

# Confident faith, contested culture

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What evangelicals think about  
their place in UK society

evangelical alliance  
together making Jesus known







# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Key findings</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Are Christians free to practise their faith?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Standing by beliefs in public .....	8
How have things changed? .....	9
<b>Living faith in public life</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Disadvantages in public life.....	11
Advantages in public life .....	11
High-profile roles .....	12
Relationship with public bodies .....	13
<b>Living out faith in the workplace</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Sharing our faith with those around us</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Hate crime and hostility</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Christian nationalism</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Faith in politics</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>25</b>

# Introduction

Christians in the United Kingdom continue to enjoy significant freedom to practise their faith. Every week, churches meet openly without fear of state interference. Believers pray, worship, read scripture and share the gospel in public spaces, workplaces, schools, universities, homes and online. These freedoms are real, meaningful and worthy of gratitude.

At the same time, there is a growing sense among many Christians that the cultural environment in which these freedoms are exercised is changing. While formal legal protections remain largely intact, perceptions of pressure, marginalisation and misunderstanding are increasing. This tension – between objective freedoms and subjective experience – sits at the heart of this report.

Concerns about religious freedom are not new. Over the past two decades, Christian organisations have repeatedly explored questions about law, rights and public policy. The Evangelical Alliance, in partnership with others, has produced resources such as [Speak Up, Living for Jesus at Work](#) and [Clearing the Ground](#), which outline legal protections and practical guidance. This report does not attempt to replicate that legal analysis. Instead, it focuses on listening to evangelical Christians themselves.

We ask a series of interrelated questions:

- Do evangelicals feel free to practise their faith in contemporary Britain?
- Has this freedom increased, decreased or stayed the same in recent years?
- How do believers experience public life, the workplace and everyday relationships?
- What forms of hostility or opposition are encountered?
- How do evangelicals understand emerging debates around Christian nationalism and political engagement?

The responses reveal a complex picture. On the one hand, there is widespread confidence that Christians can still live out their faith openly. On the other, there is a strong perception that doing so has become more socially difficult, particularly where Christian convictions diverge from dominant cultural norms.

Alongside this, we observe a continued diversity of political views among evangelicals, coupled with high levels of concern about the potential importation of Christian nationalist ideas in the UK context.

Our aim is not to draw definitive conclusions about every issue but to provide a snapshot of evangelical perceptions and experiences and to support churches, leaders, advocates and policymakers as they seek to respond faithfully and wisely.

## Key findings

- 1** Over **88%** of evangelicals feel they can freely live out their faith in the UK.
- 2** Around **48%** believe it has become harder to practise their faith publicly in the past five years.
- 3** Nearly half feel there are more challenges for Christians serving in public life.
- 4** More than **55%** feel able to be open about their faith in the workplace.
- 5** Fewer than **5%** report experiencing a hate crime, with the true figure likely lower once legal definitions are applied.
- 6** Around **35%** report experiencing non-criminal hostility.
- 7** Over **64%** are concerned about the rise of Christian nationalism in the UK.
- 8** Evangelical voting patterns remain politically diverse and volatile.

# Methodology

An online survey was developed to explore evangelical views on living out faith in public life, experiences in the workplace, confidence in sharing faith, encounters with hostility or hate crime, and perspectives on politics and national identity.

The survey was distributed through Evangelical Alliance member communications, research panels, social media channels and church networks. It was open from 17 November to 3 December 2025 and received 884 responses from evangelical Christians across the UK.

Both quantitative and qualitative questions were included. Closed questions provided statistical data, while open-text responses allowed participants to describe experiences in their own words. Selected themes from these responses are referenced throughout the report.

Some political data is drawn from a separate Evangelical Alliance survey of 1,478 respondents conducted in October 2025 using comparable questions to national opinion polling.

Respondents were asked a range of demographic questions, including age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. These data are not reported here but inform internal analysis. While the sample cannot be assumed to be fully representative of all UK evangelicals, it reflects a broad cross-section of engaged church members and leaders.



# Are Christians free to practise their faith?

To what extent do you agree with the statement: “As a Christian, I am free to live out my faith in the UK today”?

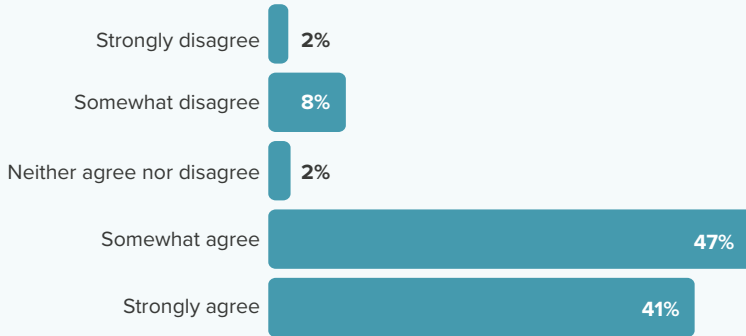


Fig 1.

