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Blair launches faith foundation

Former prime minister Tony Blair has launched a faith foundation to tackle global poverty, challenge conflict and unite the world's religions.

Mr Blair, who is a Roman Catholic, unveiled the foundation in New York.

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation has three aims: to promote faith as a force for good, improve awareness between religions and tackle poverty and war.

Mr Blair said there was "nothing more important" than creating understanding between different faiths and cultures.

'Peaceful co-existence'

At the launch in New York, he said: "The characteristic of today's world is change. The consequence is a world opening up and becoming inter-dependent.

"The conclusion is that we make sense of this inter-dependence through peaceful co-existence and working together to resolve common challenges.

"We must be global citizens as well as citizens of our country," he told the audience of academics, media and business and religious leaders.

"Idealism becomes the new realism."

He went on to cite a poll which showed the percentage of people in most Muslim countries who said religion was an important part of their lives is in the high 80s and 90s, while in the United States it



Tony Blair called for more idealism and less religious extremism

“ Though there is much focus, understandably, on extremism associated with the perversion of the proper faith of Islam, there are elements of extremism in every major faith ”

Tony Blair, former UK prime minister

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religious faith is genuine, Tony Blair on his foundation's aims deep and shapes his life".

In an earlier interview with Time magazine, Mr Blair, who is now a peace envoy to the Middle East, said the foundation was "how I want to spend the rest of my life".

The vocation is something the former prime minister has been considering for some time.

But Mr Blair said while in office he feared being branded a "nutter" if he talked about his religious views.

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