

## Secularisation:

**Wilson:** 'a process whereby religion loses its influence over the various spheres of social life' – it can be a result of social change due to a modern, dynamic, and urban society.

In the UK church attendance and membership is in decline with less marriages and baptisms taking place. According to [www.statista.com/statistics/369080/church-of-england-attendance-by-service-uk](https://www.statista.com/statistics/369080/church-of-england-attendance-by-service-uk) church attendance had fallen by 300,000 in 2020 in comparison to these figures in 2009.

**Davie:** '*believing without belonging*'. People may not attend church due to their lifestyle but still believe in God. However, the 2021 Census found that only 46.2% of the population in England and Wales consider themselves Christian.

**Herberg** believes that belonging to a church demonstrates commitment to a community and not a religion. That is, he believes that people attend church to socialise with others, meet with friends and to be a part of something. This can be considered as true when regarding elderly and people within a small community.

### Difficult to measure

It is difficult to measure secularisation as some figures are more valid than others. Some surveys show a high level of religiosity; however, quantitative measurements of church attendance are low, and different religious groups measure membership in different ways. Therefore, comparisons must be made with the past to see patterns and trends. However, the past is seen as a 'golden age' where it seems that everybody believed – which is not always the case.

Research on secularisation can also be ethnocentric and focuses on Christianity whilst 'disregarding' other faiths. Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism are also developing in the UK and evolving in different ways as ethnic minority groups are assimilating into British mainstream society.

**Pluralism:** people today have a wide choice of religious beliefs and therefore, more traditional beliefs are losing their influence with the growth of NAMs and other religious practices.

**Glock and Bellah** state that pluralism is evidence that religion is changing and is a way of individualism, where people are free to find their own religious meaning through a 'pick and mix' of 'spiritual shopping'.

**Wilson and Bruce** say that pluralism gives people choice where they feel that they can reject religion. However, some would argue that the growth of NRMs has been overestimated.

**Bruce** notes that science has become more important along with rationalisation, therefore undermining religion. **Berger and Luckman** argue that people today require proof rather than spirituality.

**Wilson** looks at traditional methods, i.e. '*hatching, matching and dispatching*' has been replaced by modern day methods; however, **Parsons** argues that the church still is significant with shared values continuing.

**Fundamentalism:** a form of a religion (especially Islam or Protestant Christianity) that upholds belief in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture.

Features of fundamentalism:

- literal interpretation of sacred scripts
- rejects religious pluralism
- requires a high level of commitment
- opposition to secularisation and modernity (conservative force)
- has emerged due to social inequality or social crisis
- uses modern technology to 'spread the word', e.g. Evangelism.

Fundamental religions have the monopoly over the truth and 'persuade' others to join them.

They look to convert others by 'door-to-door selling', e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

However, fundamentalism can lead to violence when strong beliefs have a lack of tolerance towards other religions/beliefs, e.g. Fundamental Islamic groups and 9/11.

**Don't forget criticism  
– this is important for the exam!**