Being able to live out one’s faith openly is a cornerstone of a free and democratic society. Encouragingly, 88% of respondents agreed that they are free to live out their faith in the UK.

“I feel more confident to share my faith because the atmosphere seems to be more open.”

“People are more accepting of faith, more open and searching more openly.”

However, fewer than half strongly agreed. This nuance matters. It suggests that while most evangelicals acknowledge the existence of freedom, a substantial proportion experience uncertainty, hesitation or limitation in practice.

“I feel disapproved of and viewed as non-tolerant for having clear beliefs about behaviour and morality.”

“I must consider my response to a situation or issue considerably. I never want to offend but sometimes I know my beliefs can feel offensive.”

This gap between formal freedom and lived confidence is significant. It indicates that the issue is not primarily about legal prohibition but about cultural and social conditions.

## Standing by beliefs in public

To what extent do you agree with the statement: “I feel I can take a public stand on issues that concern me on account of my faith”?

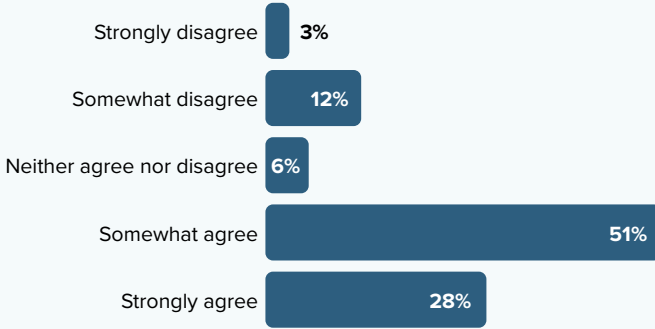


Fig 2.



When asked whether they could take a public stand on issues that concern them because of their faith, 79% agreed. This reflects a continued willingness among evangelicals to articulate convictions that may be countercultural. Respondents frequently described this as part of Christian discipleship: obedience to Christ, faithfulness to scripture and a desire to speak truth with love.

Yet over 15% felt unable to take such a stand. Common reasons included fear of being misunderstood, concern about damaging relationships and uncertainty about how to communicate convictions without causing offence. This highlights a pastoral and discipleship opportunity; many Christians desire to be faithful but feel ill-equipped to navigate complex cultural conversations. Churches can play a crucial role in providing teaching, modelling gracious dialogue and creating spaces to practise these skills.

## How have things changed?

Over the past five years, do you feel it has become easier or harder to publicly practise your beliefs?

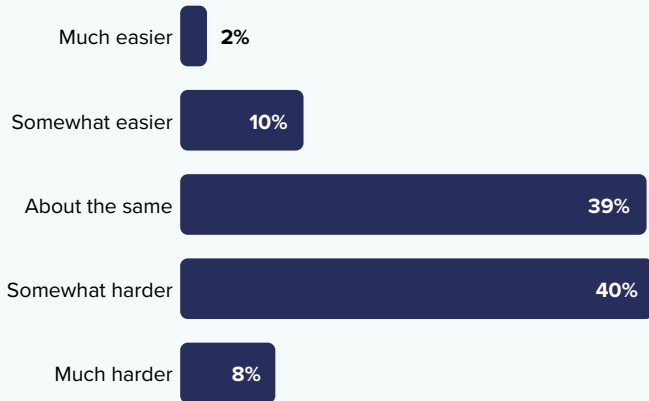


Fig 3.

Around 48% of respondents felt that practising their faith publicly has become harder over the past five years. Slightly fewer felt it has stayed the same, and around 12% felt it has become easier.

Perceptions of increased difficulty were rarely linked to specific legislative changes. Instead, respondents pointed to cultural shifts: greater sensitivity around issues of sexuality and gender, increased polarisation, and a sense that traditional Christian views are more likely to be interpreted as harmful or intolerant.

Some also referenced online culture, where social media platforms amplify conflict and reduce nuance. High-profile cases of individuals facing backlash for expressing Christian beliefs contribute to a wider atmosphere of caution, even when most believers have not personally experienced sanctions.

Those who felt it has become easier often cited personal growth in confidence and spiritual maturity, as well as a perception that society is increasingly open to spiritual conversations. Several noted that disillusionment with materialism and secularism has led many people to explore faith.

Taken together, these responses suggest a complex environment: one in which Christian beliefs may be more contested, yet spiritual curiosity may also be increasing.

# Living faith in public life

Which of the following statements best describes your view of engaging in public life in comparison to those of other faiths or none?

