

# Global Movement and the Sacred Mosaic

## *The Critical Role of Immigration in Shaping Religion in Canada*

by

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*Material in this presentation will appear in the forthcoming book,  
The Future of Life in Canada by Reginald W. Bibby 2015.*



# **ABSTRACT**

**Historically, the key determinant of Canada's religious group makeup has been immigration. In the country's first century spanned 1867 through 1967, immigration pipelines from France, Britain, and other European countries produced a solid Christian majority. In the half century since then, changing immigration patterns have contributed to Roman Catholicism remaining strong and to evangelical Protestantism becoming stronger. Conversely, the Protestant Mainline, with its British and European immigration pipelines reduced to a trickle, has suffered a severe drop in market share. Paradoxically, the arrival of people from other parts of the world in recent decades also has resulted in the growth in the size of the pools of other major world religions, as well as an increase in the number of people who have no religion. In this paper I document the crucial role that immigration has played and will continue to play in determining the religious landscape in Canada. Beyond demographics, I reflect on the impact of immigrants on religion, secularity on the religion of immigrants, and the subsequent net impact of immigration trends on the overall religious situation in Canada.**

# Introduction

## *Canada's First Century*

**There is no mystery as to how, on a national level, religious group numbers rise and fall.**

**As with the population as a whole, the numbers are a function of net migration and natural increase – of net gains via immigration and birth, along with intergroup “switching.”**

Historically, the religious landscape in Canada has been determined primarily by immigration and the subsequent ability of groups to retain their affiliates intergenerationally.

During Canada's first century that spanned 1867 through 1967, immigration pipelines from France, Britain, and other European countries produced a solid Christian majority.

# Countries of Origin: 1871-1961

	1871	1901	1931	1961
Britain	60	57	52	44
France	31	31	28	30
Other European	7	8	18	23
Asia	<1	<1	1	1
Aboriginal	<1	2	1	1
Other	1	2	<1	1

Sources: Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

# Religious Identification: 1871-1961

	1871	1901	1931	1961
Protestant	56%	56	54	49
Roman Catholic	42	42	41	47
Eastern Orthodox	<1	<1	1	1
Other Faiths	2	2	3	2
No Religion	<1	<1	<1	<1

Sources: Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

# National Backgrounds: Select Groups: 1971

	BRITAIN	EUROPE	ASIA	OTHER
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Anglican</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>United</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Lutheran</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Baptist</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Pentecostal</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>4</b>

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census.



**Protestants and Roman Catholics  
comprised more than 95% of the population from  
the time of the first census in 1871 through 1961.**

**Over the 90-year period, the percentage of  
people identifying with other major world faiths  
never exceeded 3%, while those claiming to have  
“no religion” never reached 1%.**

# The Post-1960s

## *Shifting Immigration Patterns*

**In the 1970s and 1980s,  
a major shift in the countries of origin  
of immigrants began to take place.**

**New arrivals from Britain and Europe  
were increasingly outnumbered by  
people from so-called developing countries  
in Asia, the Middle East, and South America.**

# Immigration Patterns

## Top 10 Countries of Origin

### Up Until 1981

1. United Kingdom
2. Italy
3. United States
4. Germany
5. Portugal
6. Netherlands
7. India
8. Poland
9. China
10. Yugoslavia

### 1981-2006

1. China
2. India
3. Philippines
4. Pakistan
5. United States
6. South Korea
7. Romania
8. Iran
9. United Kingdom
10. Columbia

**As the 21<sup>st</sup> century began,  
it was clear that the shift in countries of origin  
was being accompanied by  
an important parallel shift  
in the religious identification of immigrants.**

# Religious Identification of Immigrants: 1970s through Now

	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Other Faith	None	Totals
1970-1989	31	27	24	18	100
1990-1999	26	20	35	19	100
2000-2011	21	23	39	17	100

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2011.

Growing numbers of new arrivals identified with other major world religions, led by Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, or came with no religion.

Significant numbers continued to arrive as Roman Catholics.

But the Protestant newcomers tended to be Evangelicals, rather than Mainliners.

