

Heat in the Melting Pot and Cracks in the Mosaic

*Attitudes Toward Religious Groups and Atheists
in the United States and Canada*

by



Reginald W. Bibby

Board of Governors Research Chair in Sociology
University of Lethbridge
Lethbridge, Alberta Canada T1K 3M4
bibby@uleth.ca



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ABSTRACT

The ideal of pluralism has become entrenched in both the United States and Canada. Allegedly, respect and acceptance are increasingly being extended to diverse religious groups of all kinds, along with people who are not religious. In this paper, attitudes toward a wide range of religious groups and atheists in both the U.S. and Canada are examined and compared, drawing on recent parallel national surveys of Americans by the Pew Research Center and Canadians by the Angus Reid Institute. Despite the rhetoric about acceptance of religious diversity in both countries, the findings show that there still is a considerable distance to go before intergroup utopia is realized in either setting.

Introduction

The Pluralistic Ideal

Pluralism



Boomers were dramatically influenced by the 1960s “rights” revolutions...civil rights, the sexual revolution, women’s liberation, & the counterculture revolution.

In Canada many also grew up with bilingualism, multiculturalism, & the Charter.

The legacy is everywhere.

While acceptance of diverse people and lifestyles has not always been the norm in either country, these days respect and acceptance have become the dominant ideals.

Such acceptance of diversity allegedly is extended to religious groups of all kinds, along with people who are not religious.

- **Explicit multiculturalism**



- **Melting pot**



- **Both:** full participation, decrying of discrimination, goal of equality



In both countries: much progress in many areas

- ✓ Race & ethnicity
- ✓ Women
- ✓ Sexual orientation
- ✓ Physical challenges

One of the most difficult: may prove to be religion

- ✓ Religious diversity
- ✓ People who value faith & those who do not

IN BOTH COUNTRIES...

Protestants and Roman Catholics
comprised more than 95% of the population from
the 1860s through early 1960s.

Over the 100-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%.

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.

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.

The Post-1980s

Shifting Immigration Patterns

**New arrivals from Britain and Europe
have been 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

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

Significant numbers have continued to arrive as Roman Catholics.

The Protestant newcomers have tended to be Evangelicals, rather than Mainliners.

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.

Religious Composition of Immigrants to the United States (%)

1.	Christian	74
2.	No Religion	10
3.	Muslim	5
4.	Buddhist	4
5.	Hindu	3
6.	Jewish	<1
7.	Other	3

Source: Pew Research Center, March 8, 2012.



Results:



- Religious diversity
- Religious diversification...*esp. Catholicism*



Other Major World Religions: Canada and the United States

	1991	2011
	3.8%	8.2
	3.6	5.3

Sources: Canada - Statistics Canada; U.S. – Pew Forum, 2015.

Other Major World Religions, Canada: 2011



1.	Muslim	3.2%	1,054,000
2.	Hindu	1.5	498,000
3.	Sikh	1.4	455,000
4.	Buddhist	1.1	367,000
5.	Jewish	1.0	329,000

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

Other Major World Religions, United States: 2010



1. Jewish	1.8%	5,690,000
2. Buddhist	1.2	3,570,000
3. Muslim	.9	2,770,000
4. Hindu	.6	1,790,000

Source: Pew Forum, *Religious Composition by Country*, April 2, 2015.

Also in the Post-1960s
Shifting Identification Patterns



Newsflash!