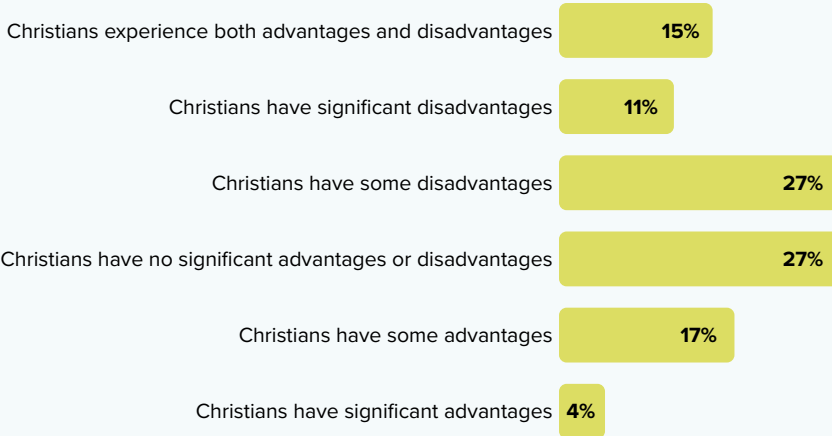


Fig 4.

Public life is understood here as roles involving visibility, leadership or influence beyond immediate personal networks – including politics, education, media, civil society and community leadership.

Responses revealed a wide range of perceptions about whether being a Christian is advantageous or disadvantageous in such contexts.





## Disadvantages in public life

Those who identified disadvantages often pointed to negative stereotypes about Christians and the church. Media portrayals of Christianity are sometimes associated with judgementalism, intolerance or political extremism, which can create barriers for Christians seeking to contribute constructively in public roles.

Several respondents contrasted this with their experience of personal relationships, where colleagues and neighbours often respond positively once they know a Christian individually.

## Advantages in public life

Those who perceived advantages frequently referenced the UK's Christian heritage. They noted the presence of the Church of England, the monarch's role as supreme governor, and the historical influence of Christian ethics on law and institutions.

For some, this heritage provides a degree of cultural familiarity and legitimacy that can make Christian contributions more easily understood than those of less well-known faith traditions.

## High-profile roles

Over the past five years, do you feel that there are greater opportunities or challenges for Christians in high-profile public positions?

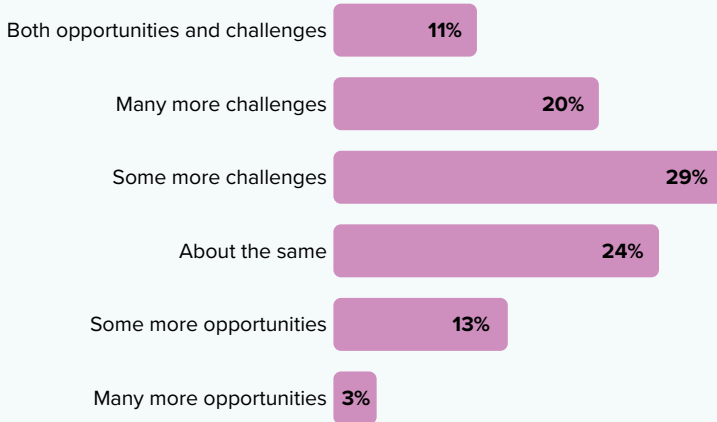


Fig 5.

Nearly half of respondents felt that there are more challenges today for Christians in high-profile public positions, with around one in five saying there are many more challenges.

High-profile Christian politicians who hold orthodox views on marriage or sexuality were frequently mentioned as examples of individuals facing intense scrutiny. Respondents expressed concern that such scrutiny can deter Christians from pursuing public roles or encourage them to conceal their faith.

At the same time, around 16% felt there are more opportunities, often due to the ability of public figures to speak about faith through media and online platforms. These responses highlight a tension: visibility increases both opportunity and vulnerability.





## Relationship with public bodies

Do you feel that UK public bodies support or restrict you in living your life in accordance with your beliefs?

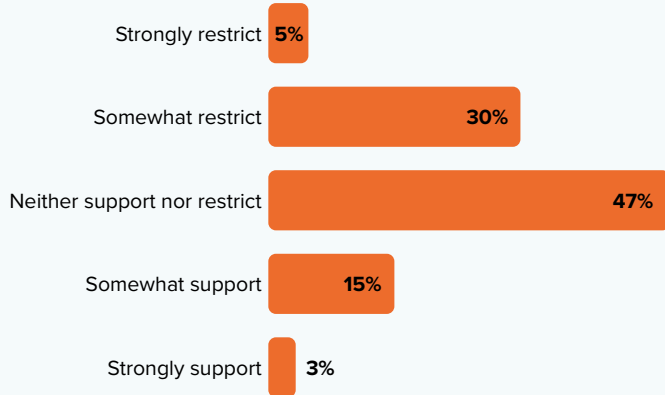


Fig 6.