# Primary Sources: Muslims, No Religion

>60%    30-25    24-20    19-15    14-10    9-6    5-3%

**MUSLIM**

Pakistan

Iran

Morocco

Algeria

Bangladesh

India

Lebanon

UA Emirates

Saudi Arabia

Jordan

Turkey

USA

**NO RELIGION**    China

USA

South Korea

Japan

France

Russia

Hong Kong



# Primary Sources: Protestants, Catholics

>30%    30-25    24-20    19-15    14-10    9-6    5-3%

## PROTESTANT

S Korea

China  
Philippines  
UK  
USA  
S Africa

Haiti  
India  
Nigeria

## CATHOLIC

Philippines

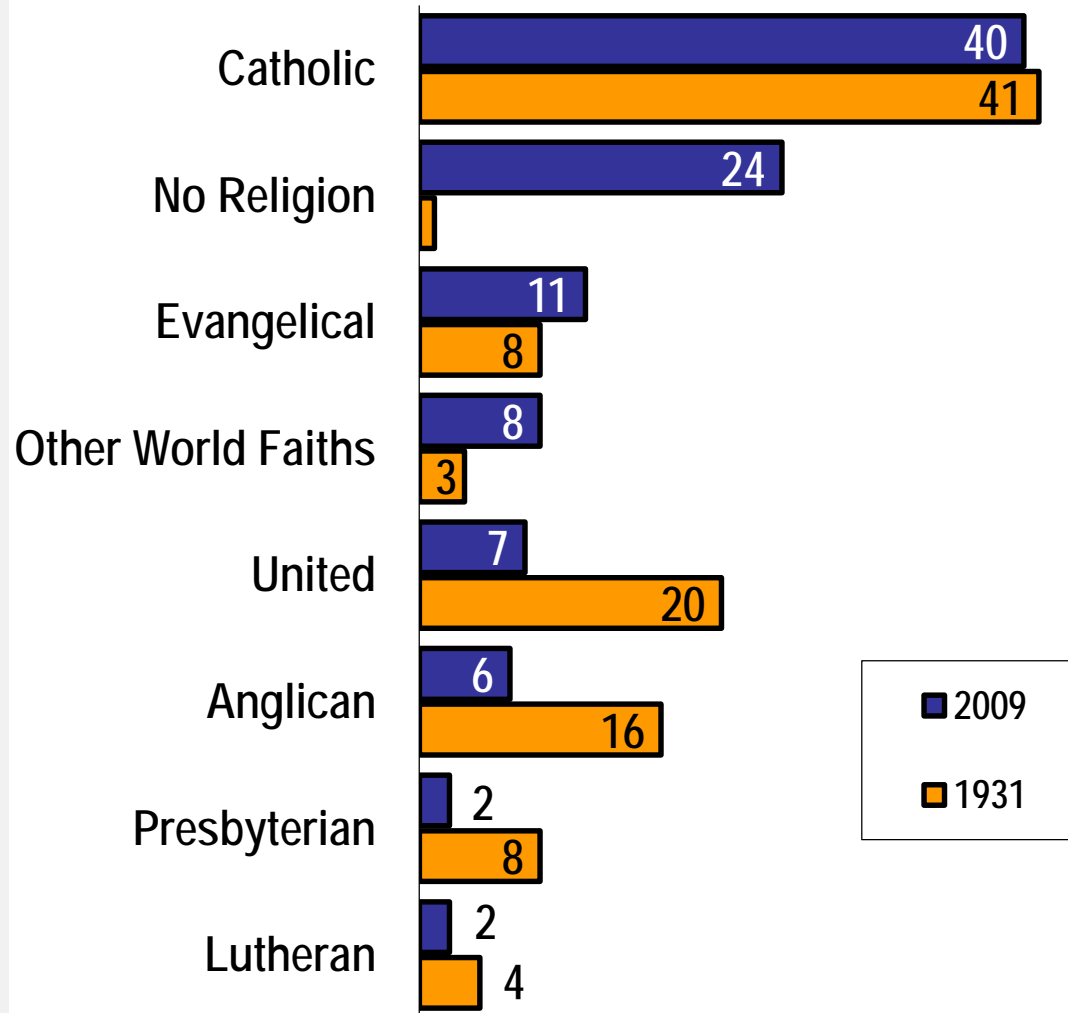
S Korea  
France  
Columbia  
India  
USA  
Haiti  
Mexico

The results have been anything but subtle:  
with their immigration pipelines reduced to trickles  
and natural increases typically negative,  
the market shares of Mainline Protestants  
have declined dramatically.

Conversely, Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, &  
Other major world religions have grown.

So has the no religion category.

# Religious Identification in Canada: 2009 and 1931



Source: Reginald Bibby, Computed from Statistics Canada, 1931 Census and 2009 General Social Survey.

Census data paint some clear and stark pictures.

- Mainline Protestants – *the United, Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches* – are being relegated to the sidelines of Canadian religious life.
- Their people have been aging, dying, and not replaced via net migration and natural increases.
- Their futures are not bright.
- A faint hope for Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Lutherans: *immigration*.

# Totals by Immigrants and Time Periods

	TOTAL	NON- IMMIGS	IMMIGS	<1971	1971- 1980	1981- 1990	1991- 2000	2001- 2011	Med Age
United Church	2,008,000	95	4	50	15	7	7	10	52.3
Anglican	1,632,000	87	13	104	46	21	17	23	51.1
Lutheran	478,000	82	18	58	9	5	5	7	46.3*
Presbyterian	472,000	79	20	37	16	9	14	17	48.0*
Jewish	329,500	69	30	28	16	15	18	21	44.5*

# In sharp contrast...

- *Roman Catholics*
- *Evangelicals*
- *Other major world religions*
- *The No Religion category*

