



THE ARCHBISHOP



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The Revd Dr Richard Sudworth has been appointed as the new Secretary for Inter-Religious Affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury and National Inter-Religious Affairs Adviser for the Church of England.

The post resources the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church of England in relating to the great world faiths – nationally and internationally, as well as at a local parish level.

Dr Sudworth will take over from the Revd Canon Mark Poulson, who has served in the post since 2014 and will now be working within the Diocese of London on developing cross-cultural learning and development through the Kings Centre, Southall.

Currently serving as parish priest of Sparkbrook in Birmingham, Richard holds a PhD in Christian-Muslim relations. He has written several books on interfaith relations, including 'Encountering Islam: Christian-Muslim Relations in the Public Square'.

Richard's ministry experience spans academic research and teaching; preparing students for ordination; and working alongside parishes to develop their capacity in community outreach, mission and dialogue. He spent four years as a lecturer in Anglican theology at The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, and until recently was book reviews editor for *Crucible: The Journal of Christian Social Ethics*.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "I'm very pleased that Richard has agreed to take on this hugely important, exciting and challenging role. He comes with an impressive background in both knowledge and practical action – I look forward immensely to his wisdom and support within the team at Lambeth Palace.

"In a time when cultural divisions are being exploited in some regions in hugely divisive ways, it is essential that we cultivate deeper and more effective relationships between the various great religious traditions and diverse faith communities, here in Britain and around the world. Christians are called to love our neighbours as ourselves and to seek their flourishing. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are to build bridges and work with others for the transformation of society.

"I also want to pay tribute to the Revd Canon Mark Poulson. Mark has done an extraordinary job and he leaves Lambeth with our gratitude, admiration and prayers."

The Church of England's Director of Mission and Public Affairs (MPA), the Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Brown, said: "Richard is one of the Church of England's leading practitioners in inter faith matters and is widely respected in the field. In the part of his work relating to Mission and Public Affairs, he will be part of a strong team leading the church's engagement with Parliament, policy makers and public ethics more widely, and his skills and experience will help ensure that the multi-faith and multicultural context is properly understood and represented in all our work. Richard's track record and many strengths will also be a key resource for MPA's Presence and Engagement programme supporting parishes where large proportions of the population are of other faiths. We very much look forward to welcoming him and learning from him."

Dr Sudworth said: "I am delighted to be taking up this post and to be supporting Archbishop Justin and the national church at such a crucial time. More than ever, a Christian witness is needed that can foster the common good across religious traditions as well as prayerfully sharing the claims of our faith.

"Such an integral vision is at the heart of the Archbishop's priorities of spiritual renewal, reconciliation and evangelism – and thus makes it an especially exciting time to be taking up this post. Whether at local parish, national, or international levels, how the Church of England can be present and engaged with other faiths in our globalised world remains one of the foremost challenges and opportunities of our age."

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