Almost half of respondents felt neither supported nor restricted by public bodies. Around 35% felt restricted. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who felt restricted were more likely to say that practising their faith has become harder, suggesting a link between perceptions of state institutions and broader cultural concerns.

The diversity of responses underlines that experiences vary significantly depending on sector, role and local context.

# Living out faith in the workplace

Please select the statements below that you agree with regarding your life as a Christian in the workplace:



Fig 7.

Workplace experience is a key aspect of everyday Christian life. 60% of respondents felt able to be open about their faith at work. Many described faith as shaping their work ethic, relationships and resilience. Common themes included integrity, compassion, patience and perseverance.

However, a significant minority reported challenges:

- 24% felt hesitant to talk about their faith.
- 11% reported criticism from colleagues.
- 2% reported formal sanctions.

Criticism ranged from sceptical questioning to dismissive or mocking comments. Some described being excluded from conversations or assumed to hold extreme views.

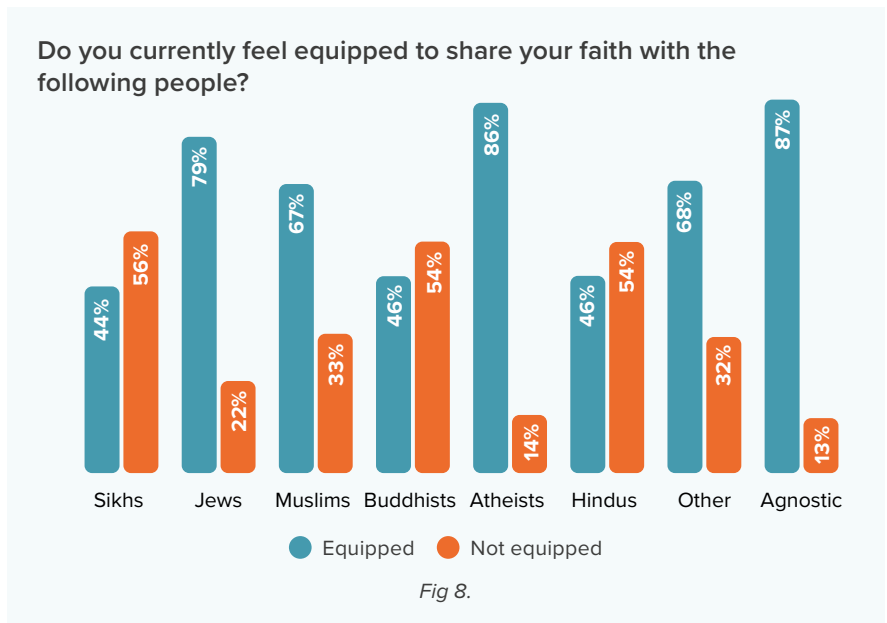
Reports of sanctions included warnings, disciplinary meetings and, in rare cases, dismissal. While these reports are helpful to hear, we do not have any further information or alternative perspectives so no judgement can be made about the appropriateness of these actions.

These findings suggest that while most evangelicals can practise their faith at work, uncertainty and caution remain common.

Churches and Christian organisations can support believers by:

- Providing guidance on legal protections.
- Offering practical advice on appropriate and respectful communication.
- Encouraging Christians to be exemplary colleagues.

## Sharing our faith with those around us



Respondents were asked how equipped they felt to share their faith with people of different religious backgrounds or beliefs.

Most felt confident sharing with atheists, agnostics, Muslims and Jews. Confidence was slightly lower regarding Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, likely reflecting less frequent interaction with people of these faiths.

In general, if sharing your faith, would you expect to be received positively or negatively by the following groups?

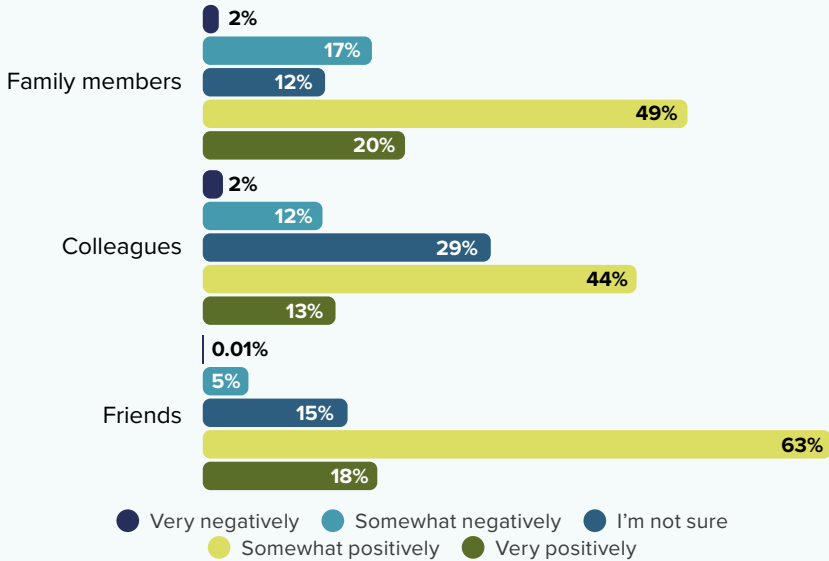


Fig 9.