## *Life and Vitality*

✓ Immigration

✓ Nature increase

# Totals by Immigrants and Time Periods

	TOTAL	NON- IMMIGS	IMMIGS	<1971	1971- 1980	1981- 1990	1991- 2000	2001- 2011	Med Age
Roman Catholic	12,729,000	84	15	515	280	292	342	478	42.9
Christian, <i>n.i.e.</i>	1,475,575	69	29	35	47	65	111	162	32.2*
Muslim	1,054,000	28	68	8	45	68	210	388	28.9
Christian Orthodox	550,690	42	57	62	31	26	88	108	42.1*
Hindu	497,960	26	71	10	32	50	105	154	34.2
Pentecostal	478,705	74	25	14	17	18	28	41	35.5*
Sikh	454,965	36	62	10	34	43	91	107	32.8
Buddhist	366,830	29	69	9	41	71	70	62	38.0*
No Religion	7,850,600	81	17	199	171	193	344	442	32.7

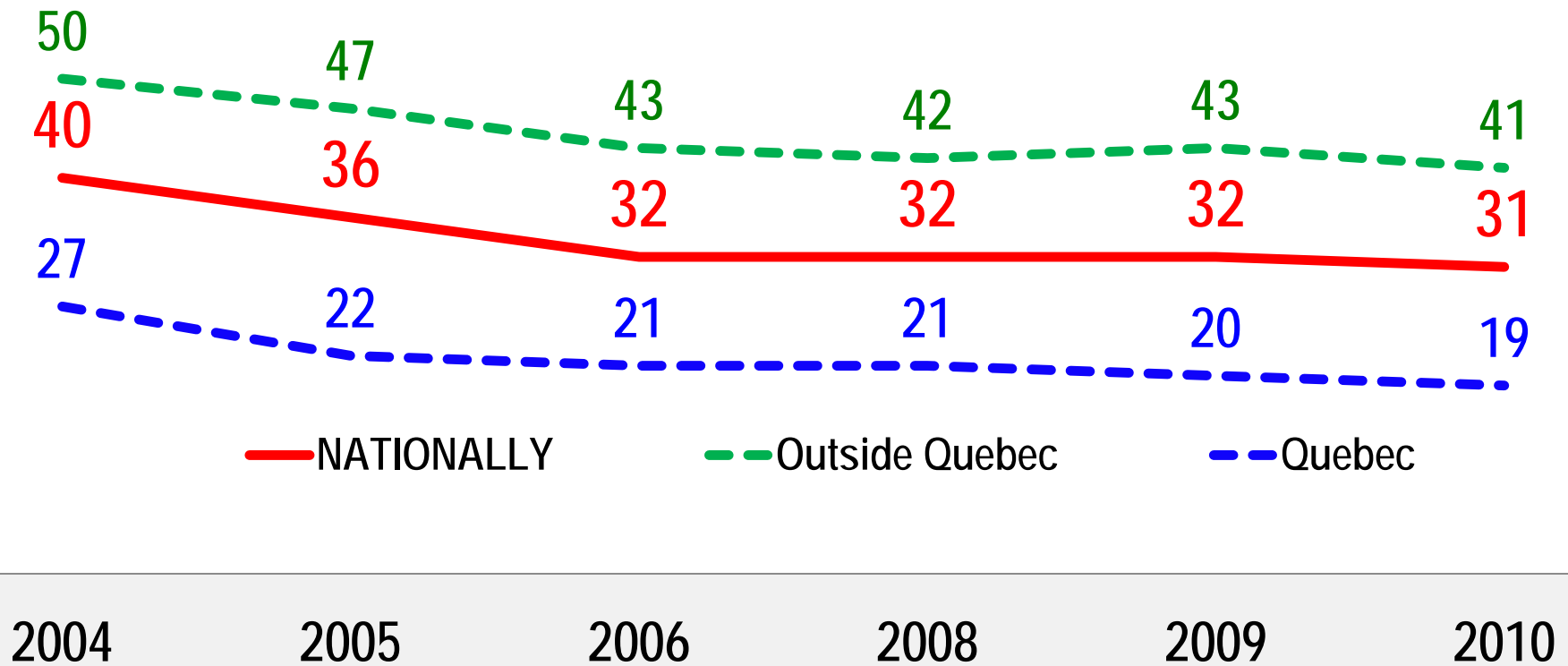
➤ ***ROMAN CATHOLICS...***

are benefitting from extensive, ongoing immigration, while retaining large numbers of their people. So are Orthodox churches.



