

2 percent of Church of England ministers say humans invented God

by [Trevor Grundy](#)

October 30, 2014

c. 2014 Religion News Service

CANTERBURY, England (RNS) A new survey finds 16 percent of the Church of England's licensed ministers are unclear about God, and 2 percent think God is a human construct.

The survey of 1,500 Anglican clergy in England, Scotland, and Wales conducted by the international market research agency YouGov, suggests the church's leadership is confused about the nature—even the very existence—of God.

Older clergy were more likely to hold unorthodox beliefs than younger clerics. Nearly 90 percent of those ordained since 2011 believe in God compared with 72 percent of those who became priests in the 1960s.

There are about 19,500 licensed ministers in England's established church whose supreme governor is Queen Elizabeth II.

Interpreted nationwide, the YouGov survey shows there are around 390 licensed ministers who do not believe in God and as many as 3,120 who are unsure about the existence or nature of God.

The church's governing body, the General Synod, does not take action against such views and clergy are left relatively free to deviate from doctrine without punishment.

The Independent newspaper quoted Alison Ruoff, a lay member of the General Synod, saying she could not understand how someone could be a priest at the same time as not believing in God.

"Clergy just preach social clap-trap these days," she said. "We expect better from them."

The Westminster Faith Debates, a series of public forums that tackle the latest research on religion and values, commissioned the survey.