When considering everyday relationships:

- Over 80% expected a positive response from friends.
- Most expected a positive response from family.
- Nearly 30% were unsure how colleagues would respond.

These findings suggest strong relational opportunities to talk about faith, particularly among existing friendships.

Uncertainty regarding colleagues may reflect workplace norms that treat faith as a private matter, as well as the rise of remote and hybrid working, which reduces informal interaction.

Overall, the data challenges assumptions that most people are hostile to hearing about faith, and should encourage believers to share appropriately and sensitively.

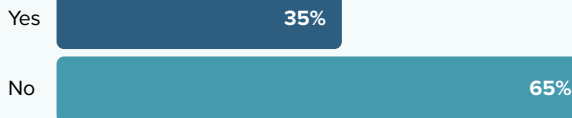


## Hate crime and hostility

Using the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s definition of hate crime – a criminal offence motivated by bias – just over 5% of respondents initially reported being victims of such a crime. However, qualitative responses indicated that many of these incidents would probably not have met the threshold for criminal behaviour. Common examples included workplace bullying or verbal hostility.

Home Office statistics for England and Wales show around 500 recorded Christian hate crimes annually<sup>1</sup>, representing a very small proportion of the Christian population, suggesting that criminal level hostility is very rare. A factor to consider is that some criminal activity experienced by Christians may or may not be motivated by bias against Christians. For example, vandalism of church premises may or may not be because it is a Christian building, but it is usually difficult or impossible to tell.

**Have you personally experienced hostility because of your Christian faith that you feel doesn’t constitute a hate crime?**

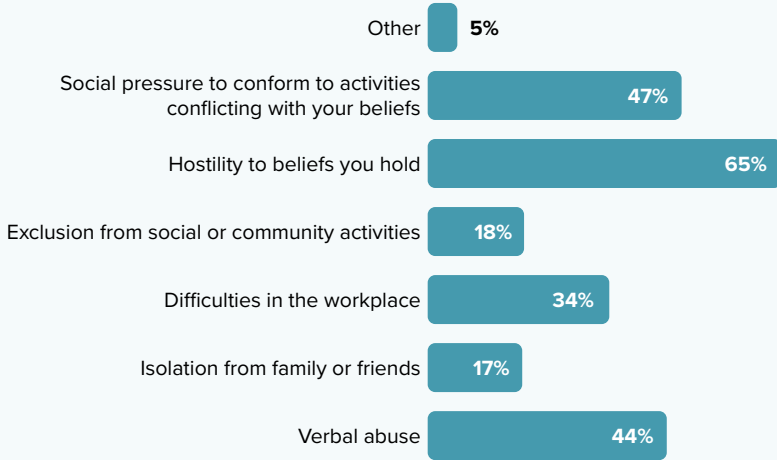


*Fig 10.*

1 Home Office 2025 – Hate crime statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025>

At the same time, around 35% of respondents reported experiencing non-criminal hostility, suggesting that while not victims in the eyes of the criminal law many Christians feel that their faith and beliefs contribute to negative experiences.

**If so, please select the option that best describes the event:**



*Fig 11.*

The most common forms were:

- Hostility to beliefs.
- Social pressure to conform.
- Verbal abuse.

Around a third of those who had experienced such hostility reported difficulties in the workplace, which reflects findings reported above. These experiences contribute to the perception that for many evangelicals being openly Christian is becoming more socially costly, even if legal protections remain strong.

# Christian nationalism

Christian nationalism is becoming an increasingly prominent topic of discussion within UK government, churches and wider society.

To what extent do you agree with the statement: “Christianity has deeply shaped the UK’s political culture and democratic process”?

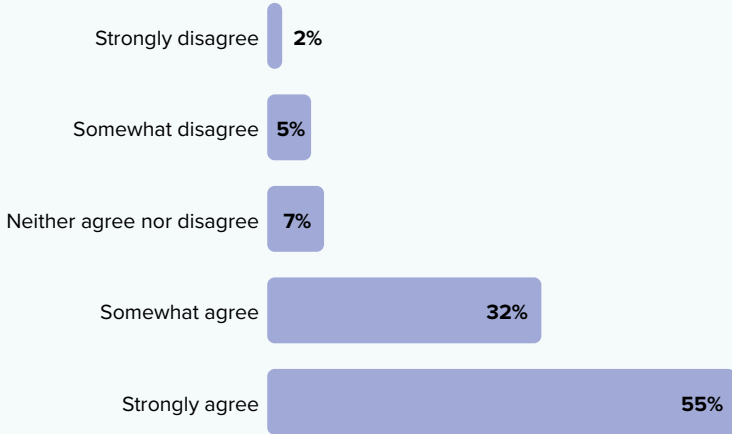


Fig 12.

