

Being Pro-Religious, Low Religious, and No Religious in Montreal

A Mirror of Canada & the World

Reginald W. Bibby

November 30, 2017



Catholic Church of Montreal

- Thank you...



- Great privilege...



- Reflect with you on some important religious developments today



- Where things **are**

- Where they seem to be **going**



You know the story

Catholics: long and prominent place in Canadian life

- Started with Quebec...earliest immigrants...
- 80,000 in 1750; incl 10,000 Acadians in NS-PEI
- Entrenched in Quebec through mid-1950s



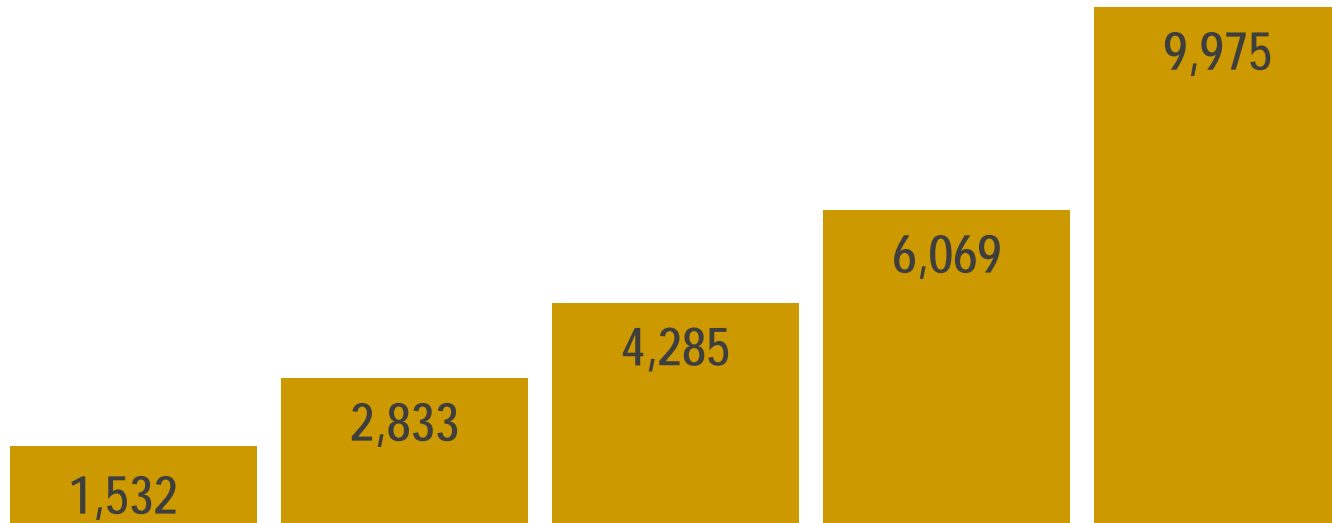
Catholicism grew along with Canada

- From St. Johns (1784), Toronto (1841), Ottawa (1847),
Victoria (1846), Saint Boniface, St. Albert (1871), rest west
- 1871 census: Catholics 42%, Protestants 56%, Other 2%



Number of Canadian Catholics: 1871-1971

In Thousands



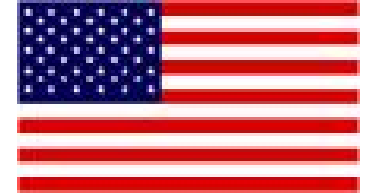
■ 1871

■ 1911

■ 1931

■ 1951

■ 1971



Around 1950:

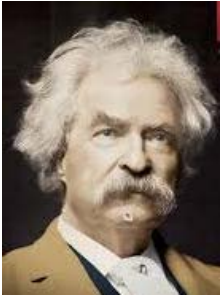
Attendance higher than in the U.S: 60% vs 50%



Highest in Quebec

Through the 1950s: impact on life & lives

- Quebec: *"organizational presence ubiquitous, cultural power enormous"* -Baum



- ✓ Mark Twain (1881): *"This is the first time I was ever in a city where you couldn't throw a brick without breaking a church window"*

- ✓ Gallup, 1945 & 1965: last 7 days = 9 in 10

- ✓ Cardinal Léger late 1950s:
"At seven every night, Montreal would be saying the Rosary with me"



- ✓ Elsewhere: last 7 days = 8 in 10

And then it all seemed to collapse

By end of 1960s for Canada as a whole...

