5	6.8	1.7	2.9	1.2	+ 5.5

Table 8 (continued)

## C. % Agree God Personally Concerned

Country	Less Than 28	28-37	38-47	48-57	58-67	68+	68+ - LT 28
Australia	22.8	25.8	28.7	28.6	30.7	35.8	+ 13.0
Austria	23.1	26.1	24.4	30.6	23.8	36.3	+ 13.2
Chile	59.5	71.0	76.5	72.4	79.6	81.4	+ 21.9
Cyprus	48.8	48.2	51.9	60.7	70.0	83.0	+ 34.2
Czech Rep.	10.4	11.0	11.2	14.0	17.4	36.6	+ 26.2
Denmark	22.0	28.2	27.7	27.6	28.1	35.0	+ 13.0
France	10.9	18.9	17.6	18.8	21.8	24.2	+ 13.3
Germany (East)	6.0	6.8	9.4	11.1	7.3	7.3	+ 1.3
Germany (West)	26.8	31.3	36.3	26.3	30.6	38.2	+ 11.4
Great Britain	20.9	27.5	28.4	21.5	30.7	32.2	+ 11.3
Hungary	27.8	28.6	23.5	26.8	30.1	51.7	+ 23.9
Ireland	49.3	55.4	65.0	65.6	78.7	88.5	+ 39.2
Israel	70.5	69.4	69.6	66.5	58.8	56.5	- 14.0
Italy	50.7	38.0	56.3	42.4	62.1	72.4	+ 21.7
Japan	25.5	26.1	21.7	25.3	22.5	23.8	- 1.7
Latvia	26.5	35.2	29.9	37.0	48.4	63.4	+ 36.9
The Netherlands	25.0	20.2	22.0	18.1	25.1	36.4	+ 11.4
New Zealand	27.1	35.6	35.5	35.1	36.5	35.3	+ 8.2
Northern Ireland	51.3	46.1	58.3	56.4	69.2	79.0	+ 27.7
Norway	18.4	25.8	21.6	26.5	32.2	29.8	+ 8.2
The Philippines	90.4	92.6	92.1	93.8	89.1	92.3	+ 1.9
Poland	51.6	57.8	64.1	57.1	59.7	75.7	+ 24.1
Portugal	46.7	45.5	58.2	52.6	73.0	77.8	+ 31.1
Russia	39.1	37.7	45.7	35.2	42.7	48.1	+ 9.0
Slovakia	45.5	47.4	44.4	48.8	58.0	71.9	+ 26.4
Slovenia	21.8	27.7	23.5	27.9	29.4	32.9	+ 11.1
Spain	29.4	31.8	29.8	36.5	47.0	61.2	+ 31.8
Sweden	18.5	16.5	18.6	22.0	16.4	23.6	+ 5.1
Switzerland	42.7	44.3	49.7	47.1	36.5	46.5	+ 3.8
United States	65.6	64.6	66.4	75.2	74.3	72.5	+ 6.9

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## Appendix: Question Wordings

- A. Please indicate which statement below comes closest to expressing what you believe about God.

I don't believe in God.

I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is any way to find out.

I don't believe in a personal God, but do believe in a Higher Power of some kind.

I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others.

While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God.

I know that God really exists and I have no doubts about it.

Can't Choose

No Answer

- B. Which best describe your beliefs about God?

I don't believe in God now, and I never have.

I don't believe in God now, but I used to.

I believe in God now, but I didn't used to.

I believe in God now and I always have.

Can't Choose

No Answer

- C. Do you agree or disagree with the following...

There is a God who concerns himself with every human being personally.

Strongly Agree/Agree/Neither Agree nor Disagree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Can't Choose/No Answer