

## Not what we might think!

In a major new survey\* over 4,000 people were asked about their feelings towards religion and only 10% of the public agreed with the statement that 'religion is a negative influence on society'.

In fact, 44% of people surveyed agreed that they have had a positive experience of Christians and Christianity and half of British adults (51%) disagree that Christians are a negative force in society.



Statistics gathered from the 18-24-year-old 'Gen Z' age group – sometimes known as the 'Post-Millennials' and often labelled the first post-Christian generation were the most likely to report that being atheist or non-religious is 'more normal'. But they were also the most likely to agree that they have had a positive experience of Christians and Christianity – a higher proportion than any other age group (51% vs 38-49%).

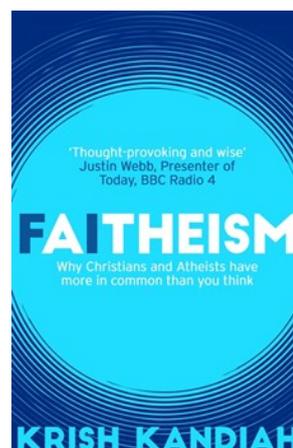
They are also the most likely to report that they go to church services (33% vs 22-31%). Three in five British adults aged 18-24 (62%) also agree that they feel comfortable discussing their religious beliefs with people at work – again, a higher proportion than any other age group (62% vs 34-56%). Gen Z, it would seem, is showing the greatest openness and positivity towards faith.

This new survey coincides with the launch of a new book, 'Faitheism' by Dr Krish Kandiah. In this book, Krish explores how Christians and atheists might have more in common than you think, looking at how – in a time of increased racial, sexual and gender equality – we need to move towards being a 'genuinely inclusive society' in terms of faith literacy and collaboration.

As an Anglo-Indian-Sri Lankan-Malaysian Christian who was brought up in a Hindu household and who has fostered children from Muslim, Hindu, Christian and atheist backgrounds, Krish is well placed to discuss issues of exclusion and acceptance. In 'Faitheism', he presents a series of stereotypes about Christians and atheists – such as 'Christians are judgemental and atheists are tolerant' – before unpacking and challenging each one. He concludes by sharing his dream that one day 'we will believe the best about each other, even when we don't believe the same as each other'.

In his work with Home for Good, the adoption and fostering charity he founded, Krish appeals to Christians to provide loving homes for children in care. Home for Good raises awareness of the needs of vulnerable children, believing the Church is ideally placed to meet these needs and ensure that no children in the UK are without a safe and loving home.

Faitheism was partially written in response to the resistance Krish has at times encountered from social services to place children in the care of Christians. Krish says of his interactions: 'we have found that some social workers show a high degree of unconscious bias, suspicion and reluctance to accept Christians as foster carers and adoptive parents'. Yet the recent ComRes survey also revealed that fewer than one in ten (7%) British adults would hesitate about leaving their child with a Christian.



<https://www.hodder.co.uk/books/detail.page?isbn=9781473648951>

\*ComRes interviewed 4,087 British adults online in two waves between 2nd and 6th March 2018.