

Religious harmony here strong, survey finds

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Amid a worldwide trend of rising religiosity, many people here believe that harmony between people of different religions remains strong, a survey by the Institute of Policy Studies found.

Keys to maintaining this peaceful state are the Government's policies on religion, and its role as arbiter of disputes, said the survey's lead researcher Mathew Mathews.

This is the third release of findings from a large-scale survey on race, religion and language by the think tank.

In these latest results, which measured self-reported perceptions on religion, 66.6 per cent of about 3,000 people polled agreed that those of different religions live in harmony here.

Another 29.1 per cent of respondents were neutral, and 4.3 per cent did not agree, reported The Straits Times online. These results, said Dr Mathews, point to a "healthy level of religious harmony".

As an example, nine in 10 respondents reported being comfortable with having a colleague or neighbour of a different faith.

These numbers, though, fell when it came to relationships in the private sphere. About two in 10 Protestant Christians said they are comfortable with their child marrying a Muslim. It was the same case the other way around.

But, Dr Mathews, said this may have more to do with religious sanctions - Islam and Christianity encourage marriage with those of like faith - than intolerance.