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Emmanuel

Forms of Christianity have dominated religious life in what is now the United Kingdom for over 1,400 years and in the 2001 census 71.6% of all respondents indicated that they were Christians.

On the other hand, although a majority of citizens still identify with Christianity, in many surveys regular church attendance has fallen dramatically since the 1950s and a Tearfund survey in 2007 showed only one in every ten Britons actually attend church weekly.

Some have sought to secularise Christmas by referring to it as "Winterval", "Festivus" or "Winter Holiday" and point out that Christians have "taken over" what was once a pagan festival marking the shortest day of the year.

But whatever people believe, whatever they call it and whenever it is celebrated the truth remains that Jesus, Son of God, was born as a human infant some two millennia ago: Emmanuel - God with us. He came, not to condemn the world, but to save the world and those that put their trust in him will not perish but have eternal life.

However you spend Christmas Day, it will probably be different from most other days of the year. Take some time to consider why it is so different and who made it so by his birth, and more importantly, by his death and resurrection.