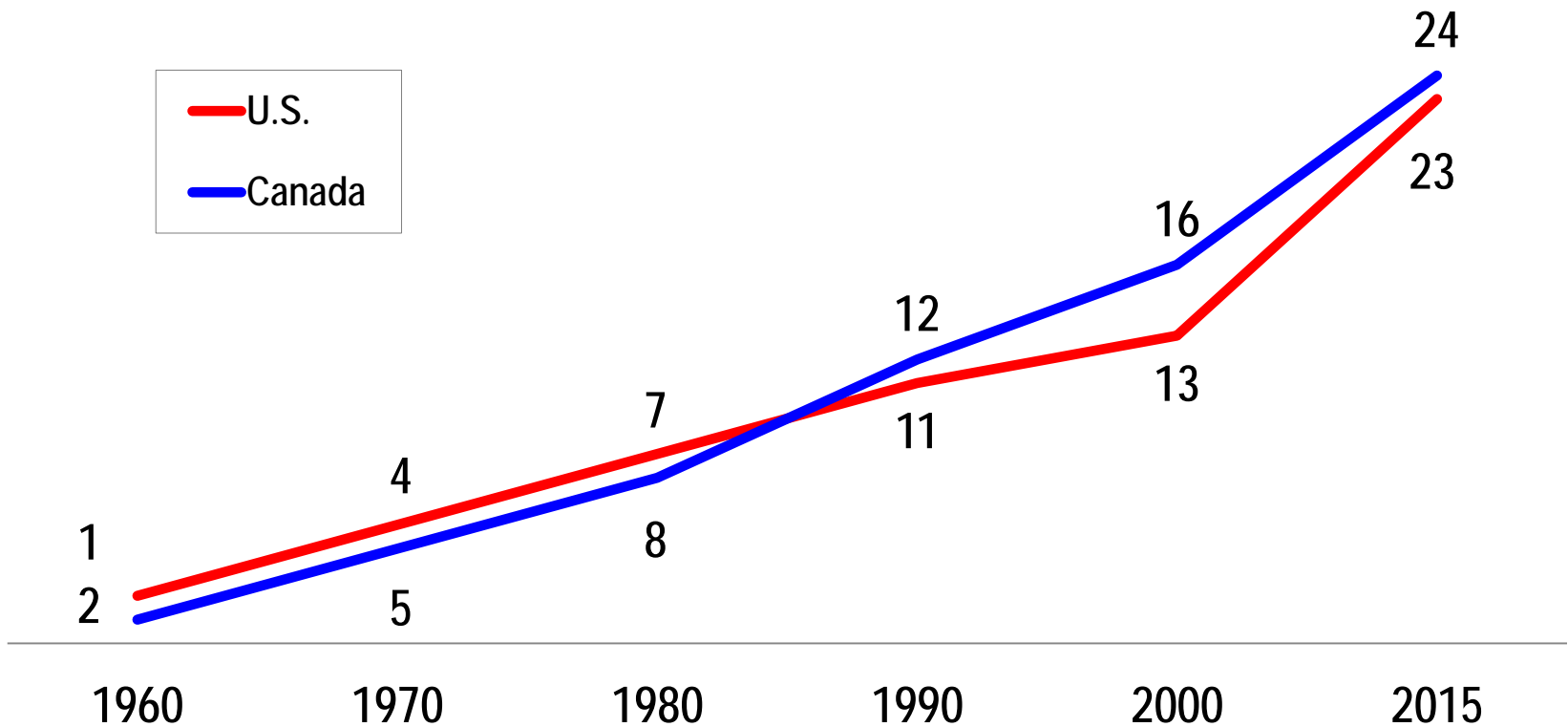


PEW FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE October 2012

Nones are on the rise and growing at a rapid pace!

- 1 in 5 Americans, 1 in 3 adults under 30
- 2% through the 1960s, 10% through the 1990s
- second only to Catholics
- mostly at expense white Protestants (70% in 1950, now <50%)
- via immigration: little change RCs (25%), Other (7%)

Adults with No Religion, 1960-2015: U.S. and Canada



Sources: U.S.: Gallup and Pew; Canada: Statistics Canada Census & GSS, ARI 2015.

NO RELIGION NUMBERS



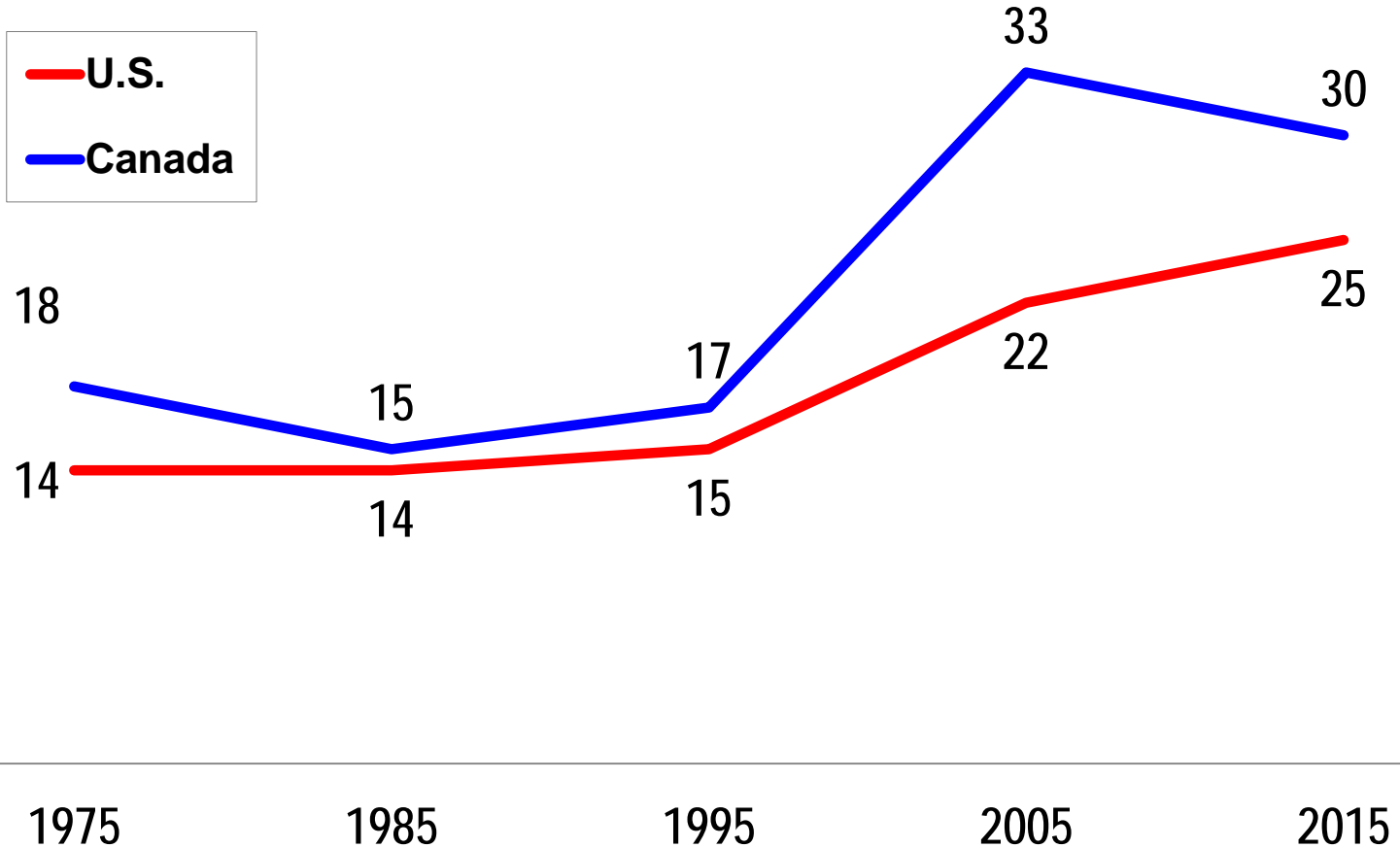
8 million



58 million

- **Growth** via immigration, *notably China*
- **Growth also** via choice **among** Can/Am-born

Never Attenders: 1975-2015: U.S. and Canada



Sources: U.S.: NORC 1975-2005; 2014 ARF; Canada: 1975-1995 Bibby, Project Canada Series; 2005 GSS, 2015 ARI.