# Roman Catholic Monthly-Plus Attendance: 2004-10: Nationally, Outside Quebec, and In Quebec (%)

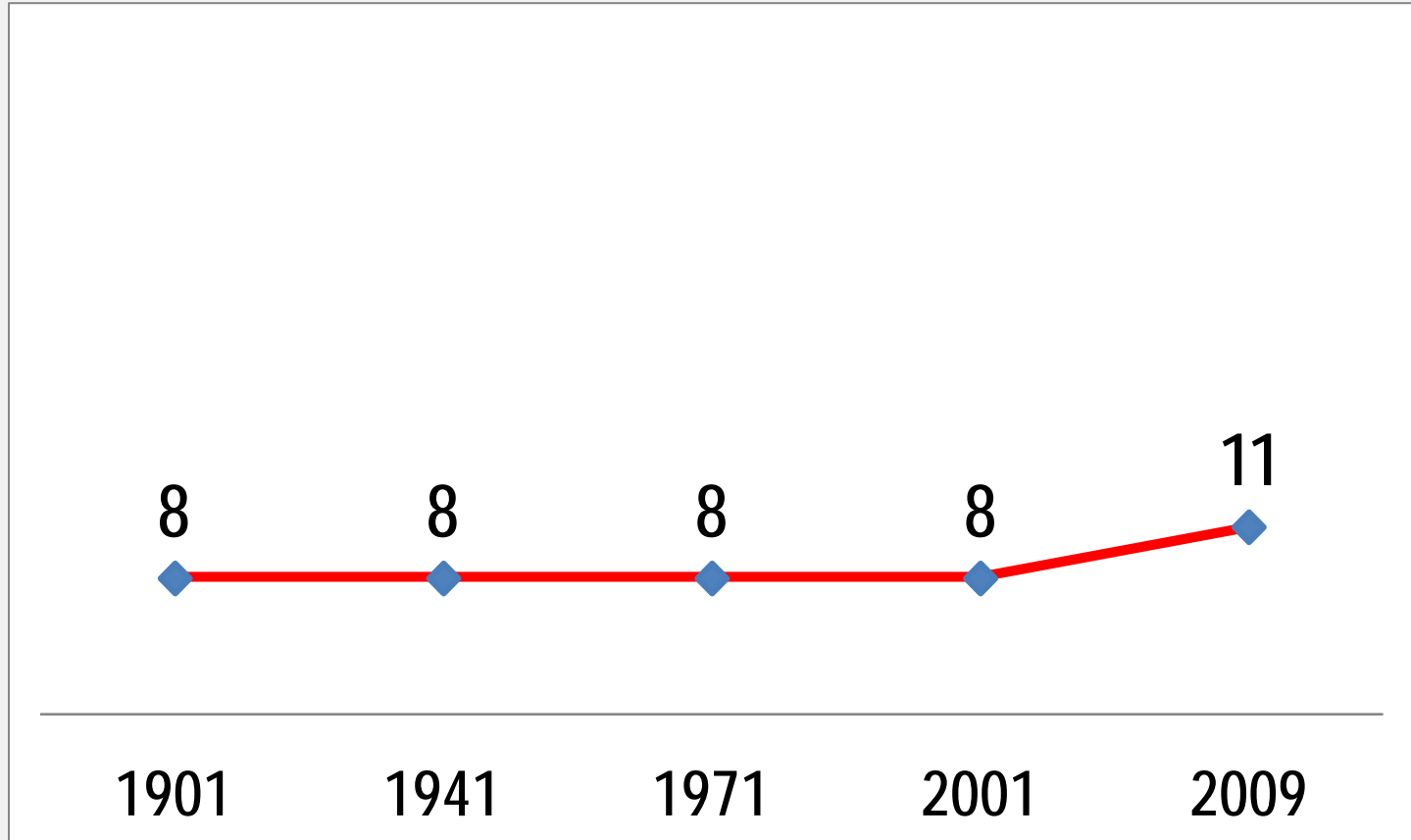
Source: Statistics Canada, 2004-2010 General Social Surveys.



➤ ***EVANGELICALS...***

are also retaining large numbers of people and being further strengthened by the arrival of “generic Christians” and Pentecostals.

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



Source: Statistics Canada census data and 2009 GSS.

➤ ***OTHER MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS,  
led by Islam....***

**are also knowing the positive impact  
of immigration.**

# Growth in Other Major World Faiths: 1991-2011



1991

2011

Muslim	253,265	1,053,945
Jewish	318,185	329,495
Buddhist	163,415	366,830
Hindu	157,015	497,960
Sikh	147,440	454,965

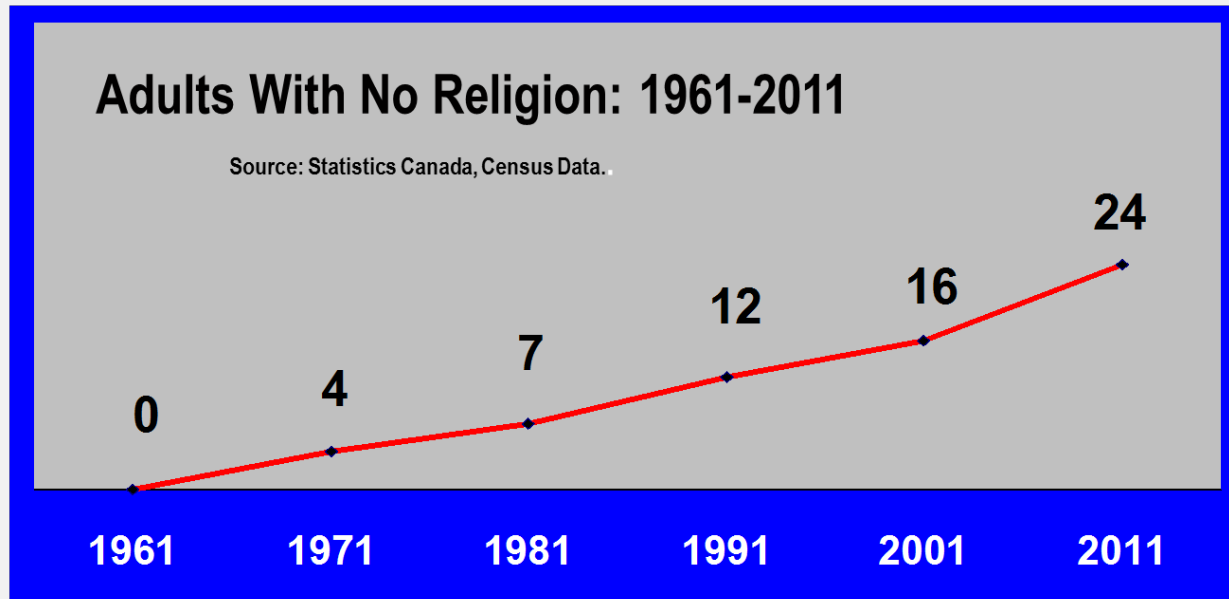
- *The NO RELIGION category...*  
is also being fed by immigration,  
notably from China