Many evangelicals believe Christianity has played a foundational role in shaping the nation. Over 85% of respondents agreed that Christianity has deeply shaped the UK’s political culture and democratic processes, closely matching findings from a similar 2024 survey. This strong consensus reflects a widespread perception that Christian values have historically underpinned public life and institutions.



**To what extent do you agree with the statement: “The UK is a Christian country, and this should be reflected in its laws”?**

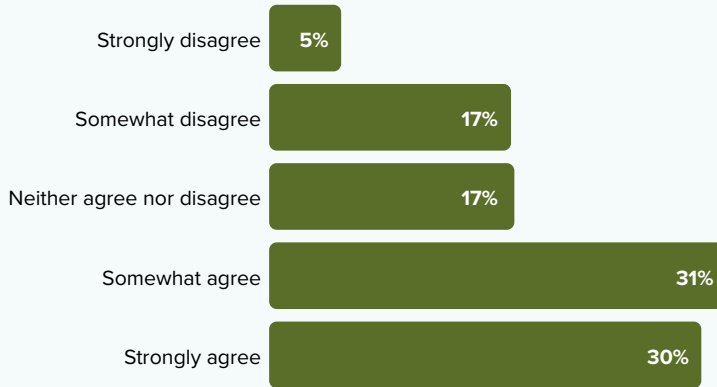


Fig 13.

A significant proportion of evangelicals also believe the UK can still be described as a “Christian country”. Over 60% agreed that this identity should be reflected in the nation’s laws, with nearly half of these strongly agreeing. However, notable minorities either disagreed or felt neutral, indicating a substantial internal divide. Compared to 2024, support for this view has increased by roughly 7%, suggesting a growing sense among some believers that the UK possesses a uniquely Christian character. This shift mirrors trends seen in the United States and may contribute to calls for “reclaiming” Britain’s Christian heritage – an idea often associated with Christian nationalist thinking.

**To what extent do you agree with the statement: “Christians have a God-given responsibility to influence all areas of society”?**

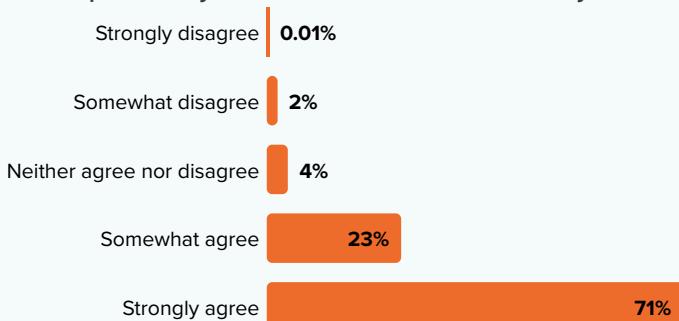
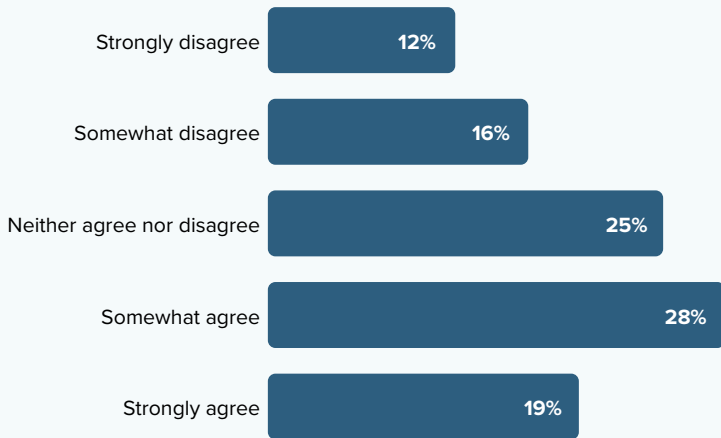


Fig 14.

There is far greater consensus on Christians' role in public life. Nearly 94% of respondents agreed that Christians have a God-given responsibility to influence all areas of society, and more than 70% strongly agreed. This highlights a shared belief that Christians should engage in and lead at every level of decision-making, from local communities to national government. Such convictions are rooted in evangelical history, where believers have often sought social reform and moral transformation based on Christian principles.

