

The Church of England's Response to Religious Pluralism

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Abstract: Originally published as part of a Doctoral Thesis which examined the training and educational needs of Church of England Clergy ministering in a Multi Faith society. An essential part of that research involved an examination of the theological assumptions that underpinned the church's response to religious pluralism.

The Church of England was first challenged, at synodical level, to the presence of people of other Faiths in British society in 1972 over the question of the sale of church buildings to other Faith communities. While this was essentially a pastoral issue, it raised questions of a theological nature.

By this time the World Council of Churches in Geneva had already started to examine the theological issues, resulting in the publication of various documents for consideration by churches worldwide. These documents formed the background to theological reflection in Britain and subsequently within the Church of England.

The paper covers the period from 1972 until 1998 and provides an analysis of the various documents and reports that informed the debate on the Church of England's response to religious pluralism.