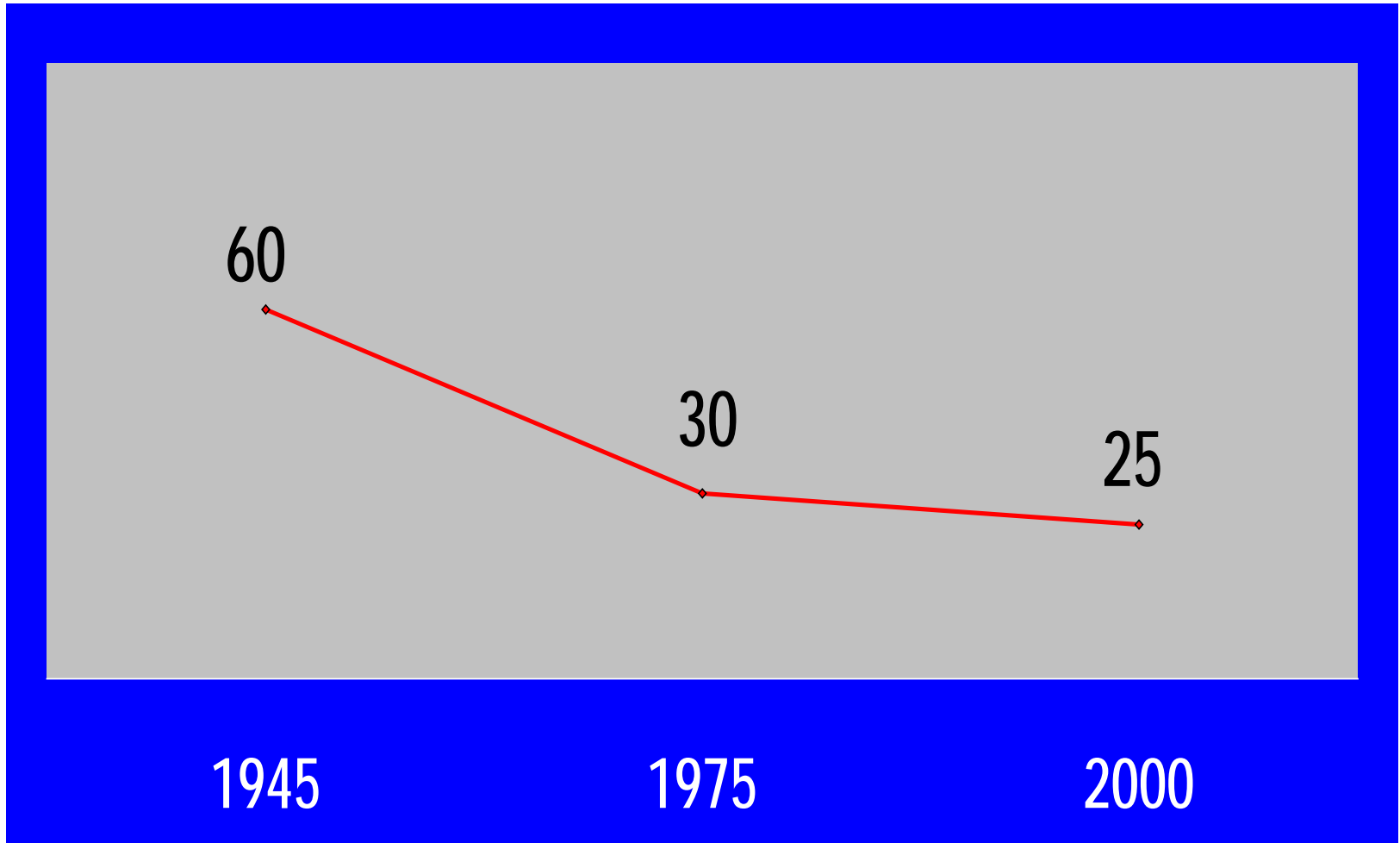


John Webster Grant:

“all indicators of participation in church activities were heading downward at an alarming and accelerating rate”