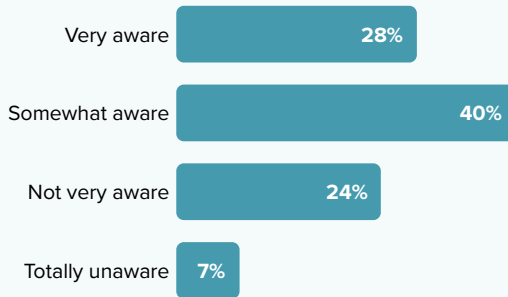
**To what extent do you agree with the statement: “Christianity should have a preferential position in politics, policymaking and wider society compared to other religious groups”?**



*Fig 15.*

Opinions become more divided when questions turn to preferential treatment for Christianity over other religions. Under half agreed that Christian perspectives should receive some form of preference in policymaking, but a quarter were neutral and more than a quarter disagreed, including 12% who strongly opposed the idea. These results suggest significant hesitation about moving from influence toward dominance, reflecting concerns about fairness, pluralism and the nature of a diverse society.

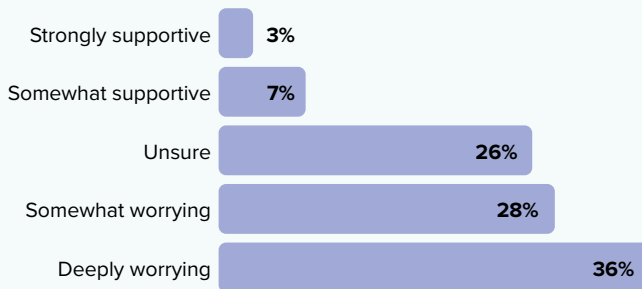
**There is increasing discussion in the media and in politics about Christian nationalism in the UK. To what extent are you aware of Christian nationalism in the UK?**



*Fig 16.*

Awareness of Christian nationalism is high among evangelicals, 92% of respondents reported some level of awareness, though only 28% felt “very aware”. The largest group described themselves as “somewhat aware”, while only 7.5% were completely unfamiliar with the concept. This growing awareness underscores how present the issue has become within churches and public discourse. It also points to the need for church leaders to develop nuanced and informed understandings of Christian nationalism so they can guide congregations thoughtfully during a time of political polarisation and increasing overlap between faith and political identity.

**Which of the following statements best describes your view of Christian nationalism?**

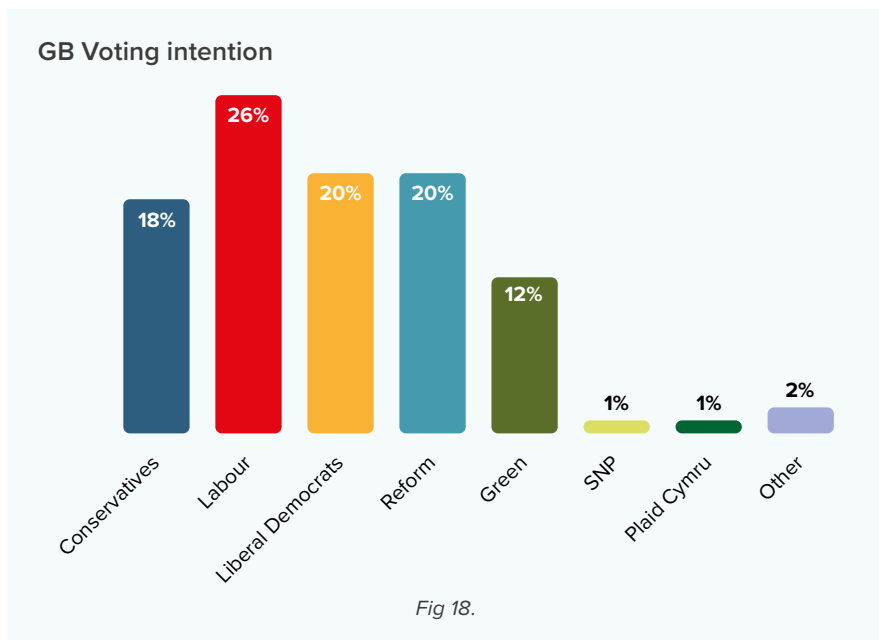


*Fig 17.*

When asked about their feelings toward Christian nationalism, most respondents expressed concern. Over 60% said they viewed Christian nationalism as worrying, and 36% described the trend as “deeply worrying”. At the same time, more than a quarter were unsure how to feel, indicating uncertainty about what Christian nationalism actually means in a UK context. This ambiguity complicates efforts to address the issue effectively and highlights the need for further research, clearer definitions and open dialogue.

Overall, the findings reveal both a strong sense of Christian influence and responsibility in society and significant caution about merging national identity too closely with religious identity.