AmCan Comparisons

Monthly-Plus Attendance, 1975-2015



53

53

50



41

34

23

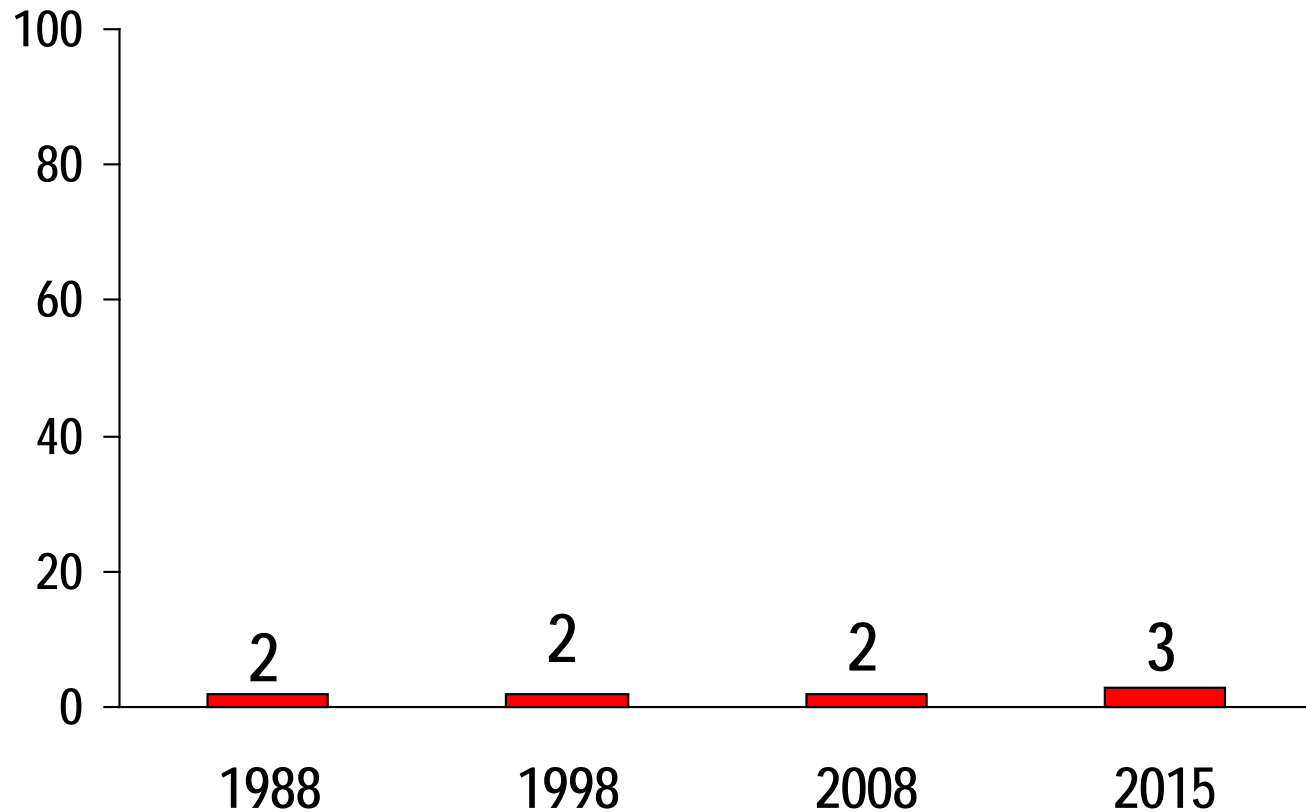
1975

1990

2015

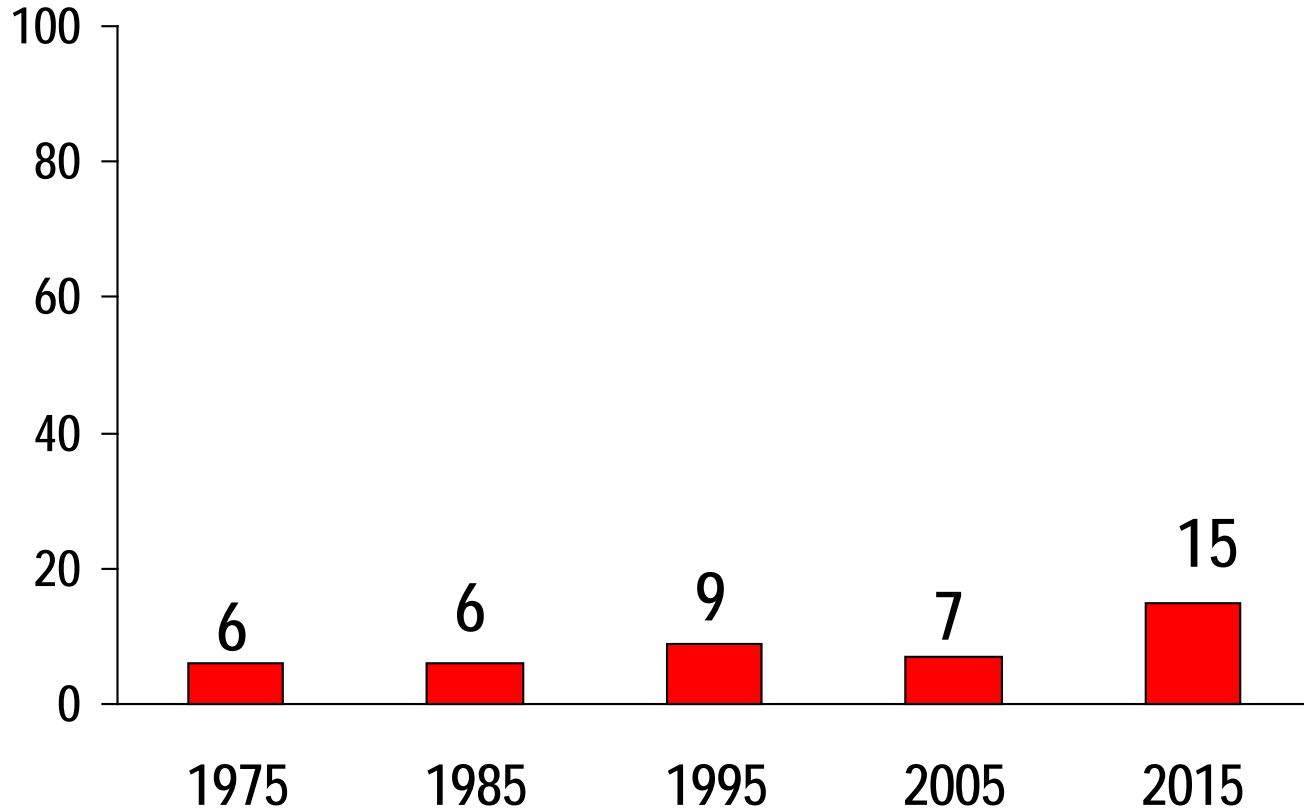
Sources: Canada - Bibby, 1975, 1990, ARI 2015;
U.S. - NORC, 1975, 1990; Pew 2015.

