

# Tony Blair Encourages Religious Diversity At Baptism Centre Opening In Jordan



Tony Blair, founder of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, was present alongside the [Baptist World Alliance](#), HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, and others, in the dedication of the new Baptism Centre in Jordan, where he highlighted the need for openness to religious diversity.

The Centre is located on the bank of the River Jordan on land close to the region known as Bethany beyond Jordan, where it is traditionally believed that John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ. The Centre will be available particularly for use by all Christian traditions that practice the believers' baptism by immersion.



Tony Blair said, "It took courage and leadership for Jordan to facilitate this site of baptism, here by this ancient river. But it took more. It took the same spirit that animated John and Jesus, and the Prophet Mohammed and all the Prophets of old. Each took the world as it was - alienated from God - and tried to make it how it should be - reconciled to God Justice, mercy, compassion, the 'us' not the 'me', pure unselfish love. This is what they stood for."

"Back then, their world was small. But their message was not. And in the larger world we inhabit today, where we travel through continents and time zones, their message is the same message today, centuries later. Don't look inwards, but look outwards. Don't exclude, embrace. Don't argue about your differences, but understand what you share and fulfil a common purpose blessed by God." [Click here to read the full text of Tony Blair's speech.](#)



The site and the centre are a tribute to the generosity of HM King Abdullah and the Jordanian Royal family. They are only one manifestation of the Royal family's consistent commitment to building better relations between the world's faiths. Significantly, it represents a predominantly Muslim country honouring the place of Christianity in the history of the Middle East and, furthermore, it recognises the fact that this region has for centuries been the home of the three Abrahamic faiths.

The Baptist World Alliance's President Reverend Dr David Coffey, who is also a member of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's Global Advisory Council, has also just delivered the Alliance's response to the [Common Word letter](#). Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, a principal initiator of this letter signed by 138 Muslim scholars and leaders, has warmly received the Baptist response. The letter calls on Christian leaders to enter into dialogue with Muslims and focus on commonalities and peaceful co-existence between the faiths. The Tony Blair Faith Foundation remains very supportive of the Common Word initiative as a whole.