

To whom it may concern,

I write to add my voice to the many who wish to speak out in favour of granting licences for religious broadcasting. I must say that current stations do not really put forward any meaningful religious content. The point of commercial radio stations is just that - commercial. Therefore, where religion is included in broadcasting it is usually just as a value added service which costs them nothing and may add a few spiritually minded people to the numbers of listeners being offered to advertisers. It is not that there is any kind of conspiracy against religion on commercial stations but that religious depth is not the main concern of the company and so will at best only ever be a minor consideration for the broadcaster. Likewise, the BBC is the to 'educate, inform and entertain' but the former two purposes are subservient to the third. Therefore, any religious content is kept to a minimum and is 'light entertainment'. In such a context, it is difficult to ever discuss or experience anything of religious depth.

This is a situation that frustrates the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jew. The current broadcasting is geared at light entertainment, and far from promoting religious diversity and understanding leaves us knowing little or nothing of each others value systems and beliefs. Religious broadcasting rights would deepen and broaden our multicultural understanding, not weaken it. In addition, I assume that any new stations would be prohibited, under new laws, from inciting religious hatred - so I for one see no harm and only good in allowing the expansion of religious broadcasting.

Thank you for your time taken in reading this.

Yours sincerely,

Pastor Chris Ruddle
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