Atheism in the U.S.: 1988-2015 (%)



Sources: 1988-2008: NORC; 2015: Pew Research Center.

Atheism in Canada: 1975-2015 (%)



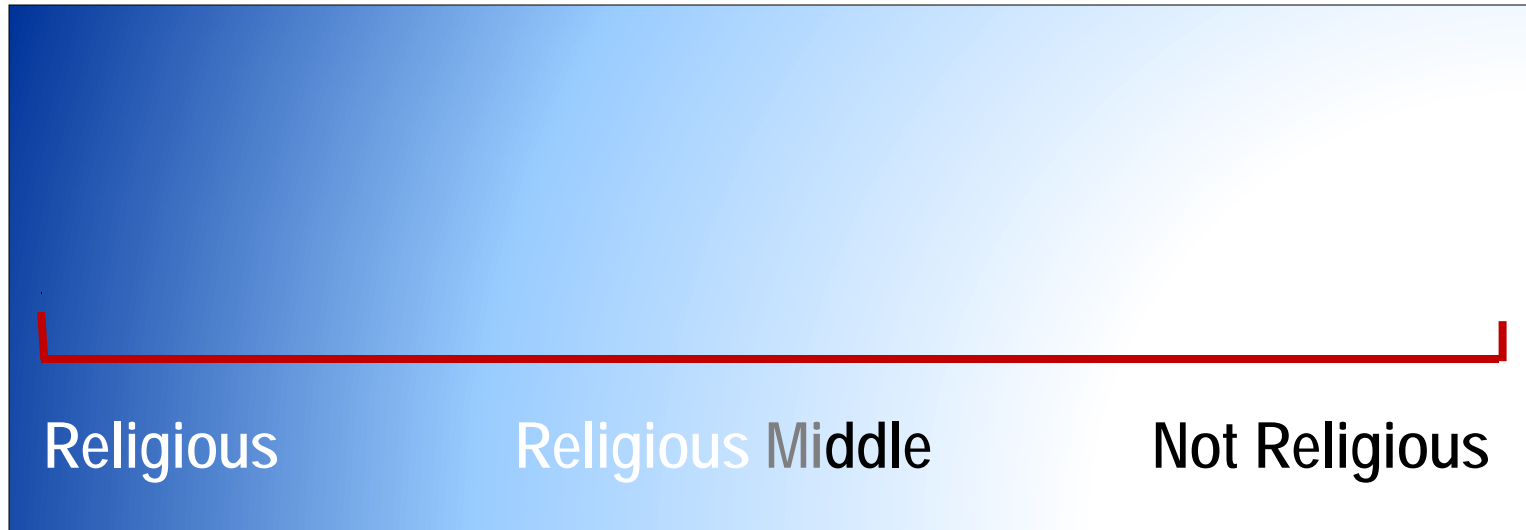
Sources: 1975-2005 Reginald W. Bibby, Project Canada Survey Series; 2015 ARI Religion Survey..

The Reality of Religious Polarization

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.

The Polarization Continuum



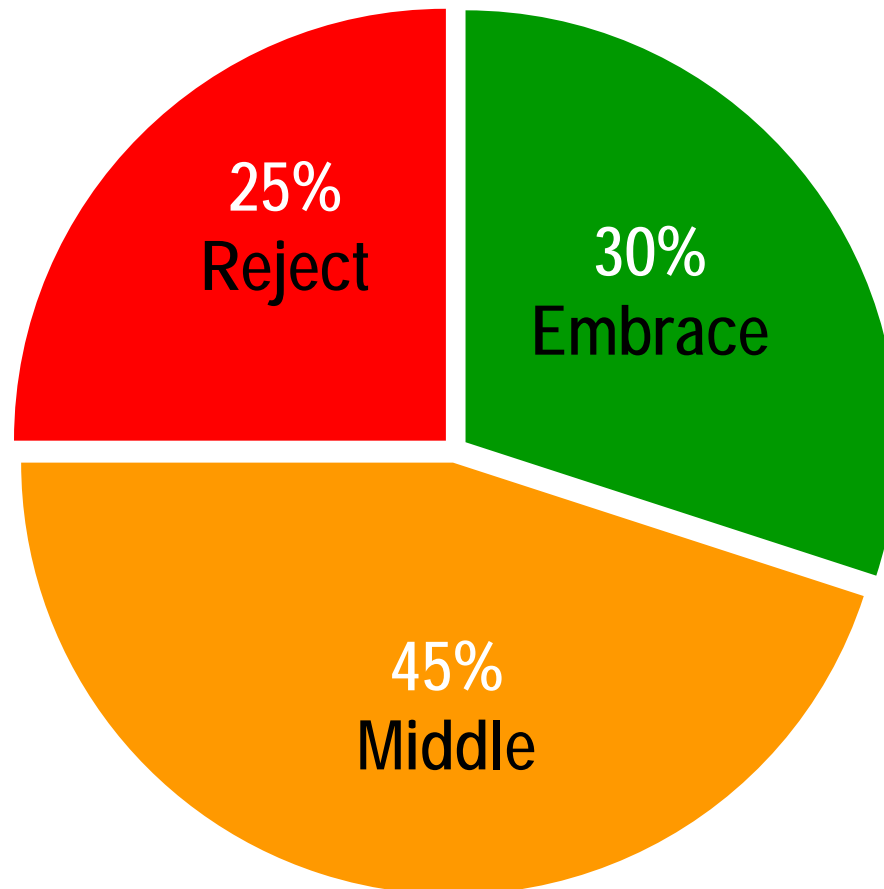
Source: Reginald W. Bibby, *Beyond the Gods & Back*, 2011:56.

