

## The Flavour of Friendship

Around the world there are four different styles or “flavour” of Friends. Three of these are categorically identified as Christian, and one is rather more “liberal” or “universal”.

Conservative Friends “believe that Jesus Christ is the Word of God”, “believe and experience that this Living Word is to be sought and experienced within us”, “believe that the Scriptures were inspired by the Word and are to be read, considered and used in the service of that Life and Power that brought them forth”.

There are Conservative Friends in the USA, United Kingdom, and Greece. According to FWCC, they account for 0.03% of the worldwide population of Friends.

Evangelical Friends “are drawn together through our clear commitment to Jesus Christ and a common desire to change our local and international worlds for Christ”. They “emphasize the divinity of Jesus Christ and focus on encouraging people to personally know and follow Christ in complete obedience to the teachings found in Scripture and to the leading of God’s Spirit”.

There are Evangelical Friends in Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Congo, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Taiwan and USA. They make up about 40% of Friends.

Friends in the Programmed Tradition, as represented by Friends United Meeting, is also “a Christian movement”. They “anticipate that continuing revelation will be consistent with the Scriptures, because the Holy Spirit is the source of both. Where worship centres on Christ and involves a listening spirituality, we believe those involved will begin to reflect the character of Jesus—bearing testimony to peace, simplicity, equality, moral purity, and integrity”.

There are Programmed friends in Belize, Cuba, El Salvador, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and USA. They make up about 49% of Friends.

Unprogrammed or Liberal Friends, in contrast, have a much less exclusive approach to Christianity. As they see it, “The Light Within is the fundamental and immediate experience for Friends. It is that which guides each of us in our everyday lives and brings us together as a community of faith. It is, most importantly, our direct and unmediated experience of the Divine. Friends have used many different terms or phrases to designate the source and inner certainty of our faith—a faith which we have gained by direct experience . . .”

There are Unprogrammed Friends in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Congo, Costa Rica, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Honk Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Russia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA. But, despite being the most widespread kind of Friend, they make up only about 11% of the world population of Friends.

[All material gleaned from FWCC Website ([http://www.fwccworld.org/kinds\\_of\\_friends](http://www.fwccworld.org/kinds_of_friends))]