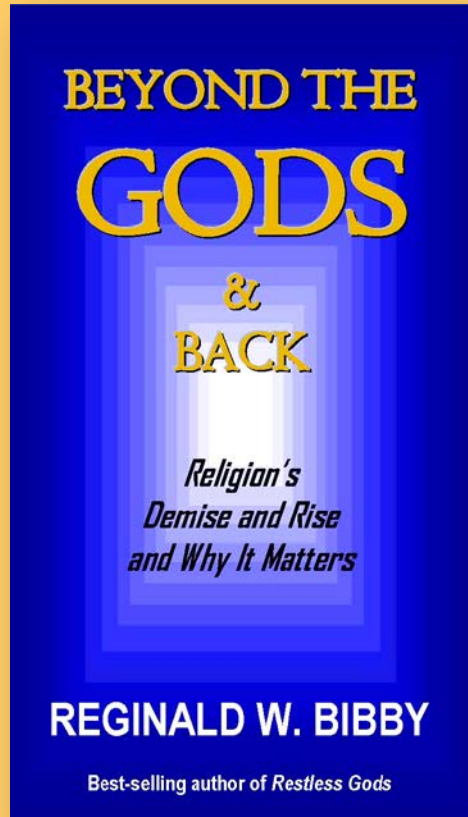


Author Meets Critics



Reginald W. Bibby
University of Lethbridge

and

Joel Thiessen
Ambrose University College

David Eagle
Duke University

William Stahl
Luther College, University of Regina

Lorne Dawson
University of Waterloo

Annual Meeting of the Canadian Sociology Association
Waterloo, ON – June 1, 2012



- Thank you...



Trend-Tracking



* 7 Adult... 1975 → 2005: > 10,000

* 4 Teen.... 1984 → 2008: > 15,000

■ Readings of

- Boomers * Pre-Boomers * Post-Boomers
- Teens 80s 90s 00s Now

■ Statistics Canada's General Social Surveys: 1985-present

■ New global surveys: 2000-plus

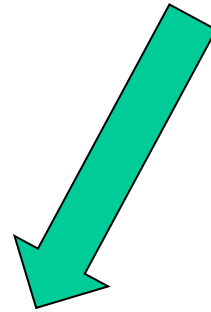


■ Together: surveys lots of information on how we have changed & not changed since 1960s