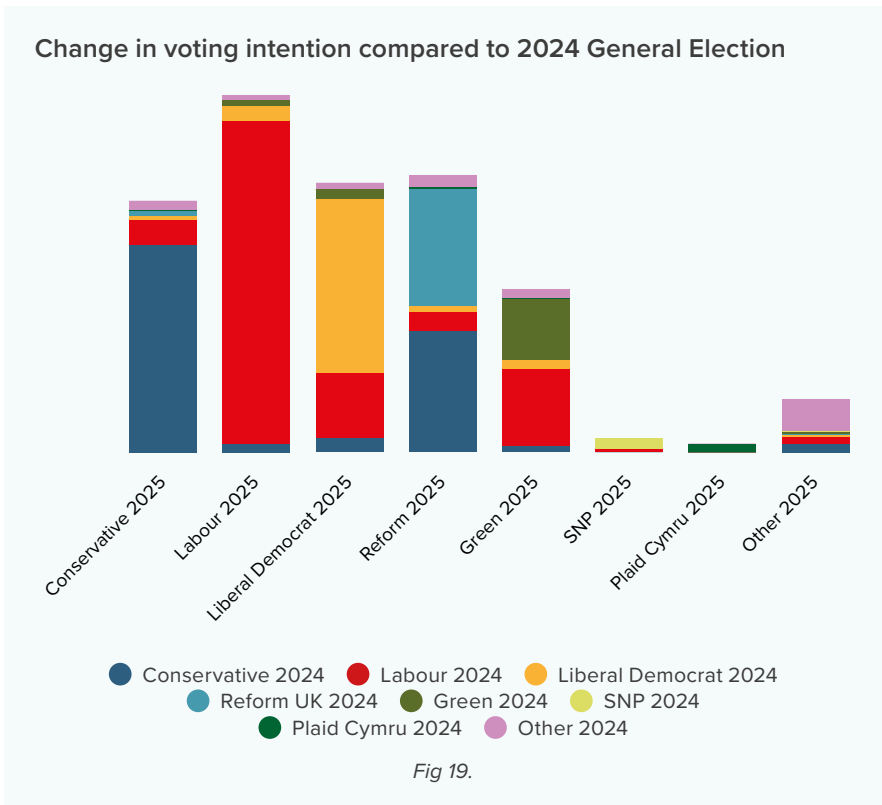
## Faith in politics



A key feature of UK evangelical engagement in politics is the diversity of party-political support. In surveys over recent years and electoral cycles, it is apparent that evangelical voting habits are not significantly different to the general public. In October 2025 the Evangelical Alliance surveyed nearly 1,500 evangelicals and, using comparable questions to opinion polls of the general public, found that Labour were the party most favoured, on 26%, with Reform and the Liberal Democrats both on 20%. The Conservative Party attracted 18% of support and the Green Party 12%.



Of greatest interest is the high volatility of evangelical voting habits. We found that nearly half of all respondents had changed who they would vote for compared to the party they did vote for in July 2024. The most significant movement was from Conservative voters shifting to Reform and Labour voters moving to the Green Party, with the Liberal Democrats also benefiting.



# Conclusion

This report reflects the complex picture for evangelicals in public life in the UK. Most evangelicals are confident in their freedom to practise their faith, to worship openly and to contribute to public life, with their faith as part of who they are. The freedoms Christians, and people of all faiths, enjoy are substantial and should not be minimised.

And yet, it would be an incomplete picture without acknowledging the growing sense of social pressure that affects evangelical Christians and how this contributes to a cautious living out of their faith and a concern that this freedom may be restricted. For many evangelical Christians, the challenge is less about what the law says and more about how their conviction is perceived and received in an increasingly contested cultural landscape.

Across public life, the workplace and everyday relationships, evangelicals describe a widening gap between formal freedom and lived confidence. Hostility is rare, and where it does take place, it is rarely criminal. It is often relational, cultural and reputational. Fear of misunderstanding, of being labelled intolerant, or of jeopardising professional relationships leads some Christians to self-censor or withdraw.

At the same time, the data also reveals openness, curiosity and spiritual searching among friends, family and colleagues, reminding us that the social environment is not uniformly hostile and that opportunities for faithful witness remain significant.





The findings on politics and Christian nationalism underline the importance of careful, discerning engagement. Evangelicals continue to affirm a strong sense of responsibility to influence society for the common good, while also expressing deep concern about conflating Christian faith with national identity or political dominance. The diversity and volatility of evangelical voting patterns further challenge simplistic narratives and point to a community that is politically engaged but far from monolithic.

Taken together, these insights suggest several implications. Churches and Christian organisations have a vital role in equipping believers to navigate cultural complexity with wisdom, confidence and grace. Policymakers and public bodies should recognise that while legal protections are largely effective, perceptions of exclusion or marginalisation can still shape participation. Further listening, research and dialogue are needed, particularly around emerging political ideologies and the future of faith in public life. While this obviously applies to Christian nationalism as examined in this report, it also relates to ongoing secular squeezing of faith out of public life.

This report does not claim to offer final answers. Instead, it provides a snapshot of evangelical perceptions in this current moment of cultural uncertainty and transition. The task for evangelicals is not simply to defend freedom but to cultivate confidence: confidence to live faithfully, to speak respectfully and to contribute constructively to a diverse and democratic society.





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