

RE, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE) –

Closure work for Year 9 Full Course

Continuing with this topic on Christian Practices, you're going to consider the changing religious landscape in Britain. We have learnt this in class already, however, this work will stretch and challenge you further.

Tasks

1. Watch this clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7s0FOY2mo8>
2. Make at least ten, bullet point notes whilst watching the clip
3. Write this question in your books: Is religion dying out in Britain?
4. Using your notes from the clip, your notes from previous lessons and the knowledge, below, produce at least two arguments in agreement with this question and at least two arguments in disagreement. Do not use 'I think'. Try to use the sentence starters of: 'Some people might agree that religion in Britain is dying out, because' and 'some people might argue that religion in Britain is not dying out, because'. Try and refer to data, below, too.

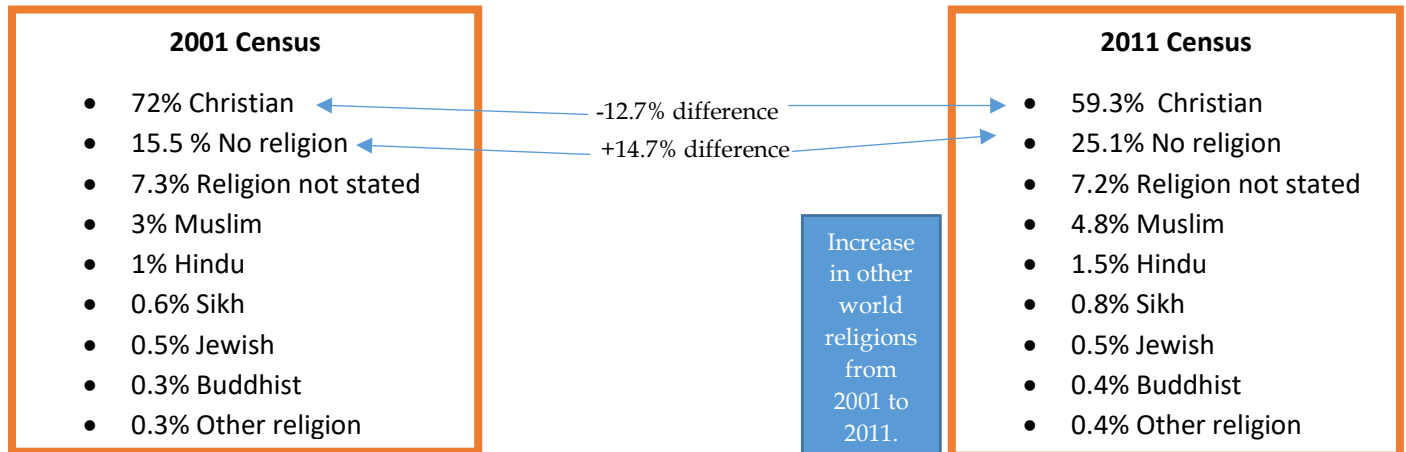
Please note: You will need the notes from this work as the basis for next week as you will be producing a piece of extended writing surrounding this question (more instructions will be on GO ready for next week's work).

Is religion in Britain dying out?	
Yes	No
<i>Some people might say yes, because</i>	<i>Some people might say no, because</i>
<i>Some people might say yes, because</i>	<i>Some people might say no, because</i>

Christianity in Britain

2011 census compared to 2001 census

- Showing an increase in diverse religious and non-religious beliefs and practices
- Over half of those who responded to the census considered themselves Christian
 - The results when asked, "What is your religion?"



Is Britain a Christian country?

Yes:

- UK laws, festivals (e.g. Christmas) and traditions (shops being closed on Sundays) that are rooted in the Christian tradition. Our law system is founded on the Ten Commandments, e.g. 'do not murder' and 'do not steal.'
- Britain has an established Church and its bishops sit in the House of Lords and debate on political issues
- The Queen's title is, "Defender of the Faith".
- 'Cultural Christianity' is socially accepted because of tradition. We sing carols, celebrate Christian festivals (e.g. Christmas and Easter), accept Christian symbols and phrases, (e.g. "it is my cross to bear") and attend marriages and special ceremonies in religious buildings.
- Our public holidays still orientate around the Christian calendar, e.g. Christmas and Easter
- Our national flag includes in it St. George's cross, reminding us once again of our Christian heritage



No:

- Attendance in church is declining. The public worship of Christianity is dying out.
- Laws about abortion and same-sex marriage have changed, despite opposition from religious groups (e.g. some Roman Catholics)
- More faiths are contributing to British culture nowadays, e.g. Muslims, Hindus and Jews.
- Rise of other religions and the non-religious in Britain (see 2011 census)

UK Laws, Festivals and Traditions

Christianity was introduced to Britain by the Romans almost 2000 years ago. This long history means it is deeply embedded in the laws, festivals and traditions of the UK. The Church of England is the 'established' religion of England. This means that it has links to the government and other official bodies such as the court system (people swear an oath on the Bible when testifying in court).

In 16th Century, King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope and made himself the head of the Church of England. Today, as well as being Head of State, the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. All monarchs are crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Traditions

- 'Keep holy the Sabbath day', is a Commandment. Traditionally Christians go to church on a Sunday and it was thought of as a 'day of rest'. As a result, the hours that shops can trade on a Sunday are restricted



- In a UK court, witnesses swear on the Bible that they are telling the truth. If they are from another religious tradition, they can choose to swear on their own holy book. Non-religious people can make a 'witness affirmation' where they promise to tell the truth without reference to a holy book
- Christian hymns and readings are often made at public events, for example the National Service of Remembrance held each year to commemorate those who died in the Second World War
- Lots of people in UK mark important life events, like marriage in a church, even if they are not religious



Laws

The UK parliament makes all UK laws by passing Acts of Parliament. It is made up of two 'houses', one of which includes 26 of the most senior Church of England bishops.

For laws to be passed they must be approved by both houses of parliament. So the Church of England has a direct role in shaping UK law.

Meetings of both houses of parliament open with Christian prayers and many of the laws of the UK reflect the teaching of some of the Ten Commandments, e.g. 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal.'

Festivals

- The Christian calendar influences UK public holidays, e.g. Christmas and Easter are still widely celebrated in UK
- School holidays fall over these times and many businesses will close
- Other Christian festivals, e.g. St. Valentine's Day are also celebrated, though for most people the religious context of the day is no longer important and it has become more of a 'secular' festival, celebrating romantic love
- Today, many people of other religious traditions may take time off work to celebrate their own festivals
- Bonfire night is celebrated in UK. It remembers the Gunpowder Plot, when plotters led by Guy Fawkes, attempted to blow up parliament.
- Some non-religious festivals, e.g. Notting Hill Carnival that happens each summer in London, celebrate the diversity of modern Britain with no specific focus on religion
- Non-religious groups, such as Humanists, might recognise World Humanist Day (in June) or Human Rights Day (in December) but they are not widely celebrated in UK

I'll crown ye! We're a Christian country after all!



Archbishop of Canterbury