New Data

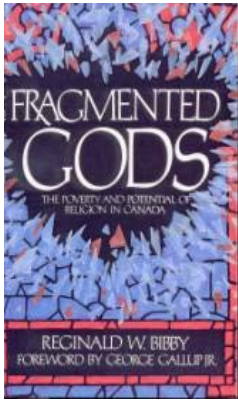


Clearer Readings

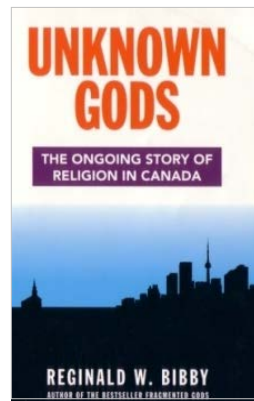


New Interpretations

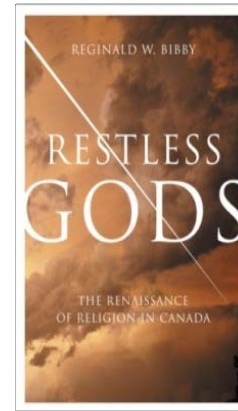
• *In chronicling the times...*



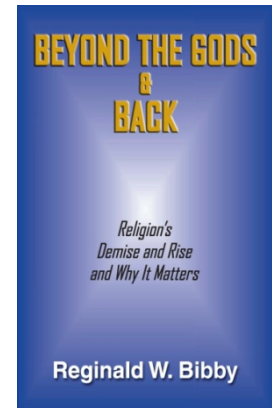
1987



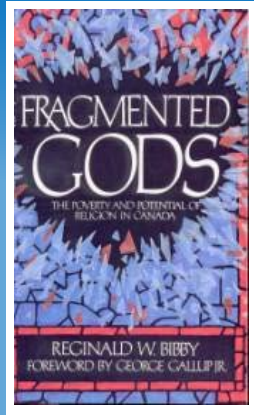
1993



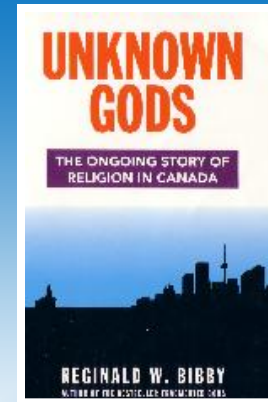
2002



2011



1987

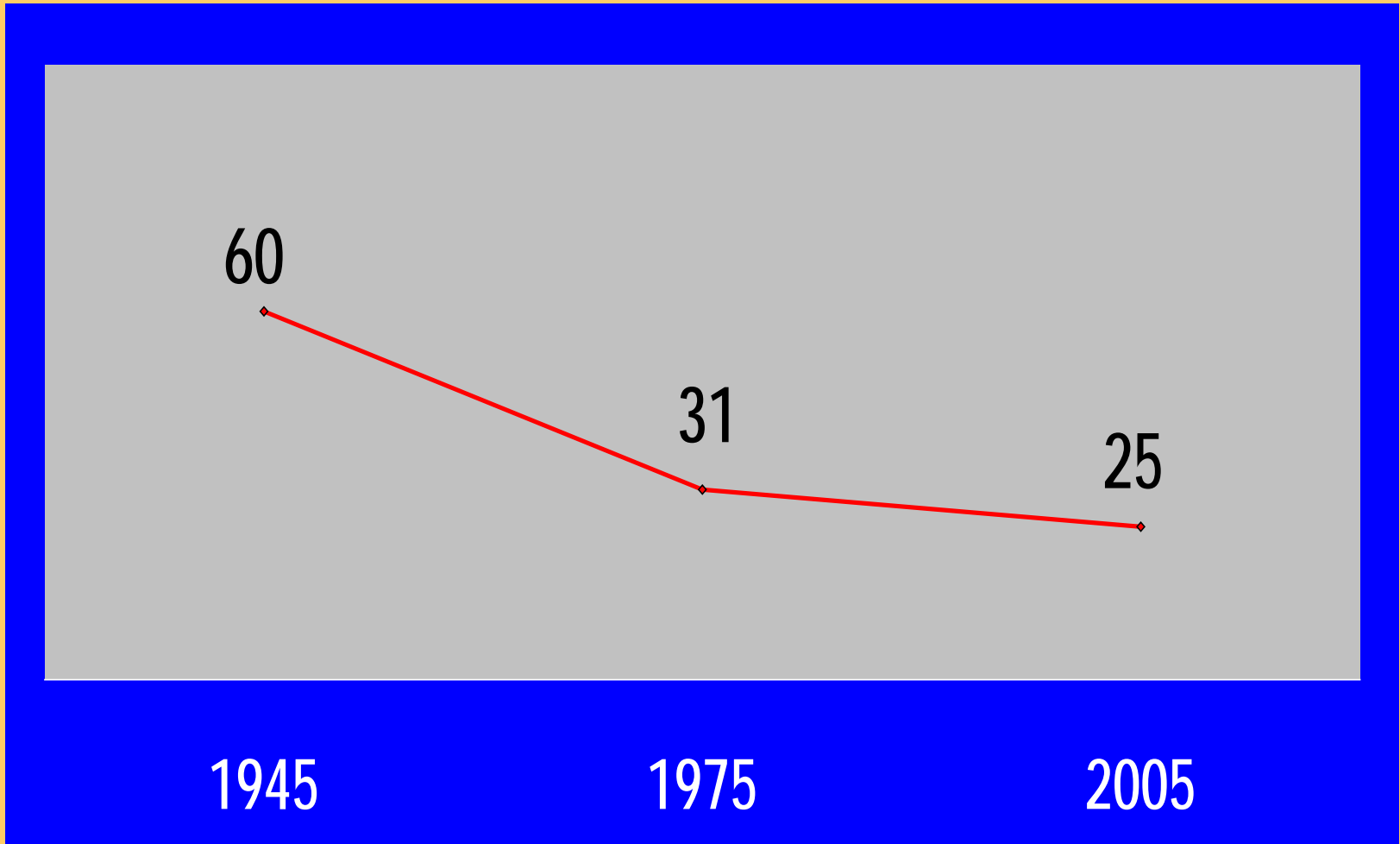


1993

I. Secularization

The Attendance Situation

Weekly Attendance: 1950s and Now

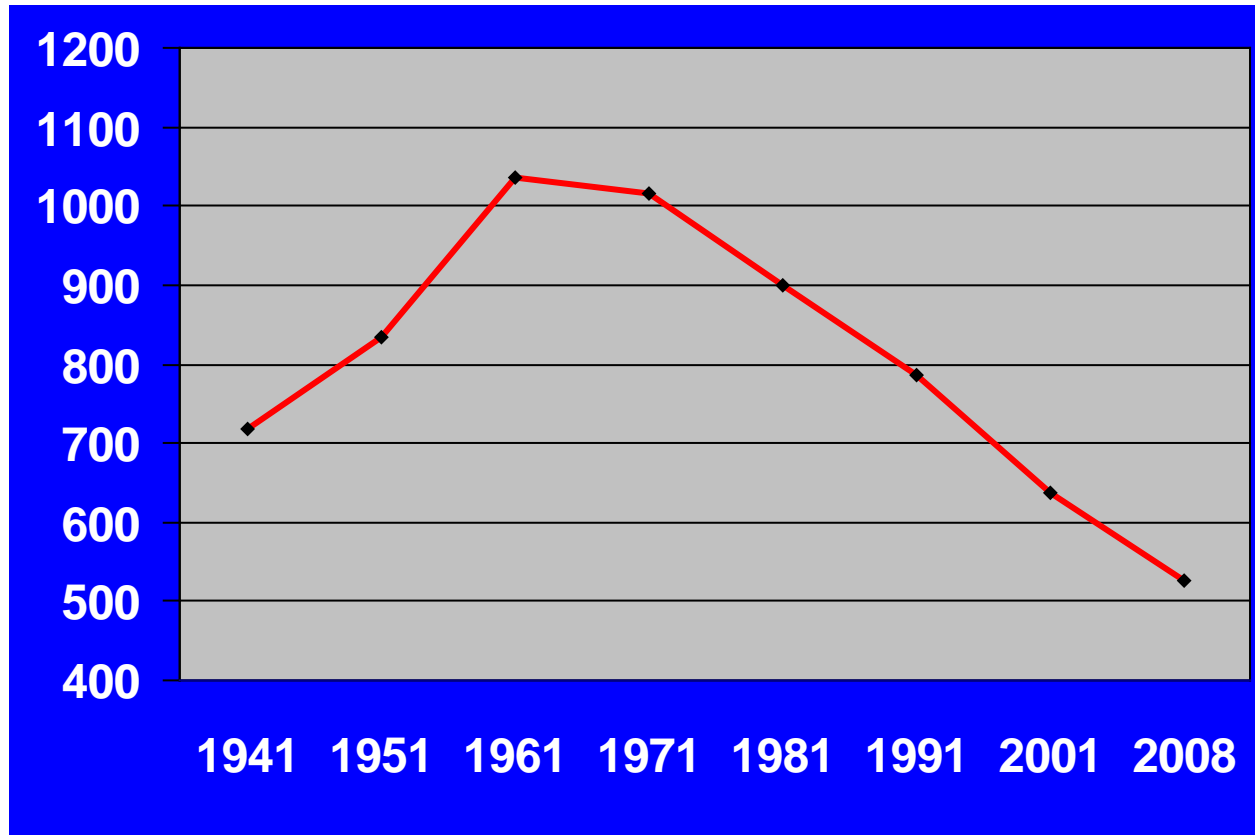


Especially hard hit:

