

Religious pluralism and Society



Census results

	Christian	No Religion
2001	71.7%	14.8%
2011	59.3%	25.1%
2021	46.3%	37.2%

Prince Charles had stated that when he becomes King he wants his title to be changed...

His Majesty [name], by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, **Defender of the Faith.**



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However, this didn't actually happen when he became King.



Why are people more aware of other/ different faiths?

- ✓ Foreign travel & holidays
- ✓ Increased variety and access to methods of communications- books, newspapers internet.
- ✓ Increase in multi faith communities, diversity in schools and the workplace.
- ✓ RE lessons
- ✓ Supermarkets stocking food for non Christian festivals.

Encountering other faiths

☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can share common values • Adopt new ways of thinking • Develop relationships • Set examples of cooperation, dispel prejudice and promote peace. • Encountering different beliefs will encourage them to think more deeply about their own. • Learn about the faith and practice of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might undermine the uniqueness of the Christian message. • Children may become interested in faiths beyond Christianity.

Interfaith dialogue: the relationship/ communication between different religions. Can be known as inter-religious dialogue.

Aims

- ❖ Promote peace and understanding.
- ❖ Build relationships
- ❖ Create mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.
- ❖ Identify areas of tension.
- ❖ Break down stereotypes and prejudices.
- ❖ **NOT trying to convert**

Church of England- "*Sharing the gospel of salvation.*" Four strands of Interfaith Dialogue:

1. Dialogue of daily Life: informal conversations about personal belief.
2. Dialogue of common good. Adherents of different faiths work together for common good of the community.
3. Dialogue of mutual understanding. People getting together for formal debates.
4. Dialogue of spiritual life. When people of different religions meet together for prayer and worship.

David Ford: there are two strands of history which led to new directions in interfaith dialogue. The Holocaust :

- Germany has traditionally been Christian, yet many of the population had enthusiastically supported the Nazi regime which persecuted the Jews.
- It can't be denied that the Church played some role in the presentations of the Jewish faith as a "failed" religion. Its followers had gone in the wrong direction by not accepting Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament.
- Christianity had superseded Judaism.
- After the war the Christian/ Jewish tensions led Rabbis to initiate interfaith discussion. The produced a document called "Dabru Emey" (Speak the truth).
- **Key points:**
- Christianity and Judaism share the same God and seek authority from the same scripture.
- Christianity and Judaism should work together for peace.
- Jews have made significant contributions to culture and economies.
- **Conclusions:**
- Christianity and Judaism need to communicate.
- Cooperation should become a normal part of Jewish and Christian life.

Tensions between Islam and the west at the start of the 20th Century.

- In 2007 leading Muslim scholars sent a letter to Churches called "A Common World between Us and You."
- It highlighted the passion both Muslims and Christians have for worshipping one God and for loving you neighbour.
- But it did not claim that the religions were the same.
- Emphasised that both religions have responsibility to work for everyone's good. Both faiths need to live up to their own teachings.
- Called for on going dialogue between the two faiths.

Dialogue doesn't just have to be between Christianity and other faiths. It can be between two separate faiths.

Catholic Church and interfaith dialogue

A Papal Encyclical is a letter sent from the Pop to the Church to address a significant issue.

Redemptoris Missio focused on Christian missionary work in a multi faith world and makes it clear from the outset that Christian mission to non-Christians remains essential. Jesus Christ is the one saviour and Christ is the only way in which God is revealed to the world. Christians have always been, and should continue to be, empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring others to the Christian faith.

For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!
(1 Corinthians 9:16)

Interfaith dialogue should be seen within the context of a Christian mission, rather than in opposition to it. Whilst the Pope takes an exclusivist approach there is need for respect in interfaith dialogue, it should be based on "hope and love" and it should be used to uncover universal truths. When dialogue is conducted with honesty and humility it can overcome "prejudice, intolerance and misunderstandings."

"then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ Jesus is

"the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."^[a]

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