Some people say Canadians variously (1) embrace religion, (2) reject religion, or (3) are somewhere in between the two extremes.

Where would you be tend to locate yourself?



The three response options were: (1) *I am inclined to embrace religion*, (2) *I am inclined to reject religion*, and (3) *I am somewhere in between*.



RESILIENT GODS

*An Updated Look at Canada's
Pro-Religious, No Religious,
& People in Between*

Reginald W. Bibby

UBC Press 2017

Religious Composition



Christian	68%	71
Catholic	41	21
Protestant	23	47
<i>Mainline</i>	14	17
<i>Evangelical</i>	9	30
Other Christian	4	3
Other Faiths	8	6
No Religion	24	23

The Realities of Religious
Diversity & Religious
Polarization Raise:
Q of Coexistence

Intergroup Attitudes: Canada & the U.S.



"How positive, negative, or neutral do you feel toward the following groups?"



Rating on "feeling thermometer": range 0-100; coldest 33 or below



% Indicating Negative

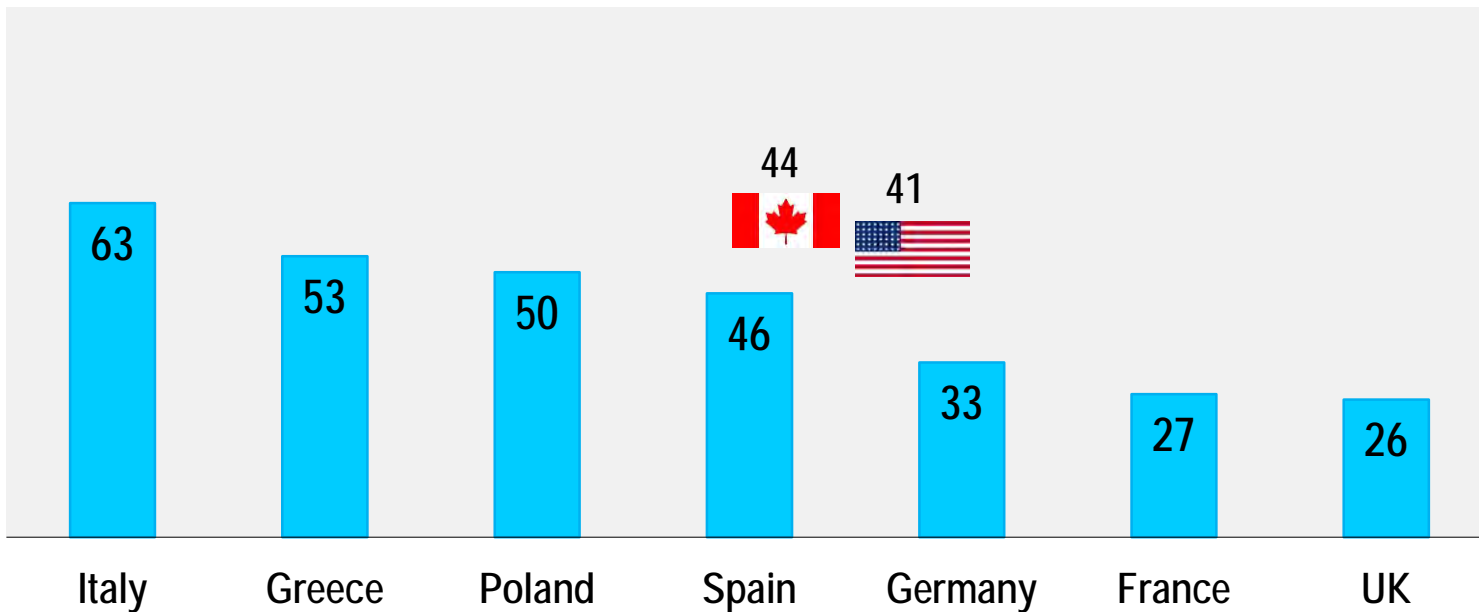


% Coldest

	<i>% Indicating Negative</i>	<i>% Coldest</i>
Muslims	44%	41
Mormons	35	29
Evangelical Christians	27	20
Sikhs	26	***
Atheists	22	40
Hindus	16	23
Catholics	13	14
Jews	12	10
Buddhists	9	22
Protestants	8	**

Attitudes Toward Muslims in Select European Countries: 2014

% Indicating "Unfavorable"



Source: Pew Research Center, 2014
Global Attitudes Survey.