# NO RELIGION

1991 = 3,333,245

2011 = 7,745,535

- Growth via immigration
- Growth also via choice among Canadian-born



# Totals by Immigrants and Time Periods

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Jewish	329,500	69	30	28	16	15	18	21	44.5*
<b>No Religion</b>	<b>7,850,600</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>17</b>	199	171	193	344	442	<b>32.7</b>



**In short:**

**not everyone is losing.**

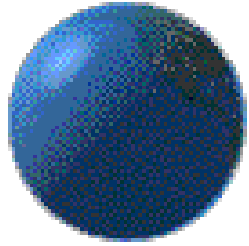
**And why should they?**

# The Global Context

To look at virtually every country in the world  
is to see a fairly obvious reality:  
to varying degrees,  
some people embrace religion  
and cores of people do not.

A significant proportion  
remain in the middle –  
something like “the politically undecided” –  
neither in nor out.

# Attendance and Identification: Globally



## Attendance

## ID

Nigeria	89%	99
India	73	99
Philippines	64	99
Mexico	60	83
Ireland	56	94
Iraq	53	99
Brazil	49	93
Iran	45	99
USA	43	84
Israel	39	96
Japan	38	48
Germany	30	75
New Zealand	27	74
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>84</b>
France	20	57
Cuba	20	90
U.K.	20	77
Sweden	17	75
Russia	15	52
China	9	7

From Bibby, *Beyond the Gods & Back*, 2011:59.

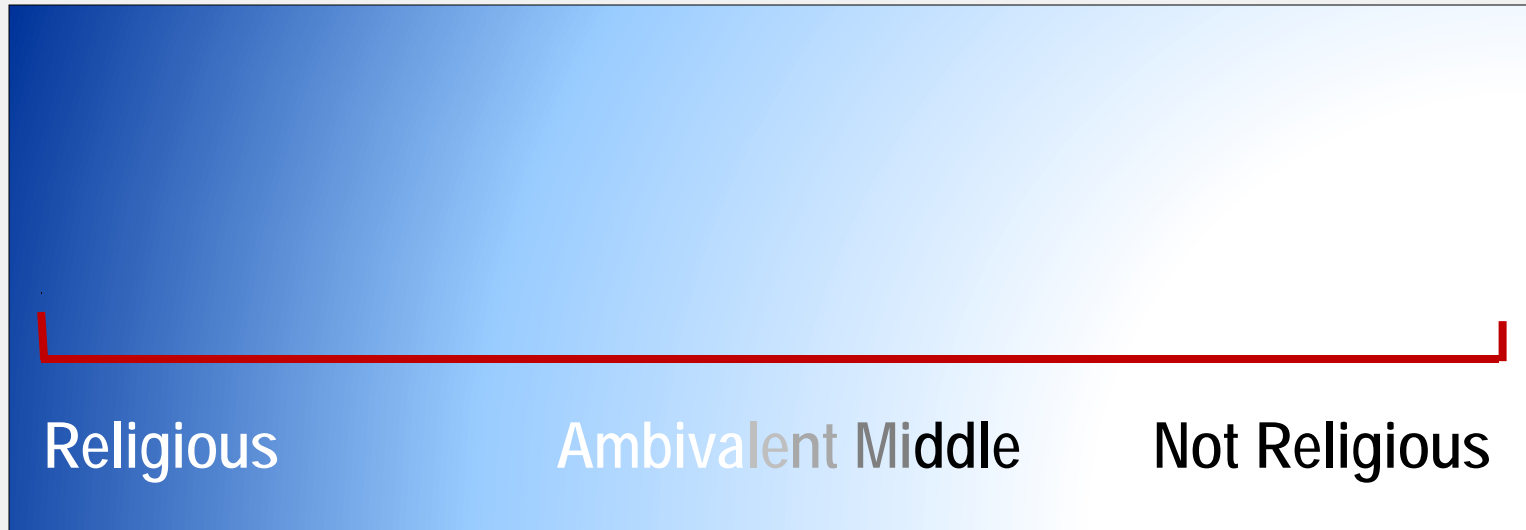
*Not this...*

Religious → Not Religious

*But this...*

Religious ← Not Religious

# The Polarization Continuum



Source: 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.

