

# BBC reduces the amount of religion it broadcasts

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The BBC has published its annual report which shows that the amount of time devoted to religion on the various BBC platforms has reduced over the past year.

In the 2012/2013 period BBC1 broadcast 99 hours of religion as opposed to 102 hours in the previous year. The only channel to show a rise in the number of hours of religious broadcasting was BBC2 which went up from 27 hours in the 2011/2012 period to 47 hours in the latest period.

BBC4 showed a significant drop from 53 hours last year to only 5 hours this year.

On BBC Radio the number of hours devoted to religion went down from 1,211 last year to 975 hours this year.

Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society, said: "It is good that the BBC is taking notice of its audiences at last — who according to its own research don't regard religion as an important genre and hardly ever watch it. This small reduction in hours is welcome, but it still represents an awful lot of religion."

Mr Sanderson said that it wasn't clear whether the BBC's figures included such things as the church service for Margaret Thatcher's funeral (which was broadcast in full) or the service of thanksgiving for the anniversary of the Queen's coronation. These appear to be extra to the official religious figures in the annual report.

Mr Sanderson said he welcomed a more imaginative approach to religion and a more critical examination of it. "It is impossible to ignore the part that religion is negative."

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