The Attendance Situation

Weekly Attendance: 1950s-2000



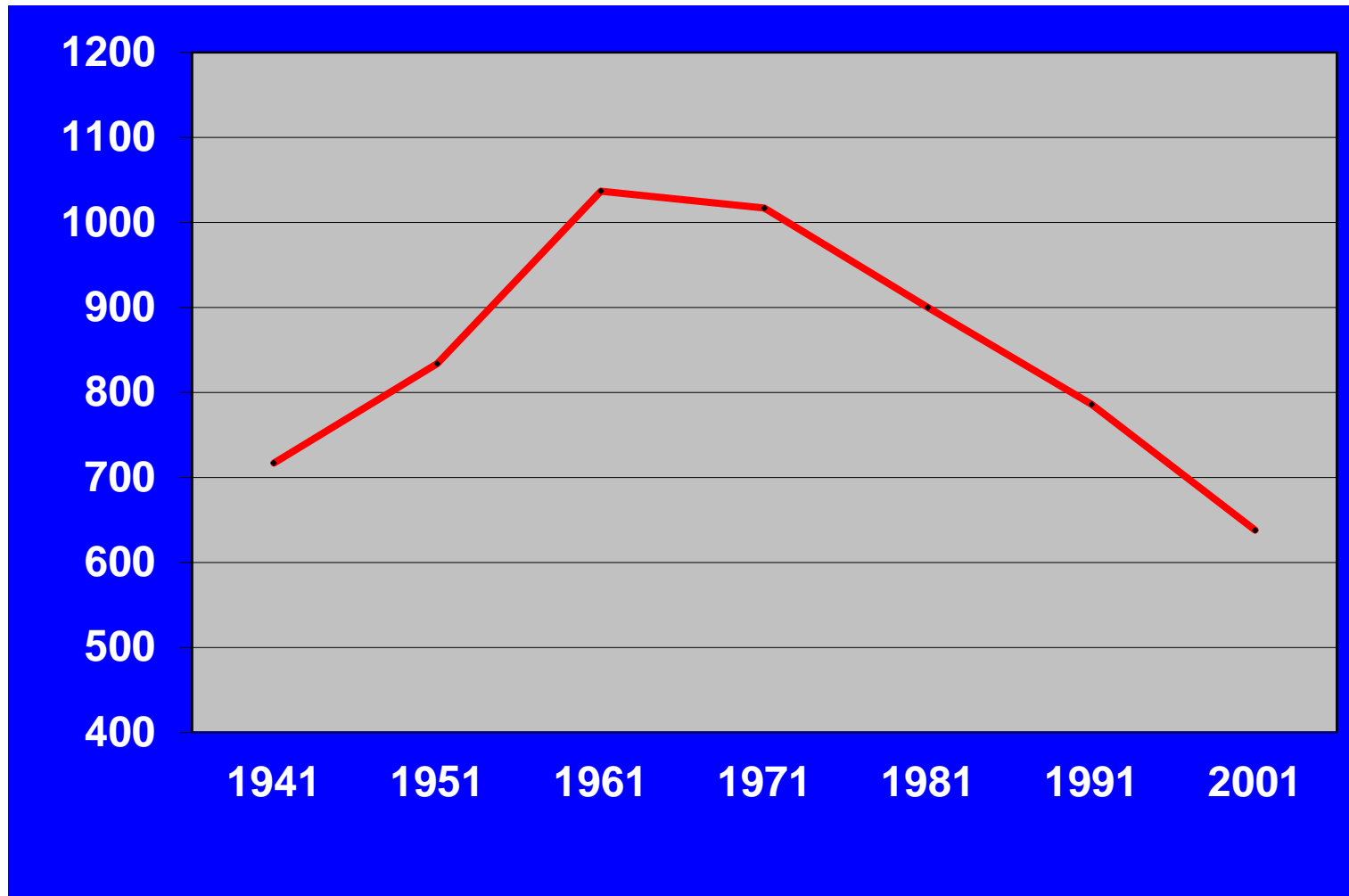
Especially hard hit:

Mainline Protestants

& Quebec Catholics

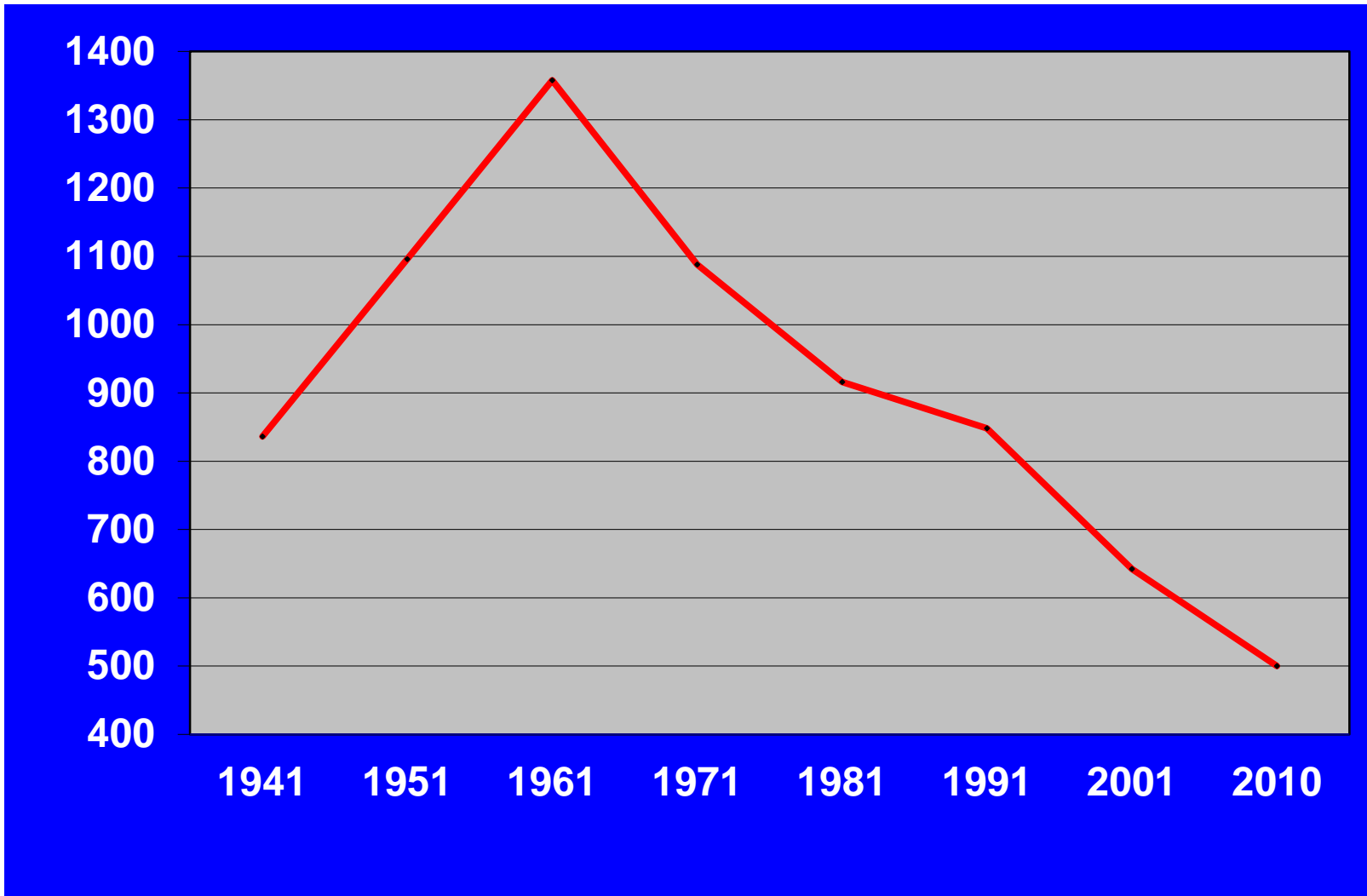
The United Church Situation

National Membership: 1941-2001 *(In 1000s)*



The Anglican Church Situation

National Membership *(In 1000s)*



Konrad Yakabuski:

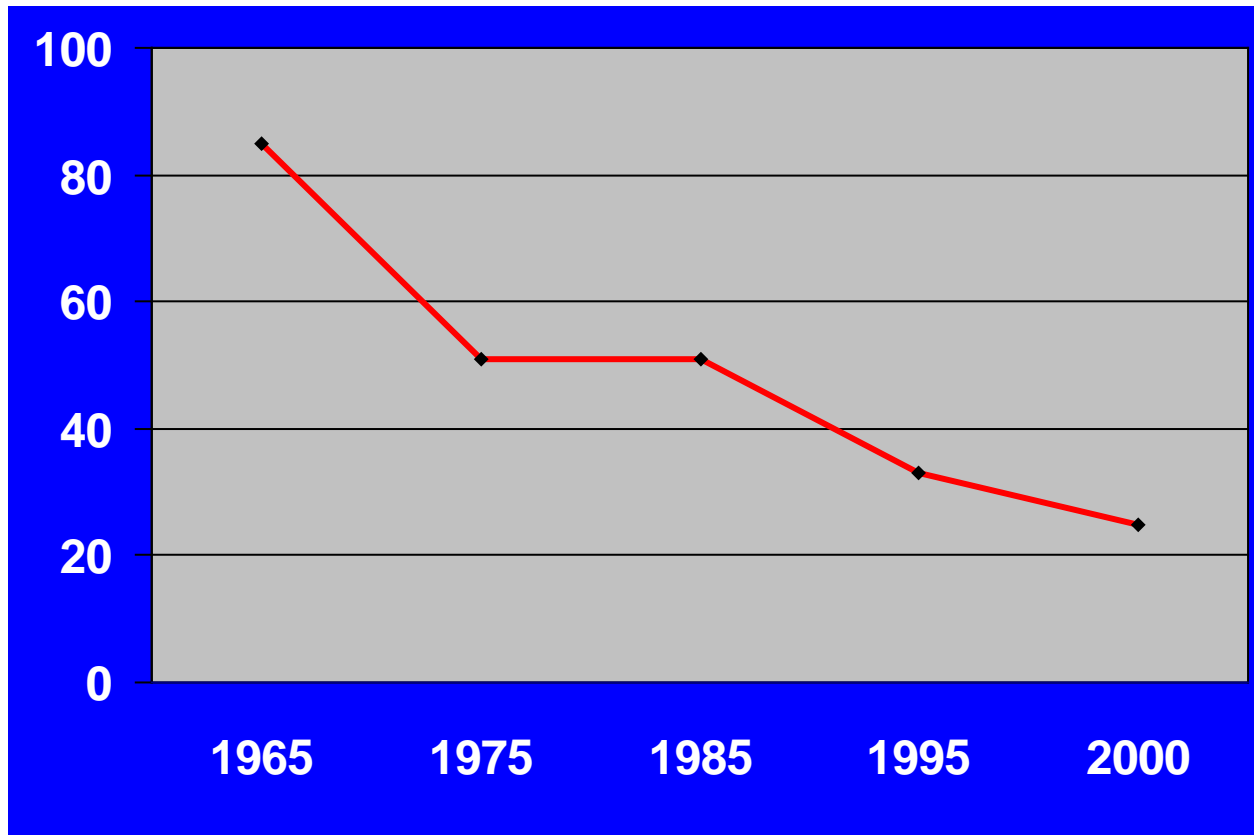
Attendance in Quebec

*“didn’t so much collapse as vaporize –
at least among those born after 1945”*



The Quebec RC Situation

Monthly-Plus Adult Attendance, 1965-2000



SOURCES: Hans Mol, 1965; Reginald W. Bibby, *Project Canada Survey Series*, 1975, General Social Surveys, Statistics Canada, 1985-2000.

*A lot of people thought religion
was winding down...
a thing of the past...
it was pretty much all over.*