**Mainline Protestants
& Quebec Catholics**

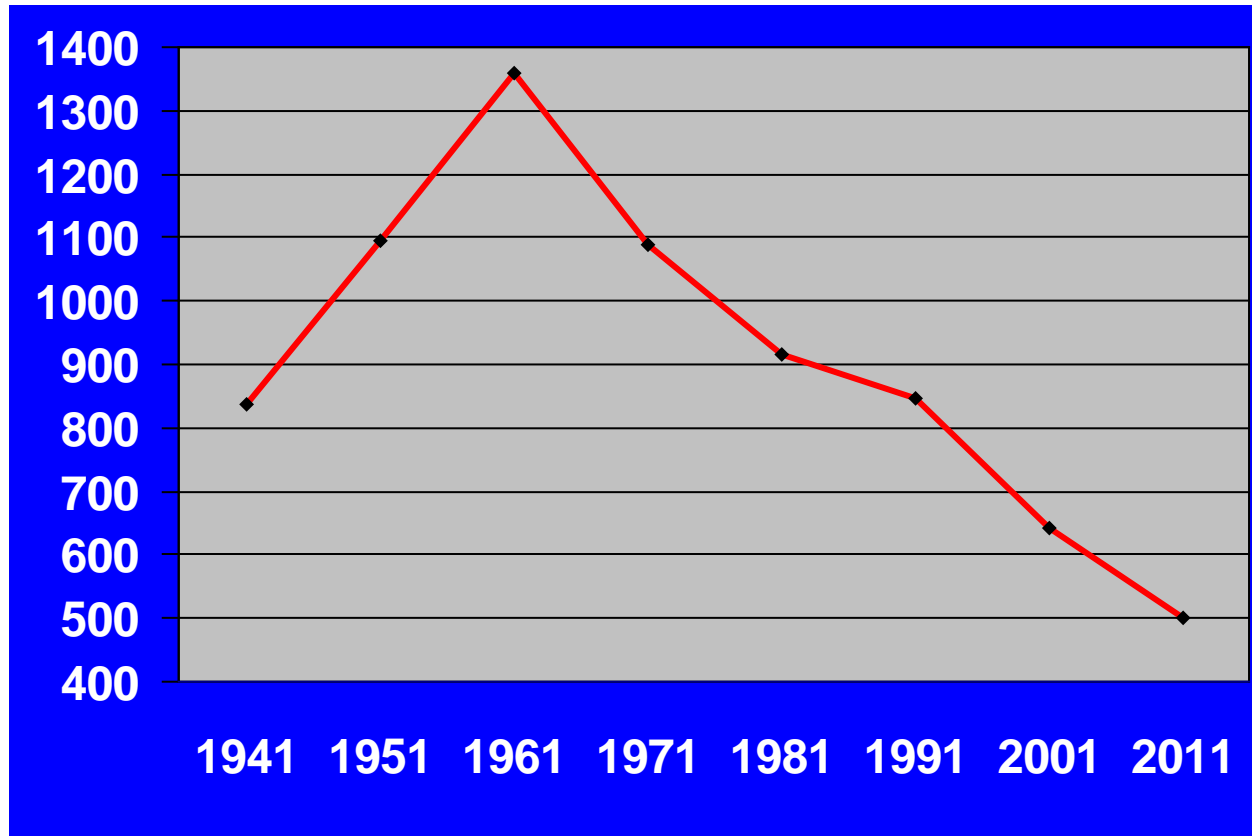
The United Church Situation

National Membership *(In 1000s)*



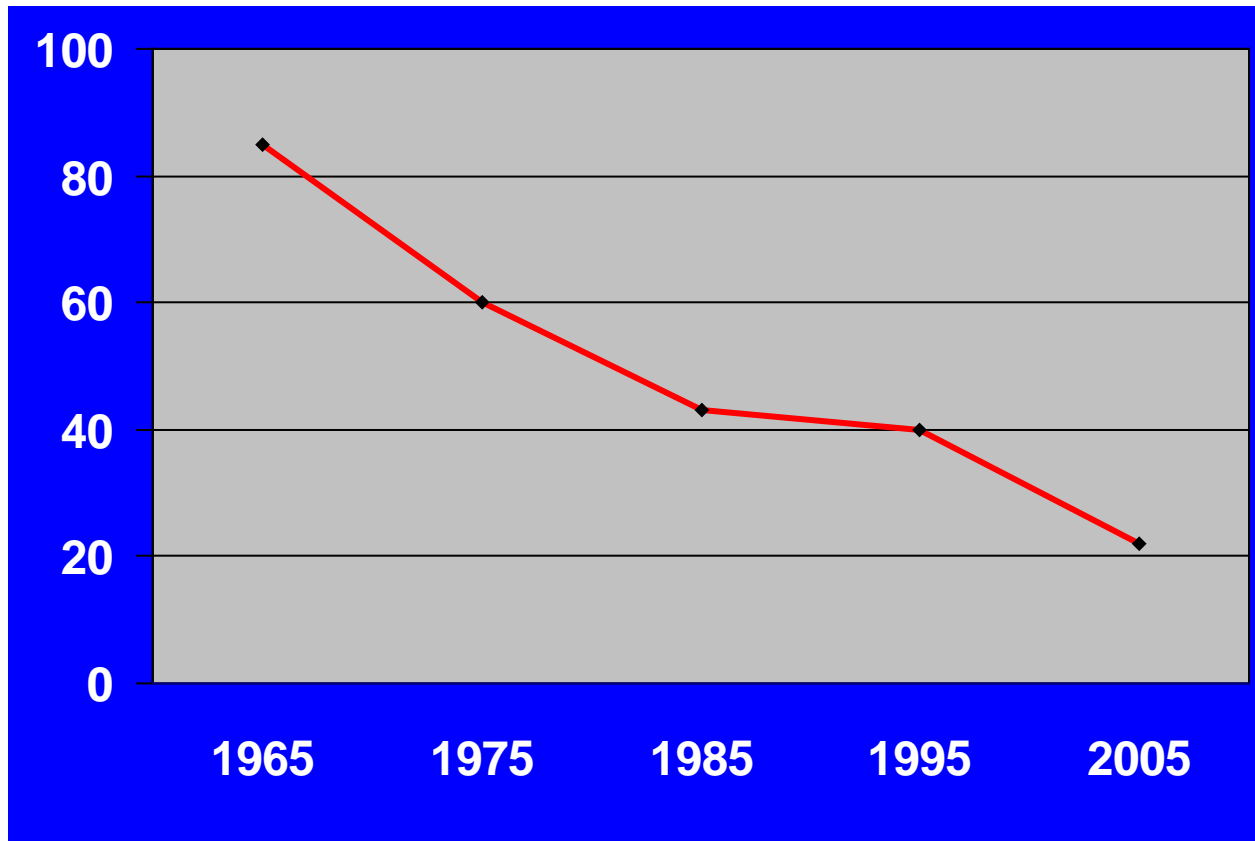
The Anglican Church Situation

National Membership *(In 1000s)*



The Quebec RC Situation

Monthly-Plus Adult Attendance, 1965-2005



