

1.1 Religion as a Worldwide Phenomenon

Syllabus

- Differentiate between different types of religion
- Have a knowledge of the distribution of the major religions traditions and of trends within those traditions
- Understand that religious belief is ancient, diverse and dynamic
 - a. Types of religion – List the different types
 - b. World-wide distribution of religion – Give an account
 - c. Religion of Europe
 - d. Religious traditions in Ireland – Give examples
 - e. Religious trends in Ireland – describe with relevant evidence three major trends in religion in contemporary Ireland

Leaving Cert Questions based on 1.1

2010 HL

- b) Compare the range of different religions that exist in Ireland today with the range of different religions in another part of Europe (40m)

2015 HL

- a) i. Describe the general world-wide distribution of members today in each of the following religions: Buddhism / Christianity / Hinduism / Islam / Judaism

Definitions of Religion:

Religion is a living and evolving phenomenon. It is ancient, dynamic and diverse. The term religion has evolved over time. In relation to the time of our ancestors it is the way in which they attached meaning to key moments of their lives.

Karl Marx:

'Religion is the opium of the masses'

Ronald J. Wilkins

'Religion responds to the mystery of the universe'

People everywhere have deep questions:

- How did humans come to exist?
- What happens when we die?
- What is the meaning of life?

The variety of religions indicate the ways in which different community of believers have responded religiously to these mysterious questions of life. From their beliefs about the cosmos and human nature morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle is derived.

Religious faith offers hope in times of pain, confusion and emptiness. Over 50% of the populations of most countries adhere to the same religion or group within a parent religion

e.g. **Roman Catholicism:** 88% (Christian) Ireland / **Iran:** Shia 89% (98% Islamic) / **Israel:**

Judaism 77% / **US:** Protestant 52% / **Mauritania:** Islam 100%

A. List the different types of religion

1. Classification of Religion by Prophetic and Mystic

Mystic religions e.g. Hinduism – experience union with the Divine

Prophetic religions e.g. Islam – divine revelation to a messenger

All major world religions contain both prophetic and mystical elements

2. Classification of Religion by the Concept of deity i.e. How a religion perceives God

Theistic: Belief in the existence of Gods or a God

Monotheistic: One God rules all

Polytheistic: Many Gods

Pantheistic: Divine is present in all things

Non-theistic: Not believing in the existence of God

Primal/Tribal: A primal religion refers to the first account of human religion dating back pre literate era 50,000 BCE. Formed the basis of every religion that has since emerged.

3. Classification of Religion By Ancestry

Classifying religions by how they emerged from one another

Judaism – Christianity – Islam are Abrahamic faiths.

B. Give an account of the World-Wide Distribution of Religion

The Major World Religions:

Christian 2.1 billion - 33% - Roman Catholic 1.1 billion 16% - Protestant 6%

Dominant in North and South America, East and West Europe

Muslim 1.6 billion - 23%

Dominant in Middle East and North Africa

Hindu 900 million - 14%

India, Nepal, Mauritius

Buddhist 376 million - 6%

South East Asia and China (despite political oppression)

Jewish 14 million - 0.22%

6 million in the USA and 5 million in Israel

Other Religions:

Sikh 22 million - 0.36%

Taoism 20 million

Baha'i 7 million - 0.11%

Confucianism 6 million (4 million in Asia and 1.8 million in South Korea)

Primal- indigenous 6%

Chinese Traditional 6%

Non-religious 16%

C. Religion of Europe

History of Religion in Europe

- Religion of Europe has been traditionally Christian.
- Great Schism of the **11th Century** and Reformation of the **16th Century** divided Christianity.
- Age of Enlightenment of the **18th Century**: people began questioning religious orthodoxy.
- **20th and 21st Century**: new religious movements and secularisation. Migration of people in the **20th Century** to and from Europe have changed the religious profile

Religion in Contemporary Europe

Christianity 63%

Non believer/Agnostic 16%

Atheist 7%

Muslim 6%

Christianity in Europe (565 million)

Changes in settlement patterns and a growth in secularism have changed the religious profile. European Church attendance declined from 30% to 25% from 1990 to 2000. Christianity made up 93% of Europe over a Century ago, now it makes up 63%.

- Catholic Southern Europe

Spain – Inquisition

Italy – Roman Empire

Has an important social position

- Protestant Northern Europe

Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland (5 Scandinavian countries)

Recognise Protestant National state churches.