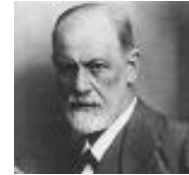
Predictions of Religion's Demise

Seemingly Accurate

- Emile Durkheim



- Sigmund Freud



- Karl Marx



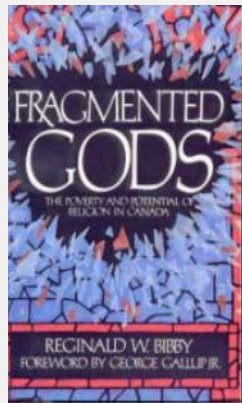
Religious

Secularization

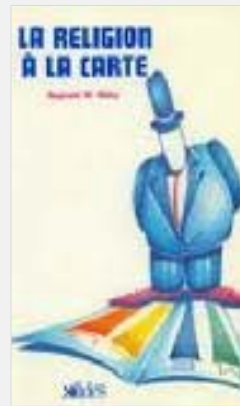


Not Religious

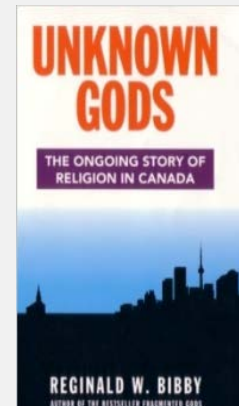
1960s - 2000



1987



1988



1993

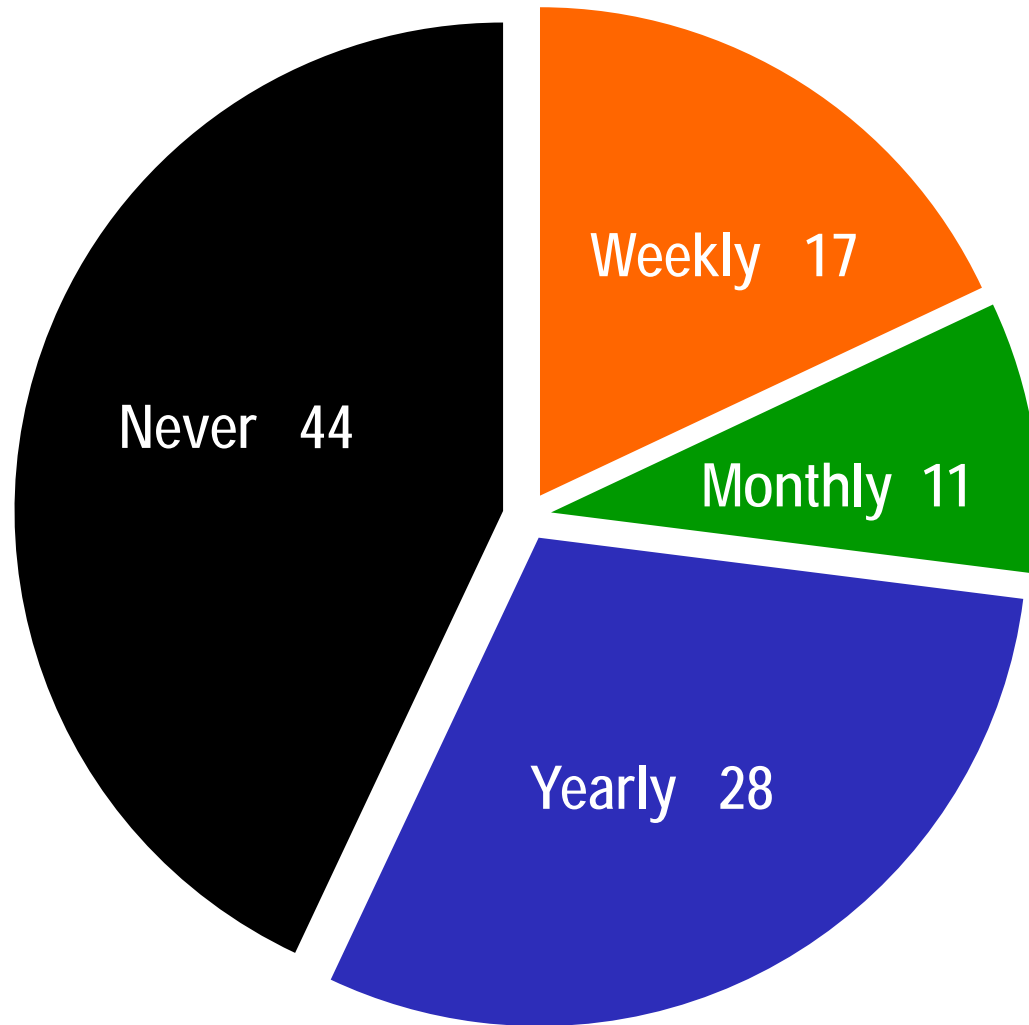
*For some people
that's still the story.
They're wrong!*

~~Secularization~~

**We now know that
there is much more
to the story.**

*For all the talk about secularization,
significant numbers of Canadians,
including people in Quebec
and Montreal,
have continued to
identify themselves as religious
and to value faith.*