Predictions of Religion's Demise

- Emile Durkheim



- Sigmund Freud



- Karl Marx



- Bryan Wilson



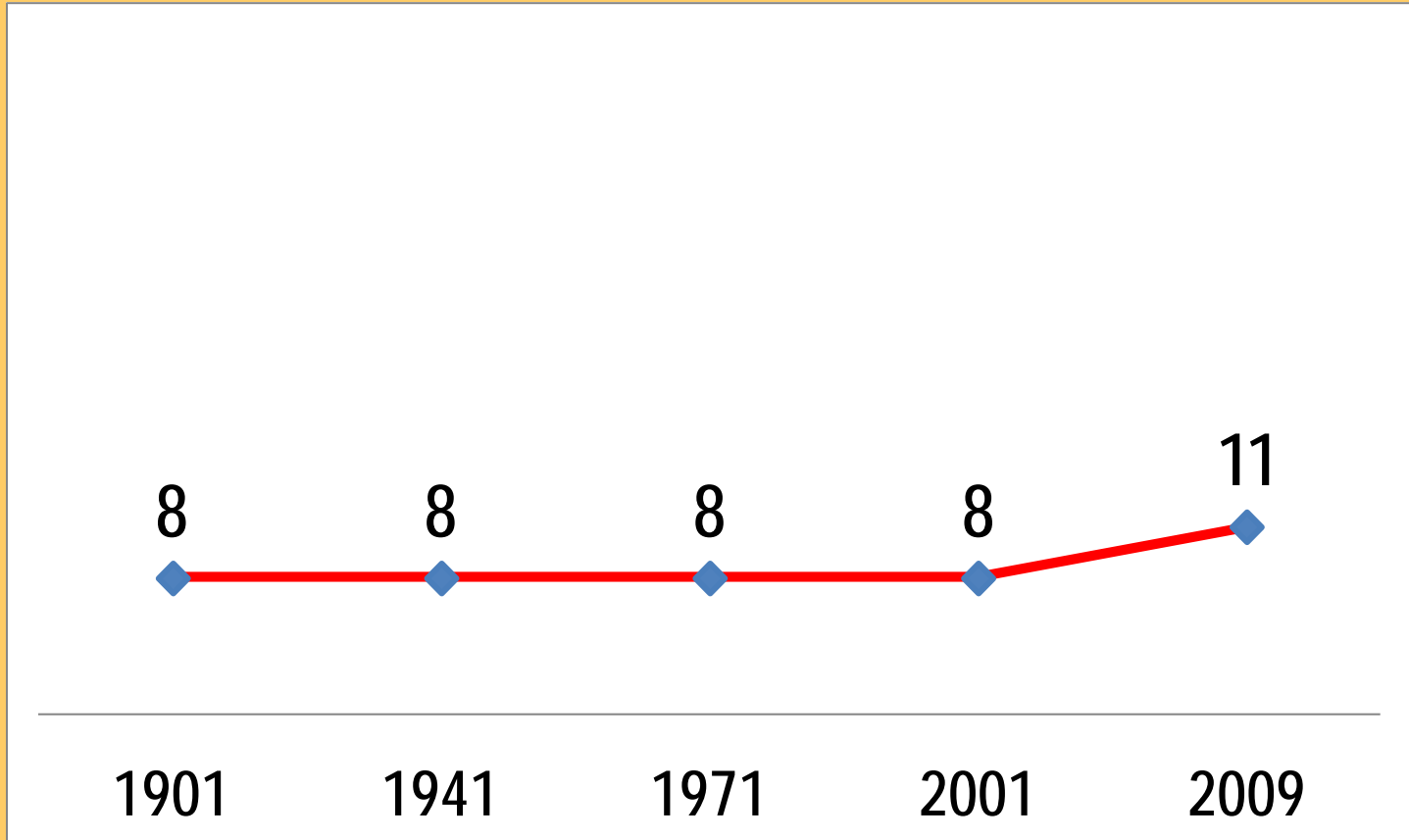
- Steve Bruce



The Problem

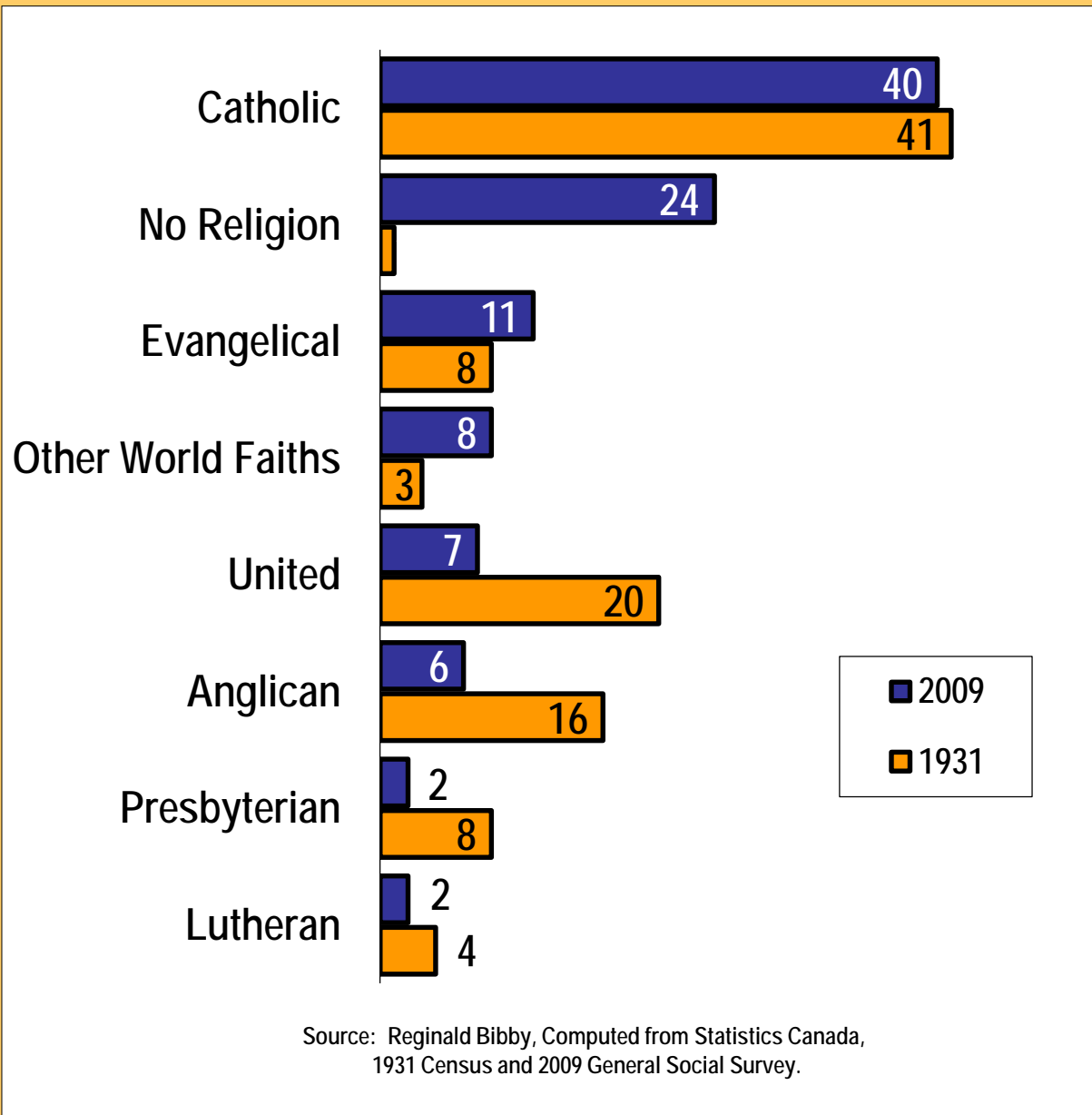
**Some teams
have not been losing**

Canadians Identifying With Conservative Protestant Groups: 1871-2009 (%)