State / Church structures strongly in place.

Germany - Catholic and Protestant Churches enjoy equal strength

England and Wales – secularised – Low Church attendance – **1900** 6% **2000** 22%

Islam in Europe (44 million excluding Turkey)

Germany and France have the largest Muslim populations

5 million Muslims in Germany – NDP & PEGIDA

5 million Muslims in France

3 million in the United Kingdom - UKIP

50,000 in Ireland – Identity Ireland (Ireland's only right wing party)

Views of Muslims vary widely among European countries

Negative views prevail in Italy, Greece and Poland

Explosion of xenophobic right wing politics - UKIP in the UK – NDP & PEGIDA in

Germany – Identity Ireland, Ireland's only right wing party emerged in 2015.

Rise in anti-Islam protests with up to 25,000 in attendance in Germany 2015

Judaism in Europe (1.5 million)

About 4 million emigrated after the war mainly to US and Palestine

In 1939 9.5 million - In 1945 - 3.8 million

France is the home of largest Jewish community in Europe 500,000 Jews

1,000 anti-semitic incidents recorded in the UK in 2014

England has large Sikh and Hindu communities also

D. Give Examples of Religious Traditions in Ireland

Christianity (4 million)

Roman Catholic 3.8 million

Anglican 130,000

Anglican & Roman Catholic Church trace their origins to the ministry of St. Patrick, the patron Saint of Ireland and missionary and to the Celtic Church foundation in 5th Century. Roman Catholicism and Celtic Christianity became one – Making Ireland exclusively Catholic throughout the Middle-Ages.

Presbyterian 24,600

King James I Ulster Plantations was a scheme that 'planted' settlers in Ulster thus introducing Protestantism to Ireland. British rule in Ireland over the Centuries was interpreted by Irish Catholics as occupation and a drift grew between the two denominations. Catholics identified with Republicans and Protestants with Unionist, therefore it became hard to differentiate religion and politics. The Catholic Church influence was huge in the 21st Century. The 1937 Constitution, written in De Valera's time is still the law of the country. The Church dominated politics up until the 90's and still some laws such as the blasphemy law and the allowance to give preference to Catholic school children in Catholic schools remain in place today.

Census 2011

- **Roman Catholic: 3,861,000**
- **Church of Ireland: 129,000**
- **Muslim: 49,200**
- **Orthodox: 45,200**
- **Presbyterian: 24,600**
- **No religion: 269,000**

Although non-religious is the second biggest group in 2010 **70%** of Irish citizens responded that "they believe there is a God"

Weekly Mass Attendance

2006 mass attendance 43%

1981 mass attendance 92%

Census 2011 – Orthodox grew by 117%

E. Describe with relevant evidence 3 major trends in religion in contemporary Ireland

Trends in religion developing due to wealth, education, scientific and technological progress, globalisation, challenges to traditional authorities, increasing democracy and political co-operation

1. Secularism and Secularisation

Trend: the secularisation of Ireland

What is Secularism?

Secularism is a principle that states:

Organised religion should have no direct influence on society

Religious beliefs should be a private matter

Strict separation of the state from religious institutions

People of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law

All that can have meaning is in the **material** world

No 'other worldly' or transcendent source of meaning, **science** and that which can be proven should be far more influential

Origins

Rooted in the rise of secular humanism during the Renaissance

During the Enlightenment science became far more influential than religion as it challenged religious beliefs and authority.

What is Secularisation?

It is not a philosophy or a way of understanding of the world

It is a movement in culture in which society transforms from close identification with religious values toward nonreligious values

Culture of a society focus on nature and science to better mankind

Communist countries have tried and failed to eradicate organised religions

Ireland and Secularisation

8% secularist / 92% believe transcendent

Secularisation hasn't had a major impact on Ireland

An examination discovered that Ireland is resistance to secularisation although there are clear **secularist tendencies** that will seemingly prevail in the future

Lack of affiliation to mainstream religion

2011 Census 7% nonreligious, a 3% increase from 2006

Vagueness about belief in God

Only 60% students consider themselves

70% believe in God

22% in a transcendent

Student survey revealed 20% are Atheists and 40% believing in God suggesting that future generation will be more secularised

Decline in religious beliefs

Those who considered themselves nonreligious increased to 44% in 2012

Rapid fall in Church attendance

2006 mass attendance 43%

1981 mass attendance 92%

Religious structures will have little influence on ethical, economic, social thought or development

The Church is becoming less influential with teachings in regard to abortion, fornication and same-sex relations.