Canadian Service Attendance: 2011



Source: General Social Survey 2011

1961

The Numbers

2011

1000s

8,343

3,664

2,409

594

430

144

663

819

254

95

Roman Catholic

United

Anglican

Muslim

Baptist

Christian Orthodox

Hindu

Pentecostal

Lutheran

Presbyterian

Sikh

Buddhist

Jewish

Aboriginal Spirituality

No Religion

12,811

2,008

1,632

1,054

636

551

498

479

478

472

455

367

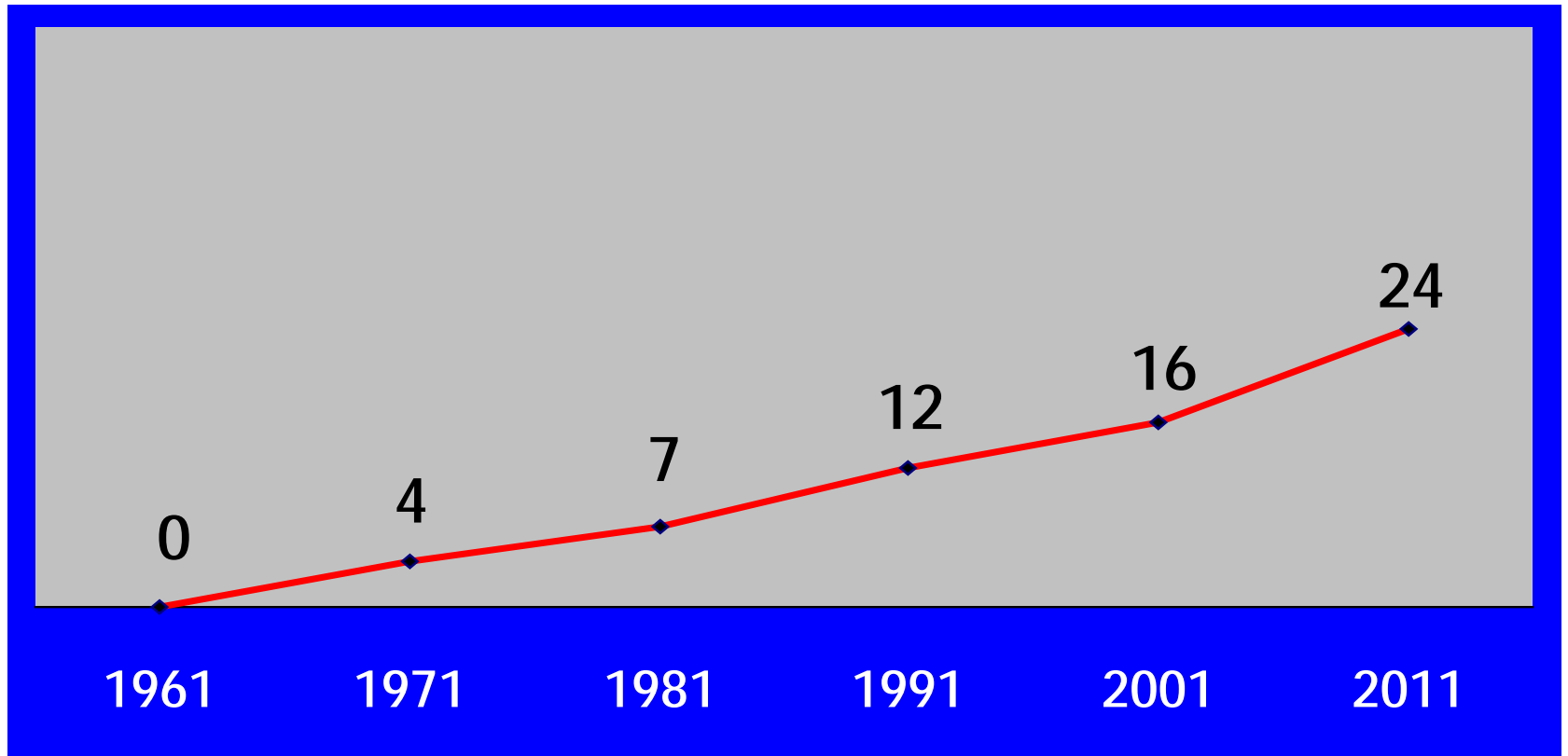
329

65

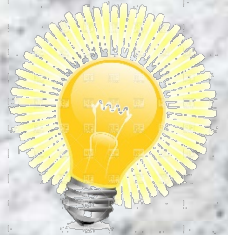
7,851

*At same time,
growing numbers
taking a pass on religion.*

Adults With No Religion: 1961-2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Census Data.



*With all this in mind, around 2010,
yours truly had a mild 2-point epiphany:*

*First, clearly some Canadians were
embracing religion,
and an increasing number rejecting it,
with the remainder somewhere in the middle.*

*Second, that pattern is found everywhere
on the planet.*

Not Secularization...

Religious



Not Religious

But Polarization...

Pro-Religious

Low Religious

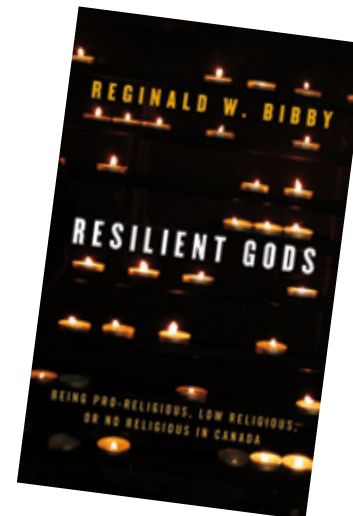
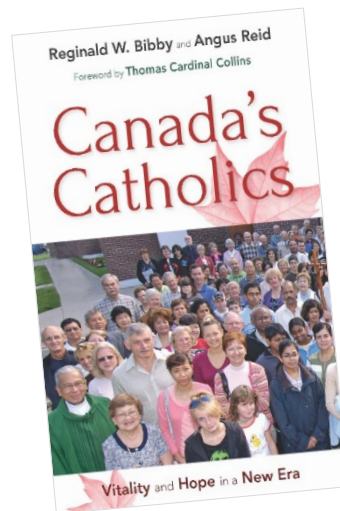
No Religious