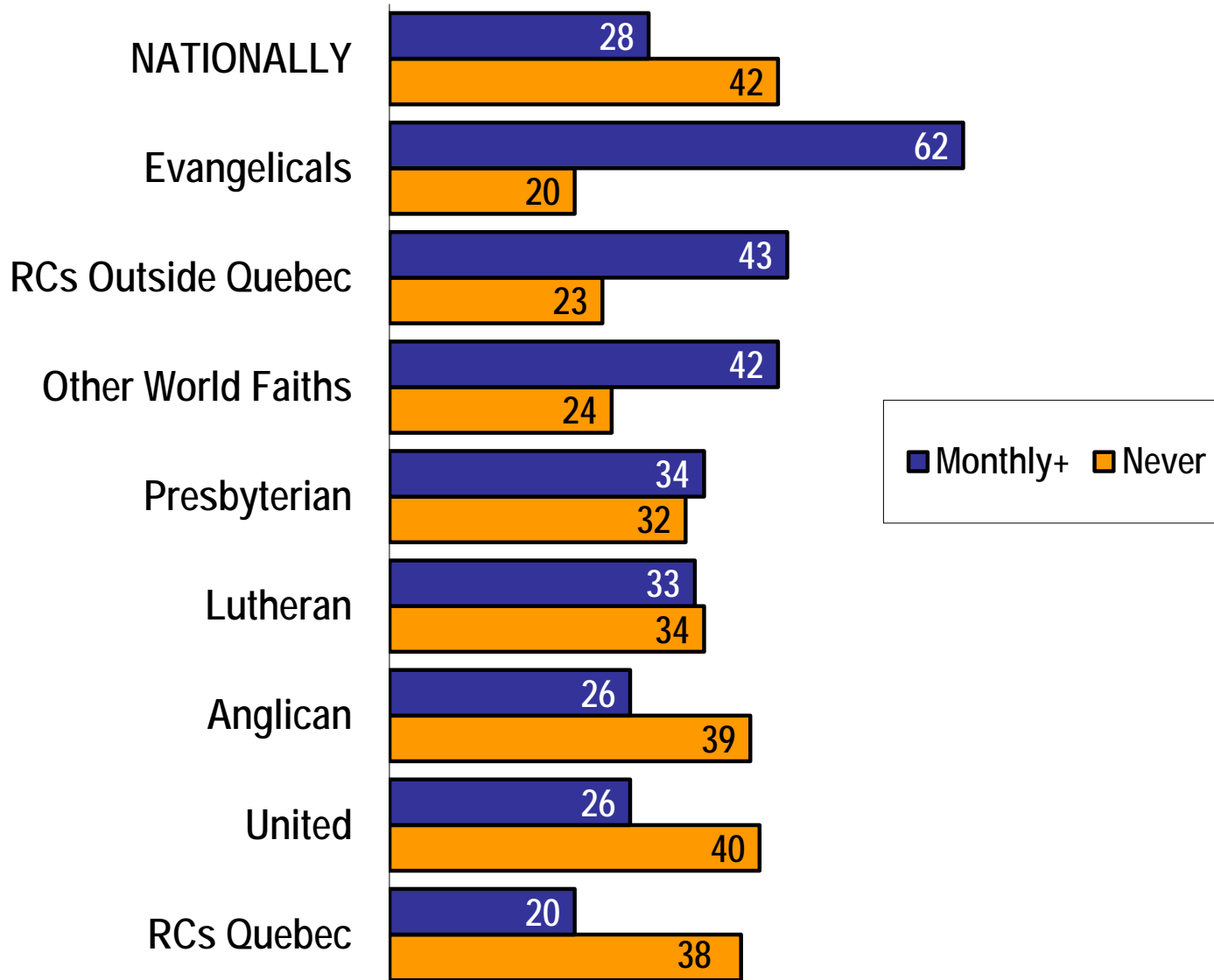


Source: Statistics Canada census data and 2009 GSS.