In contemporary Ireland there are secularist tendencies amongst young adults.

Although there are minor religious tendencies within the Irish community as the culture drifts away from a Catholic domination, ultimately Ireland has resisted secularisation, unlike in countries such as France. 93% of the country still recognise themselves as being a part of an organised religion, with 90% still Christian. The significant drop in mass attendance indicates that Ireland is moving towards a more personal commitment to God rather than communal. However young students show the possibility of allowing secularisation to occur in the future with only 40% believing in a God.

2. Islam

Trend: Changing Ireland's historically religious Christian distribution and diversifying it

Origins:

Historically there are no grievances between Islam and Christianity in Ireland

The Ottoman Empire: The Sultan sent £1,000 sterling and 3 ships full of food during the Famine

1950's - First known influx of Muslims in Ireland, students came here especially to study at the Royal College of Surgeons

1976 - The first Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre

1990's – Recent growth in numbers closely connected to the transformation of Ireland from a country of emigration to one of immigration as a consequence of the economic boom that started in the early 1990s and the beginning of the 'Celtic Tiger' years

Since **1991** the number of Muslims increased considerably after the arrival of Muslim refugees from Bosnia, Somalia and Kosovo, as well as asylum seekers and professionals and workers from various Islamic countries

1992 - Moosajee Bhamjee first and only Muslim TD

Today in Ireland

Muslim leaders in Ireland insist that as many as 500 Irish are reverting to Islam each year

Economic recovery will see an increase in immigrants entering Ireland again

Increasing Globalisation of the world also will lead to an increase

There are several student Islamic societies (ISOC) in the major universities

There are now around 20 mosques throughout Ireland and over 36 prayer centres

1991 Census – 4,000

2006 Census – 25,000

2011 Census - 50,000

More than 120% increase since 2002 making it one of the fastest growing religions in Ireland

The biggest non-Christian religion in Ireland is Islam. Muslims are projected to replace Protestantism as the 2nd most adhered to religion in Ireland by 2043.

3. Ireland and the Environment

Origins

Contemporary religious approach to the environment that is gaining momentum due to ongoing devastation in the natural world as a result of **an ecological crisis** that is caused by:

Technology – electricity using non-renewable energy

Politics – Nuclear War threat and armaments

Industries – releasing toxins

All 3 major of the major world religions that exist in Ireland today and make up more than 90% of the population emphasise the responsibility of humans to care for the earth

Judaism and Christianity

Exodus 23:10 stresses the important of allowing the land to renew itself by leaving it fallow one year in seven

Psalms – declare God's glory – leads to the idea of stewardship and not ownership

Islam

Role of humankind as Caliph (steward) - God's trustee on earth- Viceregent

'There is no altering the creation of Allah.' (*Surah 30:30*)

500 verses relating to the environment

Hindus

All of creation is a manifestation of God and not to be exploited

How is this trend manifested in Ireland?

What has caused the increased interest and respect for environment?

Current Environmental Crisis

Compelling to both believers and non-believers to act on issues

Pollution - Great Pacific Garbage Patch

Deforestation – extinguishing rainforests at a rate of an acre a second

Erosion

Becoming an ethical issue

Britain building nuclear power station just 150 miles from Ireland – any leaks wind would blow in a way that it would affect Ireland and not UK

- **Fr. Sean McDonagh** looks at Christian theology of environmentalism

- **An Tairseach Dominican Farm and Ecology Centre**

A Centre for Ecology & Spirituality & Organic Farm & Farm Shop

The mission of An Tairseach is to grow in awareness that the Earth is our home and home to all living beings

- **Green Party**

Founded in 1981 and in 2007 won 6 seats forming the coalition government

- **WEEE Scheme electrical and electronic equipment**

Manage the collection, recovery and recycling of WEEE and waste batteries on behalf of our members

- **2015 Budget Environment and Waste Management Programme**

€34.8 million allocated will go towards promoting protection of the environment, including investing in remediation of landfill sites

Ireland was the first of the fiscally stressed countries in Europe to implement a **carbon tax**.

