

S W E D I S H  
C O L L E G I U M  
*for* ADVANCED STUDY

Lecture

**GRACE DAVIE**

Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Exeter

*Religion in Modern Britain:  
Revisiting a Research Site*

Thursday, 17 March, 6:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall  
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala

The lecture will be followed by a reception. Prior registration is required.  
Please contact [rsvp@swedishcollegium.se](mailto:rsvp@swedishcollegium.se) no later than 14 March to sign up.



## ABOUT GRACE DAVIE

Grace Davie is Professor Emeritus of Sociology of Religion at the University of Exeter. She is a past-president of the American Association for the Sociology of Religion (2003) and of the Research Committee 22 (Sociology of Religion) of the International Sociological Association (2002-06).

In 2000-01 she was the Kerstin Hesselgren Professor at Uppsala University, where she returned for extended visits in 2006-07, 2010 and 2012. In January 2008, she received an honorary degree from Uppsala. She has also held visiting appointments at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (1996) and at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (1998 and 2003), both in Paris.

In addition to numerous chapters and articles, she is the author of *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (Blackwell 1994), *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (OUP 2000), *Europe: the Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (DLT 2002), *The Sociology of Religion: A Critical Agenda* (Sage 2007/2013) and *Religion in Britain: A Persistent Paradox* (Wiley-Blackwell 2015). She is the co-author of *Religious America, Secular Europe?: A Theme and Variations* (Ashgate 2008), and co-editor of *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Ashgate 2003) and *Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe* (2 vols) (Ashgate 2010 and 2011).

## ABSTRACT

The essence of this lecture lies in the following paradox: British people are becoming steadily more secular, but at the same time religion as a topic is increasingly present in public debate. I explore this apparent contradiction in the religious life of Britain by bringing together six different factors that push and pull in different directions: cultural heritage, the inherited model, a shift from obligation to consumption, new arrivals, secular reactions and - not least - an increasing awareness that secular Britain (like most of Europe) is an exceptional case in global terms.

Particular attention is paid to London which is no longer the beacon of secularity envisaged in the 1960s, but has become instead a thriving religious market, a shift which mirrors the change in London itself. Like many of its counterparts in Europe, London has become a truly global city.