Religious Identification in Canada: 2009 and 1931



Service Attendance by Group: 2009

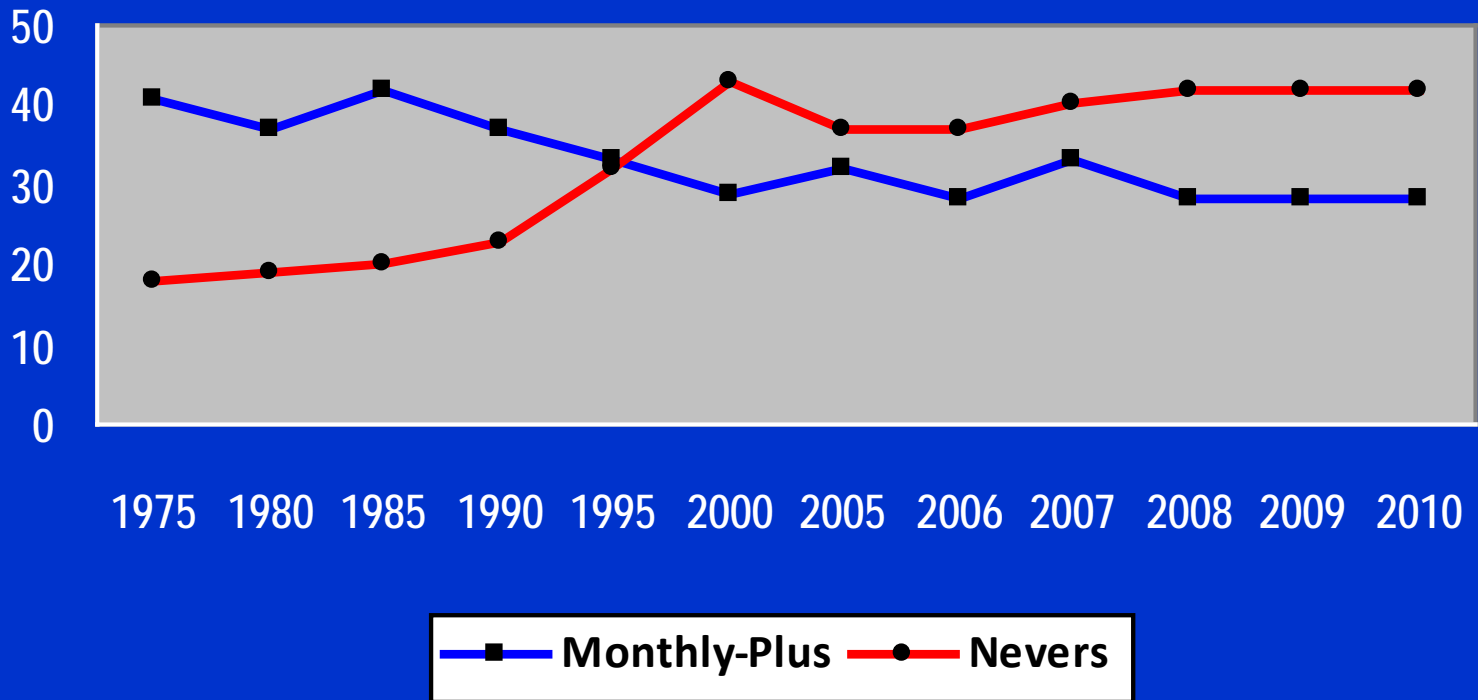


- **Pockets – many – of vitality**
- **Religion is not going away**

- **Yet, also clear that there has been a momentum swing away from religion**

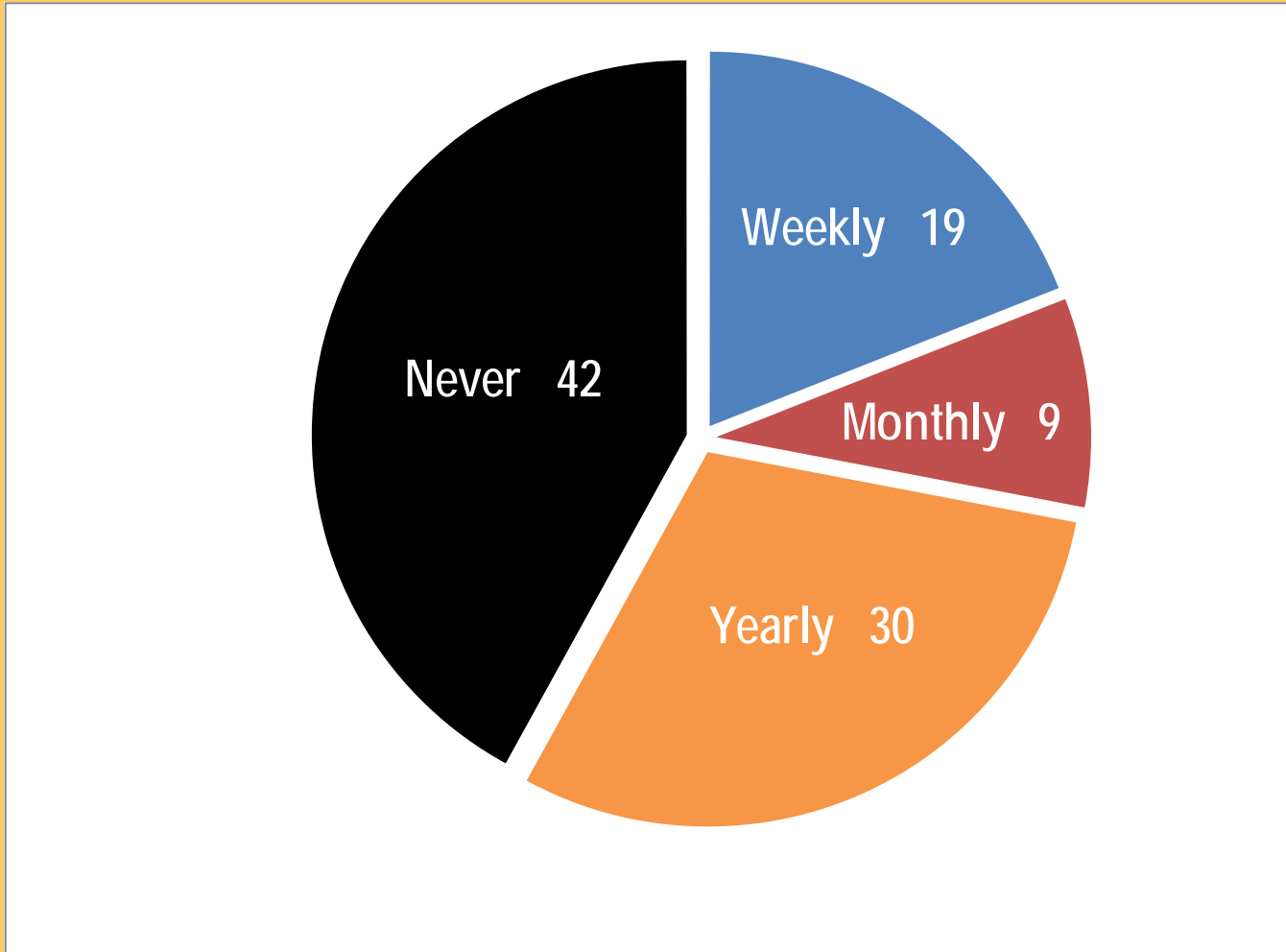
Service Attendance: 1975-2010

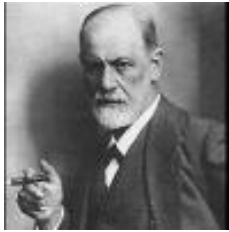
Monthly-Plus and Never



SOURCES: Reginald W. Bibby, *Project Canada Survey Series, 1975-80*,
General Social Surveys, Statistics Canada, 1985-2010.

Canadian Service Attendance: 2010





Linear & Unlimited
Secularization



Inevitable & Increasing
Revitalization



***We awake today, not to
a secularized Canada,
but to a polarized Canada.***

***A solid core of people continue to value faith;
but a growing core do not.***

***A significant proportion
remain in the middle –
something like “the politically undecided” –
dropping in and not dropping out.***

The Polarization Continuum



Source: Derived from Reginald W. Bibby, *Beyond the Gods & Back*, 2011:56.

Because life is dynamic, movement in both directions of “the polarization continuum” has been taking place and will continue to take place.

But neither will disappear in the foreseeable future.

What is at issue is the extent to which both will ebb and flow – grow or not grow.

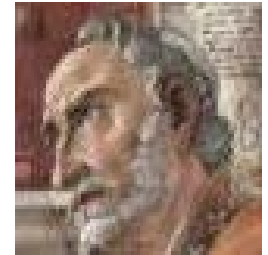
Those in middle could go either way.

Dynamic...ever-changing

On the Religion Side...

2. There in an Ongoing Market for Religion

“Our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee” -St. Augustine

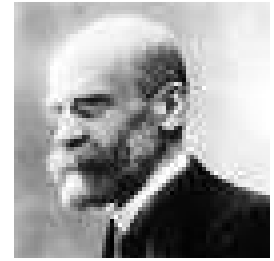


All of us have “a fundamental dis-ease” that leaves us “forever restless, dissatisfied, frustrated, and aching” –Ron Rolheiser



- **Emile Durkheim**

science doesn't move fast enough...
may never be able to address some
issues, notably death



- **Rodney Stark**

there is always a market for religion



*“People continue to have needs that only
the gods can satisfy”* –Rodney Stark

*Secularization ≠ end of religion;
secularization → innovation*

**Committed
Core**



**Religious
Vitality**

*What's more...
religion continues to be important
in most settings
across the planet.*

*Of course there are variations;
but its persistence
is unmistakable.*

Committed
Core

Immigrants



Religious
Vitality

The Numbers...



- 2.0 billion *Christians* †
- 1.2 billion *Muslims* ☾★
- .8 billion *Hindus* ॐ

Roman Catholics

- ✓ 1 billion **worldwide**
- ✓ 75 million **US** 
- ✓ >14 million **Canada** 



* 7 million *Quebec*, 7 million *outside Quebec*; 4 million *Ontario*

Newsflash!