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

But neither will disappear in the foreseeable future.

Those in middle could go either way.

*What is clear is that virtually everywhere – including Canada – religion persists.*



# 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 the fastest growing religion!*

- “Christianity on its biggest roll in its 2,000 year history
- its numbers & market share: at all-time highs
- by 2050: Christianity could top 3 billion people
- 1950-2000: Roman Catholics grew from 500 million to over 1 billion
- 1900-2000: Pentecostals: from zero to half a billion
- 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

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

Source: Barrett et al. 2001:4.and Bibby 2011:204.

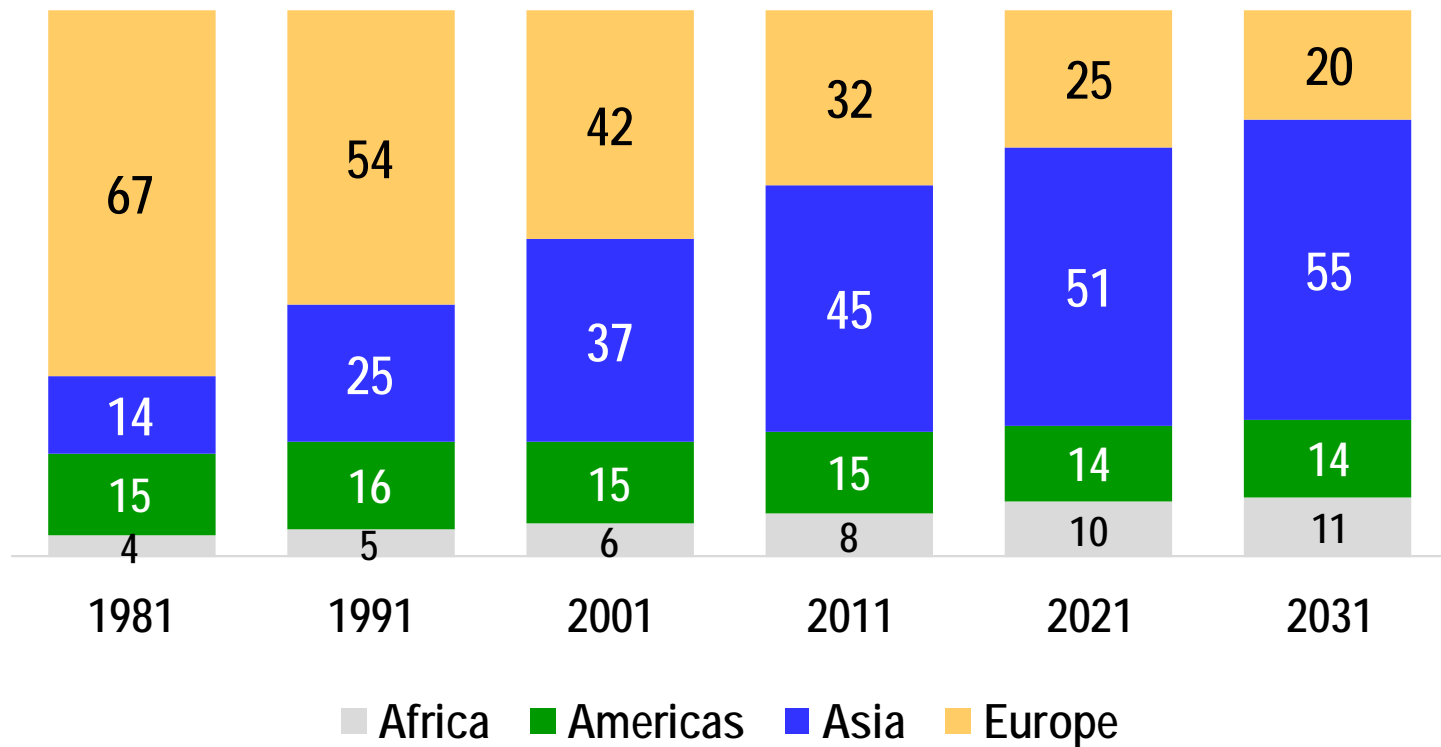
*A sociological axiom:  
life does not take place in a social vacuum.*

