

Queen Elizabeth favored as Church of England head

by [Al Webb](#) in the [June 13, 2012](#) issue

Nearly three-quarters of people in England believe that Queen Elizabeth II should retain her position as titular head of the Church of England, according to an opinion poll. The survey, conducted by the polling organization ComRes for the British Broadcasting Corporation, showed 73 percent favor her remaining as the church's "Supreme Governor" and "Defender of the Faith"—titles held by the monarch since King Henry VIII broke with the pope and Roman Catholicism in the 16th century.

Should Prince Charles succeed his mother to the throne, about 50 percent would favor a change that he himself has suggested: that instead of Defender of the Faith, he bear the title of Defender of Faiths. At a multifaith reception she held at Lambeth Palace, Queen Elizabeth staunchly defended the Church of England itself, which she suggested is often misunderstood. "Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of all other religions," she said, but "instead the church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country."