RELIGION MAKING A GLOBAL COMEBACK

- “Christianity on its biggest roll in its 2,000 year history
- its numbers & market share: at all-time highs; 2050 = over 3 billion
- 1950-2000: Roman Catholics grew from 500 million to over 1 billion
- 1900-2000: Pentecostals: from zero to half a billion
- >1950: Adventists: 1 to 16 million; 200 countries; 90% outside NAM

- key growth: Africa, Asia, Latin America
- by 2050: could be 220 million Christians in China – 15% of pop
- Global North: 32% of world’s pop in 1900, 18% in 2000; 2050 = 10%
- Global South: 68% - 82% - 90%

World Religion Increases in the Next 24 Hours

Christians	69,000
<i>Roman Catholics</i>	37,000
<i>Pentecostals</i>	30,000
Muslims	68,000
Hindus	37,000
Chinese folk	10,700
Buddhists	10,600
Atheists	1,200
Sikhs	1,100
Jews	350



Religious Identification of Immigrants: 1990-2010

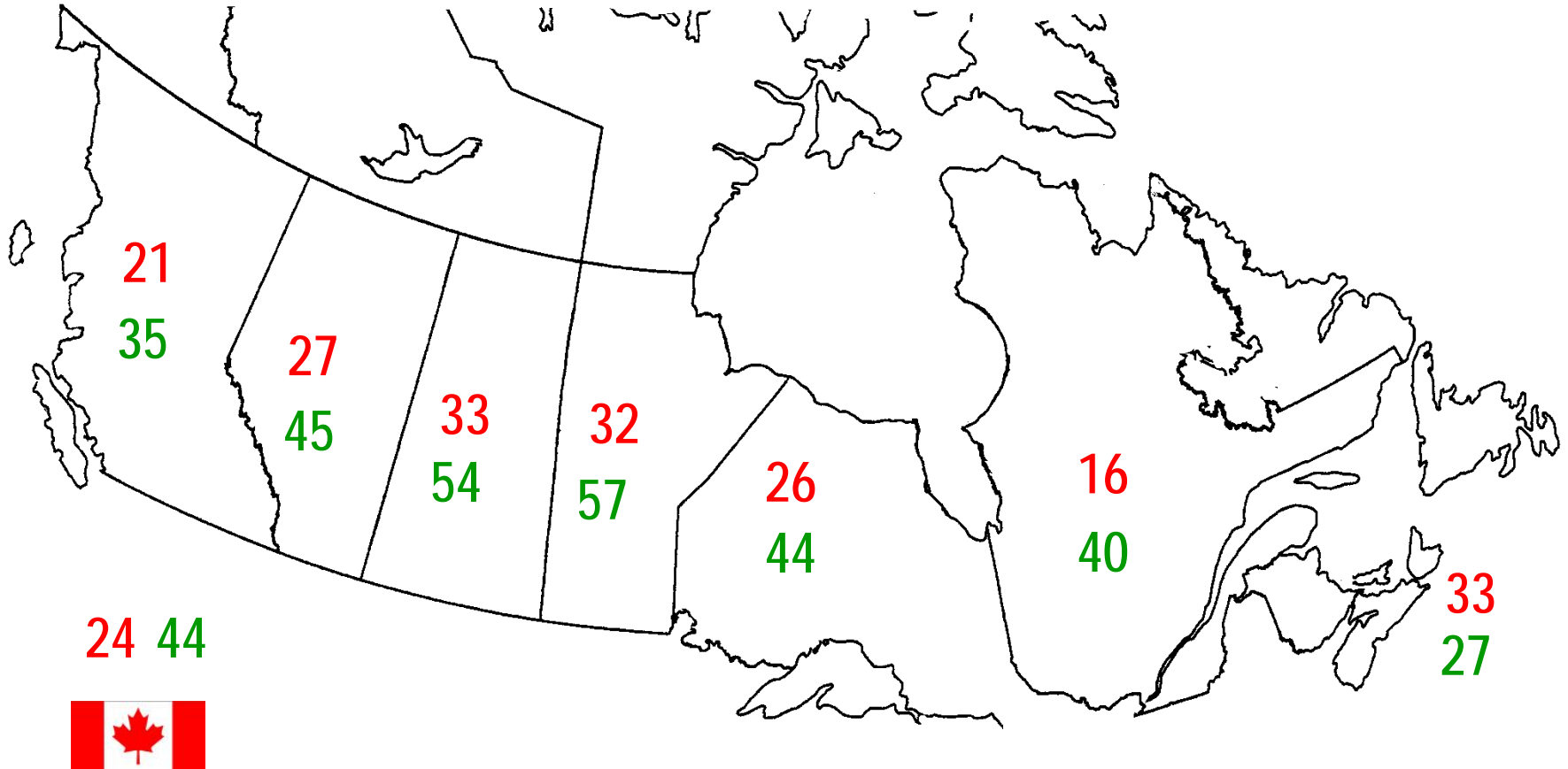
	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Other Faith	None	Totals
1990-2004	22%	20	38	20	100
2005-2010	30	21	34	15	100

Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Immigration Fast Facts

- **Immigration**: % of **pop born outside Canada** (20%) highest 75 years
 - ✓ responsible for two-thirds of pop growth for 2001-2006
 - ✓ pop increased by 1.6 million; 1.1 = immigrants
- **2010**: a record 280,000 new permanent residents admitted
- **Main sources**: Philippines (37T), India, China (30T ea), UK, USA (10T)
- **Ontario**: received **42%** (54% in 2005, 59% in 2001)
 - ✓ **AB** 6%-12%; **MB** 2-6%; **QC** 15%– 19%

Monthly-Plus Attendance, People Born In & Outside Canada: 2010 (%)



Source: Statistics Canada, GSS 2010.

Committed
Core

Immigrants

Ambivalent
Middle



Religious
Vitality

*Surprisingly large numbers of people
“in the middle” –
even some “at the non-religious end” –
have not shut the door on religion.*

*For many,
religion potentially has a role to play.*

Frequency of Personal Religious Practices or Spiritual Activities: 2010


“How often in the past year have you engaged in personal religious practices or spiritual activities?”

	Weekly+	Monthly	Few Year	Yearly	Never	Totals
	41%	9	11	4	35	100

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Importance of Religious or Spiritual Beliefs: 2010

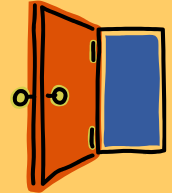
"To the way you live your life"

	Very	Some	Not Very	Not At All	Totals
	34%	31	17	18	100

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Receptivity Among “The Religiously Undecided”

Canadians Attending Less Than Once A Month



62% of adults

40% of teenagers

receptive to greater involvement

IF

they can find it to be worthwhile



People are not looking for
CHURCHES.