Intergroup Attitudes on Average

"How positive, negative, or neutral do you feel toward the following groups?" Means



Catholics	71	62
Protestants	70	***
Buddhists	69	53
Jews	67	63
Hindus	63	50
Evangelical Christians	61	61
Atheists	61	41
Sikhs	58	***
Mormons	56	48
Muslims	51	40

Intergroup Averages by Religious Groups

Indicates <50



Prots Caths Nones

Prots Caths Nones

Catholics	70	81	57
Protestants	78	70	61
Buddhists	66	70	70
Jews	71	67	61
Hindus	61	65	62
Evangel Ctns	68	64	48
Atheists	54	61	74
Sikhs	58	57	58
Mormons	56	58	51
Muslims	52	49	52

60	80	52
***	***	***
45	55	64
64	61	58
44	53	56
73	57	41
32	38	60
***	***	***
47	51	44
36	40	45

Select Group Averages by Age

Indicates <50




	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Buddhists	70	70	69	69
Jews	64	66	68	72
Hindus	65	63	64	63
Atheists	65	64	60	55
Mormons	55	54	56	59
Muslims	55	52	50	49

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Buddhists	58	56	50	47
Jews	60	63	63	68
Hindus	54	52	47	46
Atheists	49	44	35	34
Mormons	46	46	48	52
Muslims	49	42	36	31

Intergroup Attitudes

"How positive, negative, or neutral do you feel toward the following groups?"

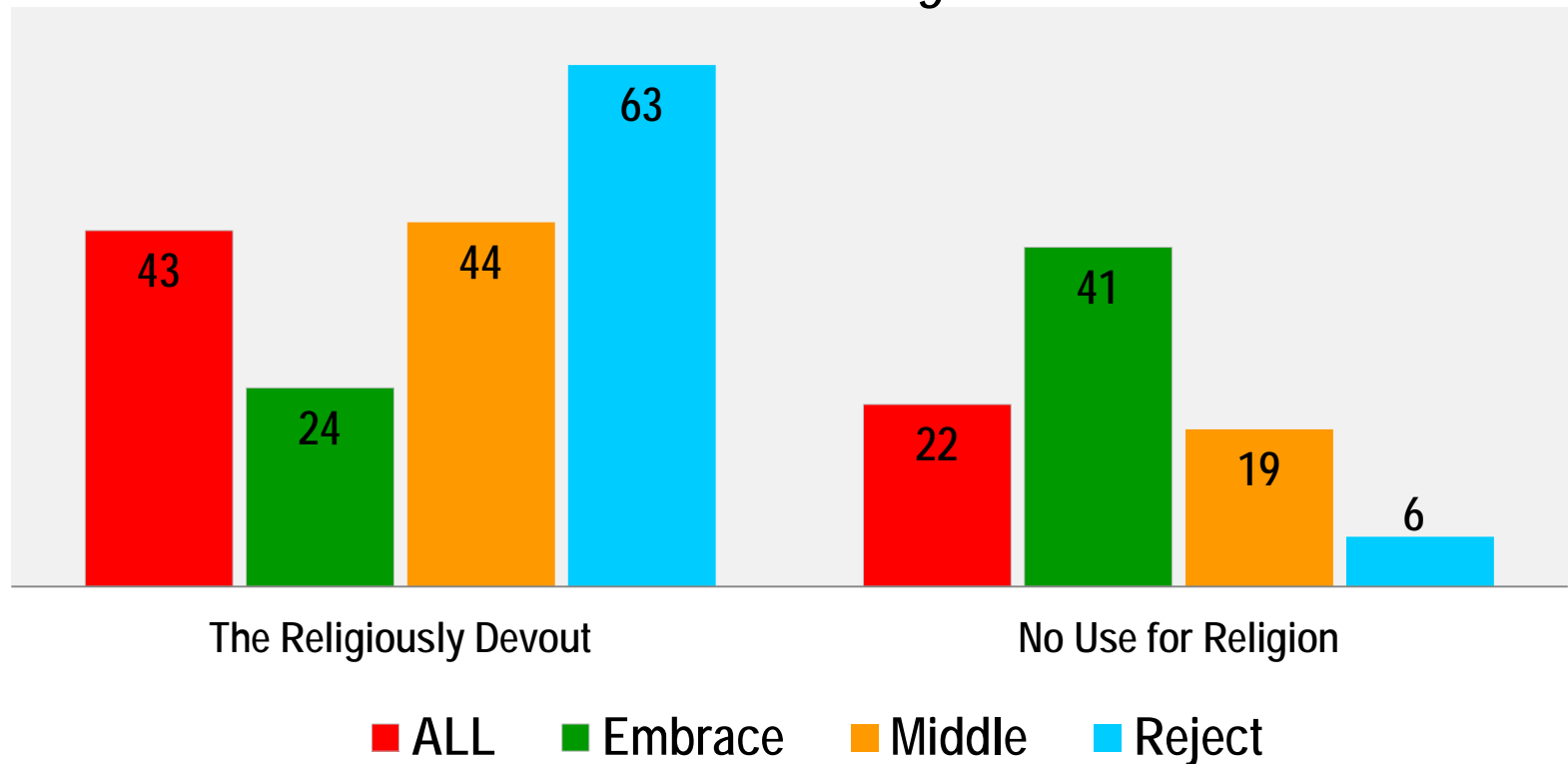
% Indicating Negative

		Embrace	Middle	Reject
Muslims	44%	45	42	48
Mormons	35	32	29	48
Evangelical Christians	27	12	22	51
Sikhs	26	31	21	29
Atheists	22	48	16	4
Hindus	16	22	11	16
Catholics	13	8	8	29
Jews	12	11	9	18
Buddhists	9	17	6	7
Protestants	8	7	5	14

Discomfort Around the Devout and Those Rejecting Religion (%)

“Generally speaking, I feel a bit uncomfortable around people who...

- are religiously devout*
- have no use for religion”*



Source: 2015 ARI Religion Survey.