*We are influenced by  
our social environments.*

*In Canada: that means  
our global environment.*

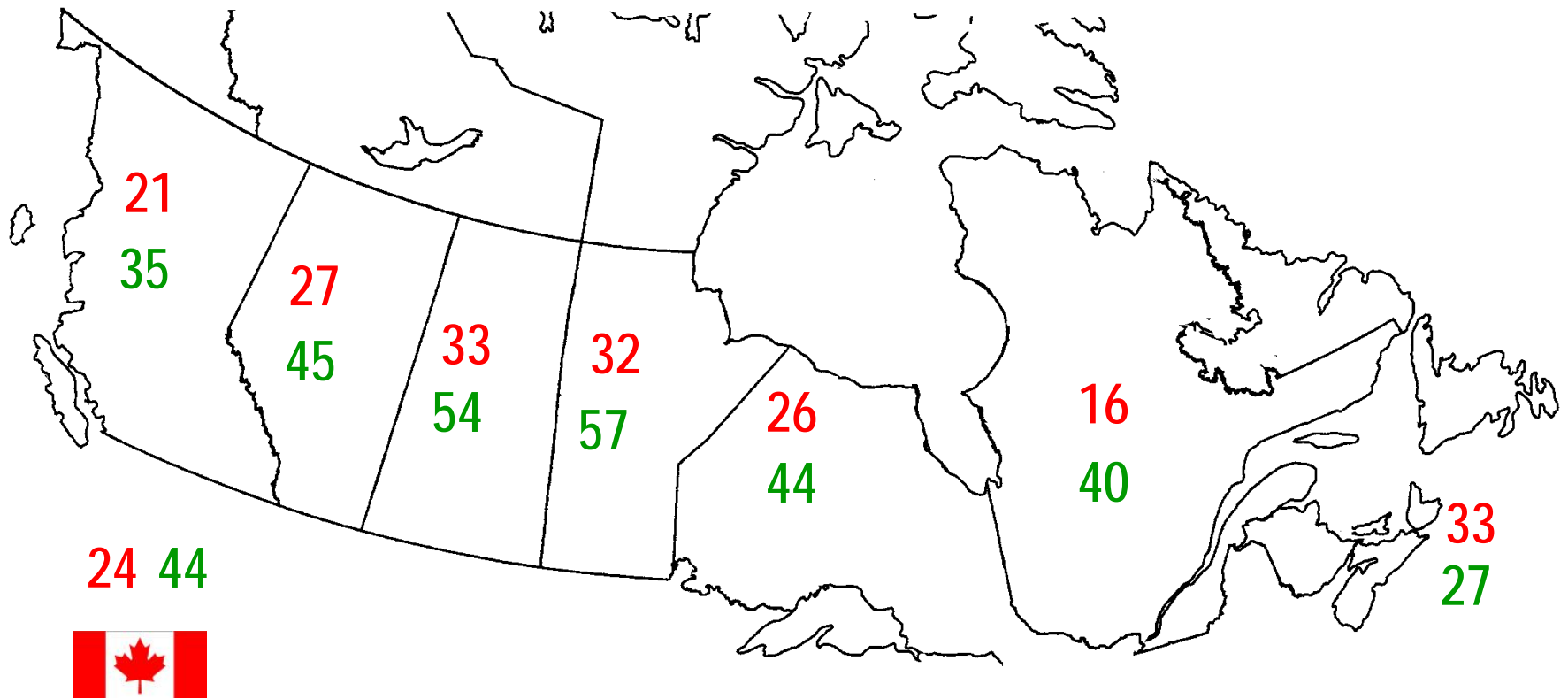


# Sources of Canada's Foreign-born Population: 1981-2031 (%)



Source: Derived from Statistics Canada 2010, Cat. 91-551-x.

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



Source: Statistics Canada, GSS 2010.

## **After 2030: The Central Role of Immigration in Population Growth**

**Between 1851 and 2001, natural increase was the main factor behind Canada's population growth. The proportion of growth due to natural increase, however, has declined since the late 1960s. Since 2001, it has accounted for about one-third of population growth.**

**According to all scenarios used in Statistics Canada's most recent population projections, natural increase is expected to continue to decline in the future decades, due to a projected increase in the number of deaths.**