They are looking for
MINISTRY.

“What would make greater involvement worthwhile?”

- Spirituality
- Personal
- Relational

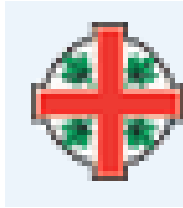
So it is that the desire for things religion historically has addressed persists.

But an important reshuffling & refurbishing of players is taking place.

3. The Restructuring of Religion in Canada

- *Good news for religious groups:
religion's future not in question*
- *Ongoing needs of large numbers:
guarantees ongoing role for religion*
- *Sobering news for religious groups:
their futures anything but guaranteed*
- *The Key = performance*

Maybe the old...



- Est. groups are not fly-by-night operations.
- Have long histories, recuperative powers.
- They retreat, retrench, revamp, resurface.
- Go down only so far – then come back.
- New leaders, new resources.

Maybe Something Else



Durkheim...

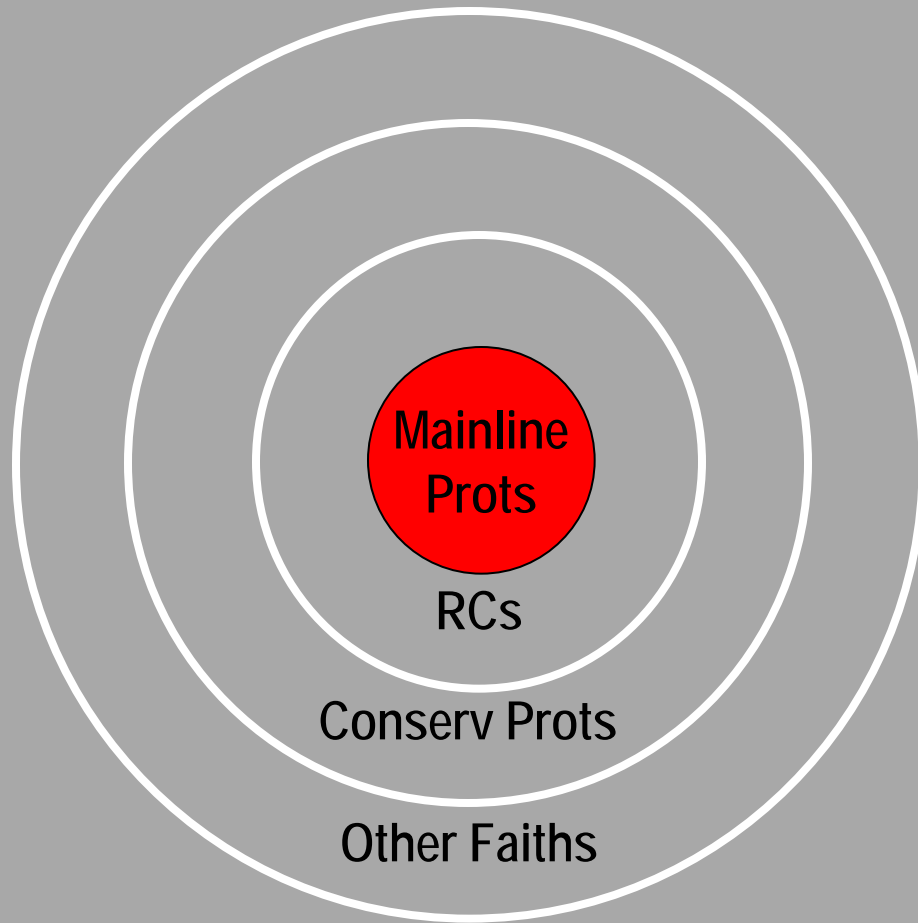
"The old gods are growing old or are already dead, and others are not yet born.

There are no gospels which are immortal, but neither is there any reason for believing that humanity is incapable of inventing new ones."

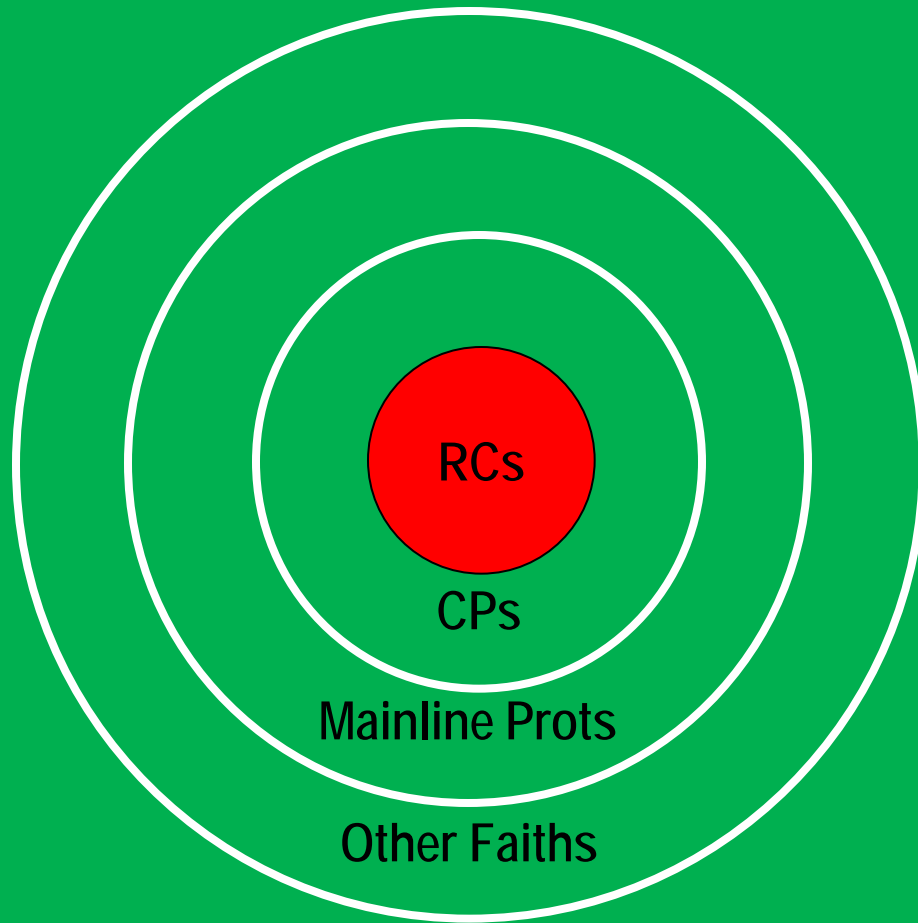
The current situation is characterized by

A Reshuffling of Players

The Primary Players in the Past



The New Primary Players



Teach our students:

A GOOD EXPLANATION

- (1) can account for the data and*
- (2) has predictability.*

In my mind,

POLARIZATION –

vs. relentless, inevitable, linear-like

SECULARIZATION –

or for that matter,

REVITALIZATION –

meets those two criteria.