The Future

More National & Religious Diversity



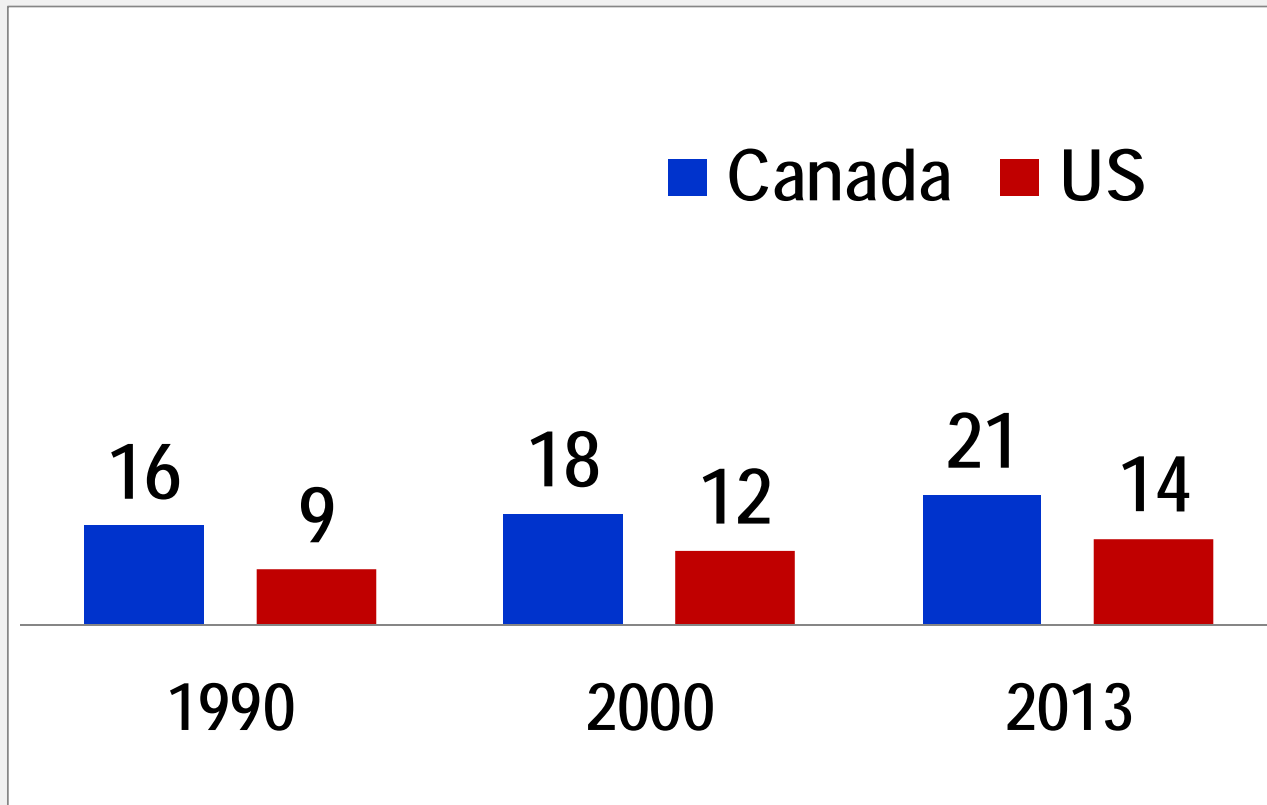
World's Top 10 Immigrant Destinations

In Millions

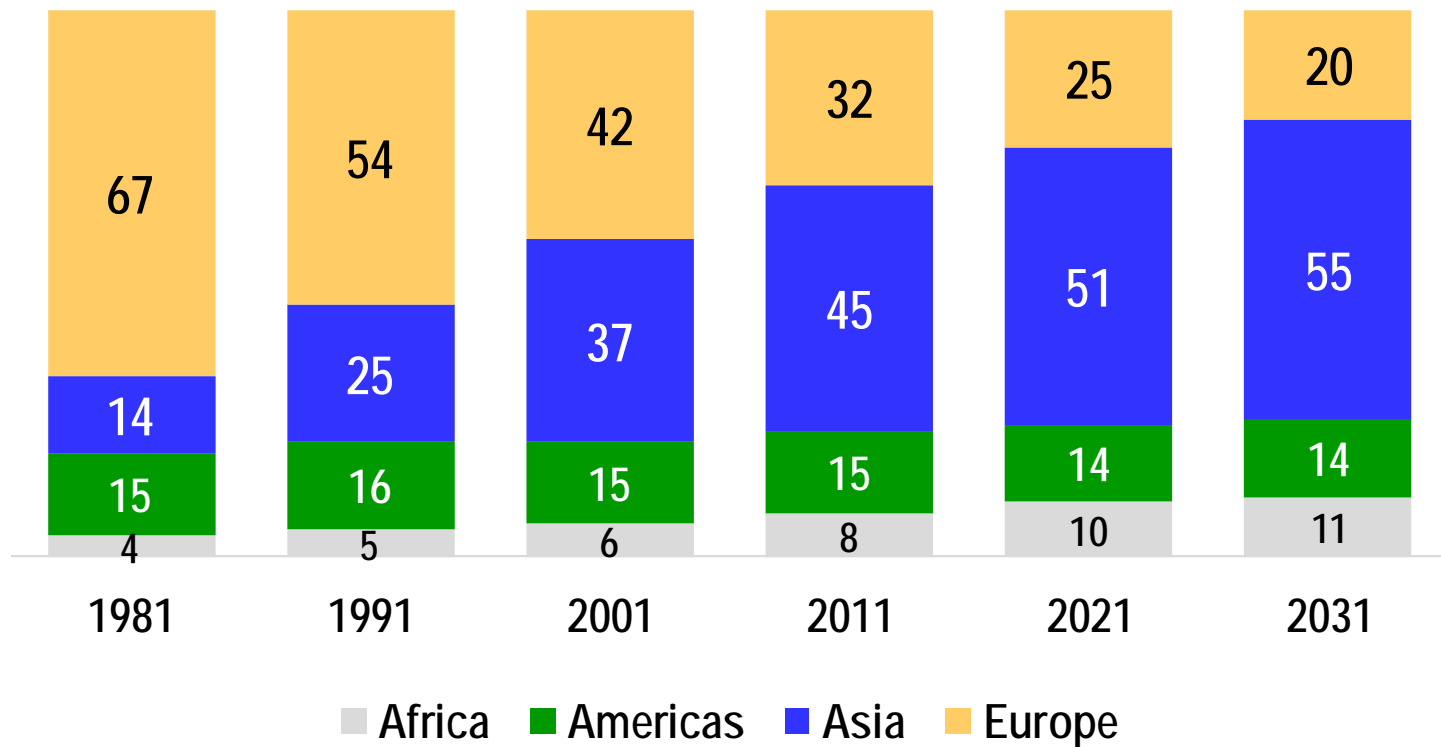
10.	Ukraine	5.3
9.	India	5.4
8.	Spain	6.4
7.	United Kingdom	6.5
6.	France	6.7
5.	Canada	7.2
4.	Saudi Arabia	7.3
3.	Germany	11.0
2.	Russia	12.0
1.	United States	43.0*