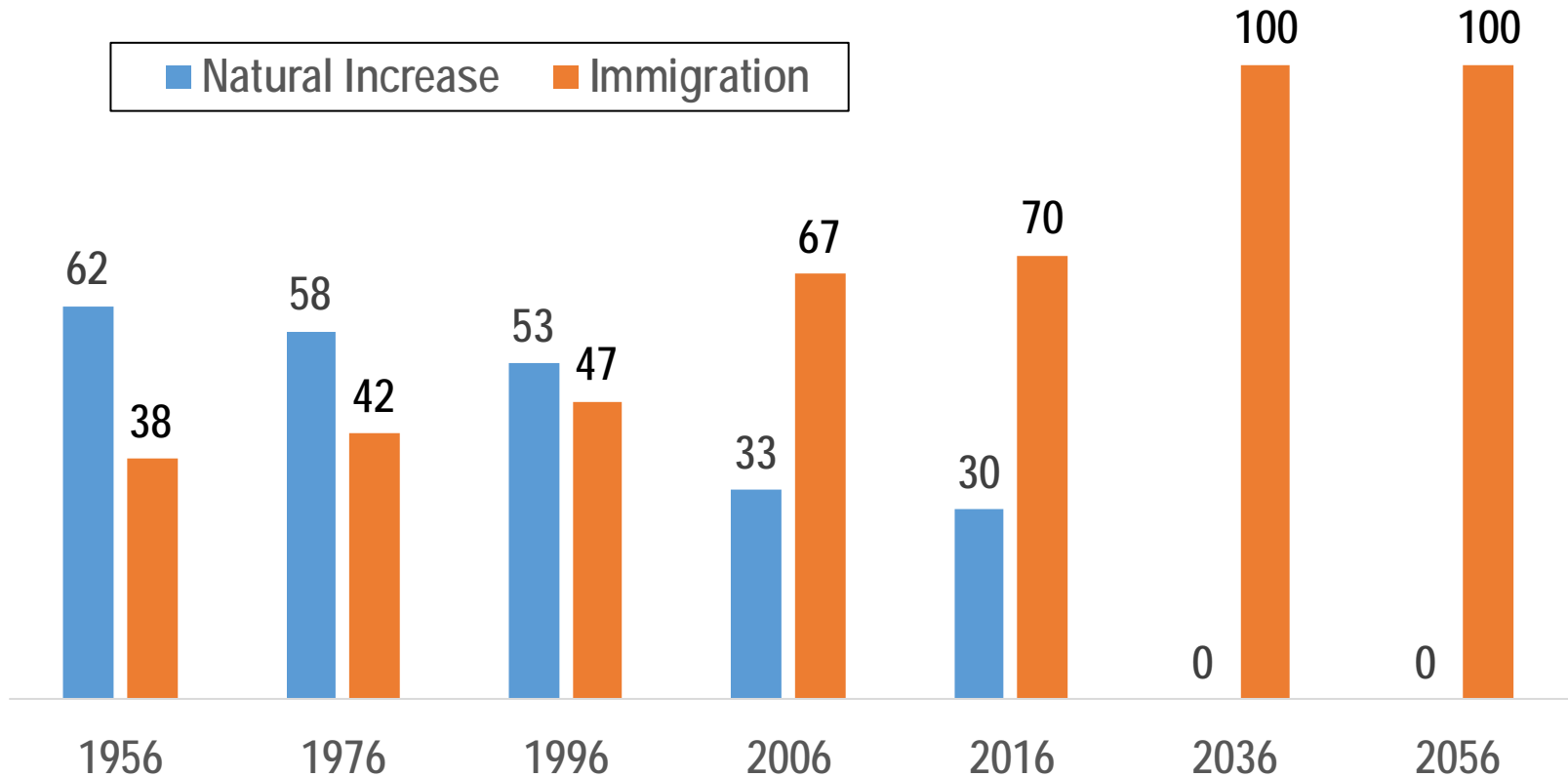
**The aging of the population will accelerate between 2011 and 2031 as baby boomers reach the age of 65. In 2026, the first of the baby boomers will reach the age of 80, an age when mortality is high. As a result, the number of deaths will increase significantly.**

**Starting in 2031, migratory increase could account for more than 80% of Canada's population growth, compared to about 67% currently.**

**Without a sustained level of immigration or a substantial increase in fertility, Canada's population growth could, within 20 years, be close to zero.**



# Population Growth through Natural Increase & Immigration: 1956-2056 (%)



Source: Derived from Statistics Canada 2007. Cat. 91-003-XWE.

# The Future

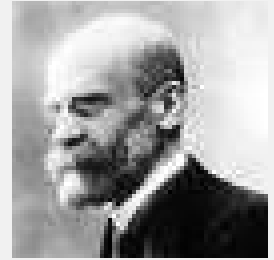


Canada's religious shape will be determined by

1. ongoing **immigration patterns**
2. existing and new **religious groups**
3. **interaction** with **culture**

- **Emile Durkheim**

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



- **Rodney Stark**

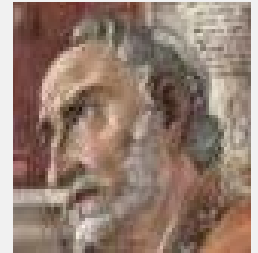
there is always a market for religion



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

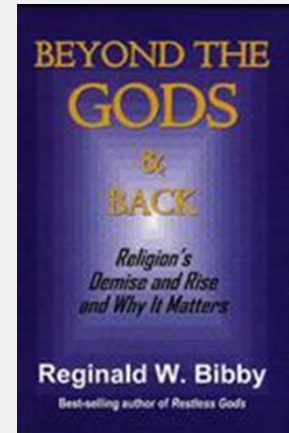
- **They are in good company...**

*“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

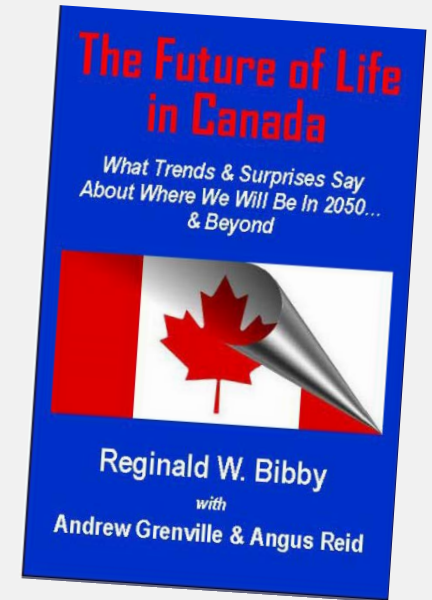




- Religion is not going away
- But the dominant players are changing

# By 2050...

- Polarization



- Catholics...Evangelicals...Muslims



# ❖ Wildcards?

1. Renewal of Established Groups
2. New Religious Expressions?

*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."*