Includes 12 million Mexicans

Foreign-Born Makeup of Population: 1990-2013 (%)

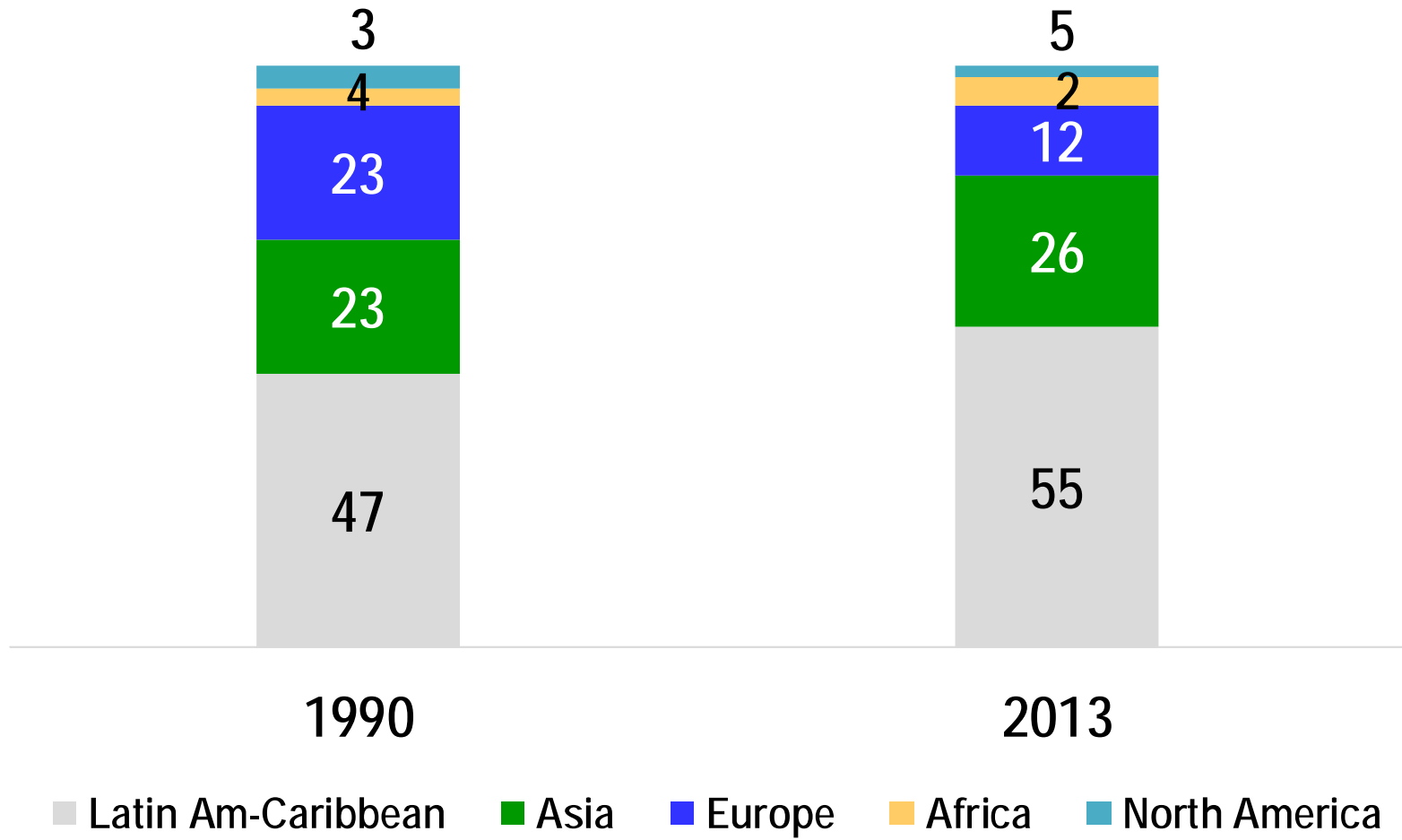


Sources of Canada's Foreign-born Population: 1981-2031 (%)



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

Sources of the American Foreign-born Population: 1990 & 2013 (%)



Source: Pew Research Center, December 17, 2013.

Current and Projected Sizes of Major Religious Groups: 2010 & 2050, the United States & Canada (%)

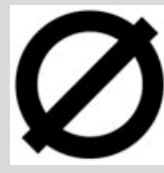
	2010		2050	
	Canada	U.S.	Canada	U.S.
Christians	69	78	60	66
No Religion	24	16	26	26
Muslims	2	1	6	2
Hindu	1	1	3	1
Buddhists	1	1	2	1
Jews	1	2	1	1
Other	2	1	2	3

Source: Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*. 2015.

That Was

**THE MOST IMPORTANT SLIDE
IN THE PRESENTATION!**

Religion and non-religion will continue to exist.



*The **Q** is **how the groups will get along.***