*Around the world,
in every country,
and within regions within each country,
people variously
embrace religion,
reject religion,
or are ambivalent toward religion.*

*“Everywhere”
includes Canada,
Quebec,
Montreal...
& the people in this room.*

Checked it out: March 2015

- partnered with Angus Reid
- **3,041 participants**
- explicitly explored polarization

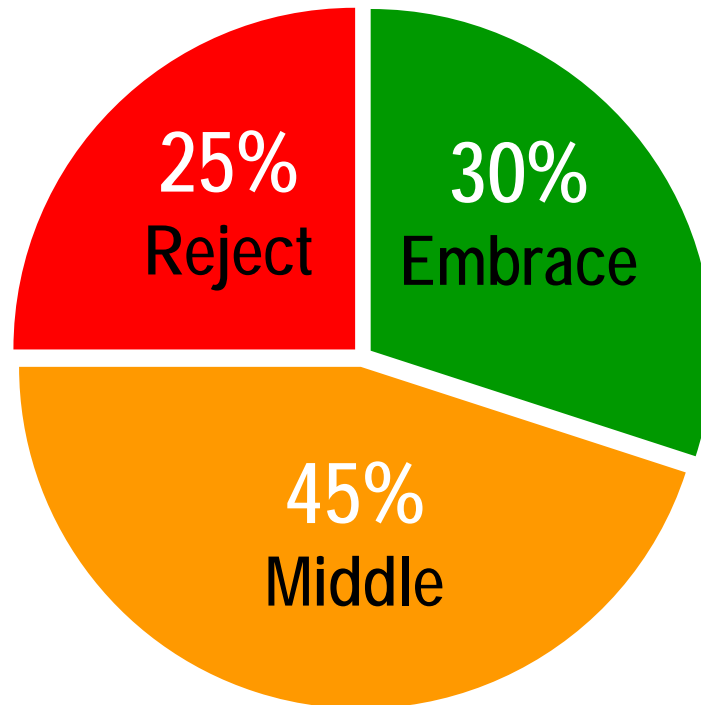


Some people say Canadians variously
(1) embrace religion, (2) reject religion, or
(3) are somewhere in between the two extremes.



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*.



The 3 Inclinations by Region

Embrace Middle Reject Totals
Pro-Religious *Low Religious* *No Religious*

NATIONALLY **30%** **44** **26** **100**

Quebec **24** **48** **28** **100**

Rest of Canada **31** **43** **26** **100**



27 **46** **27** **100**

The 3 Religious Inclinations in Montreal

Embrace Middle Reject Totals



27% 46 27 100

Catholics

27 53 20 100

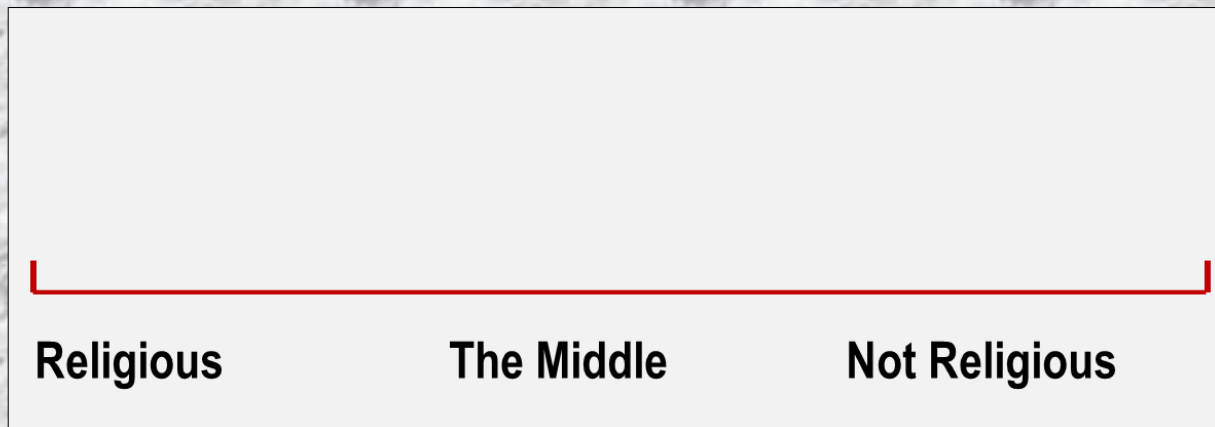
French-speaking

25 56 19 100

English-speaking

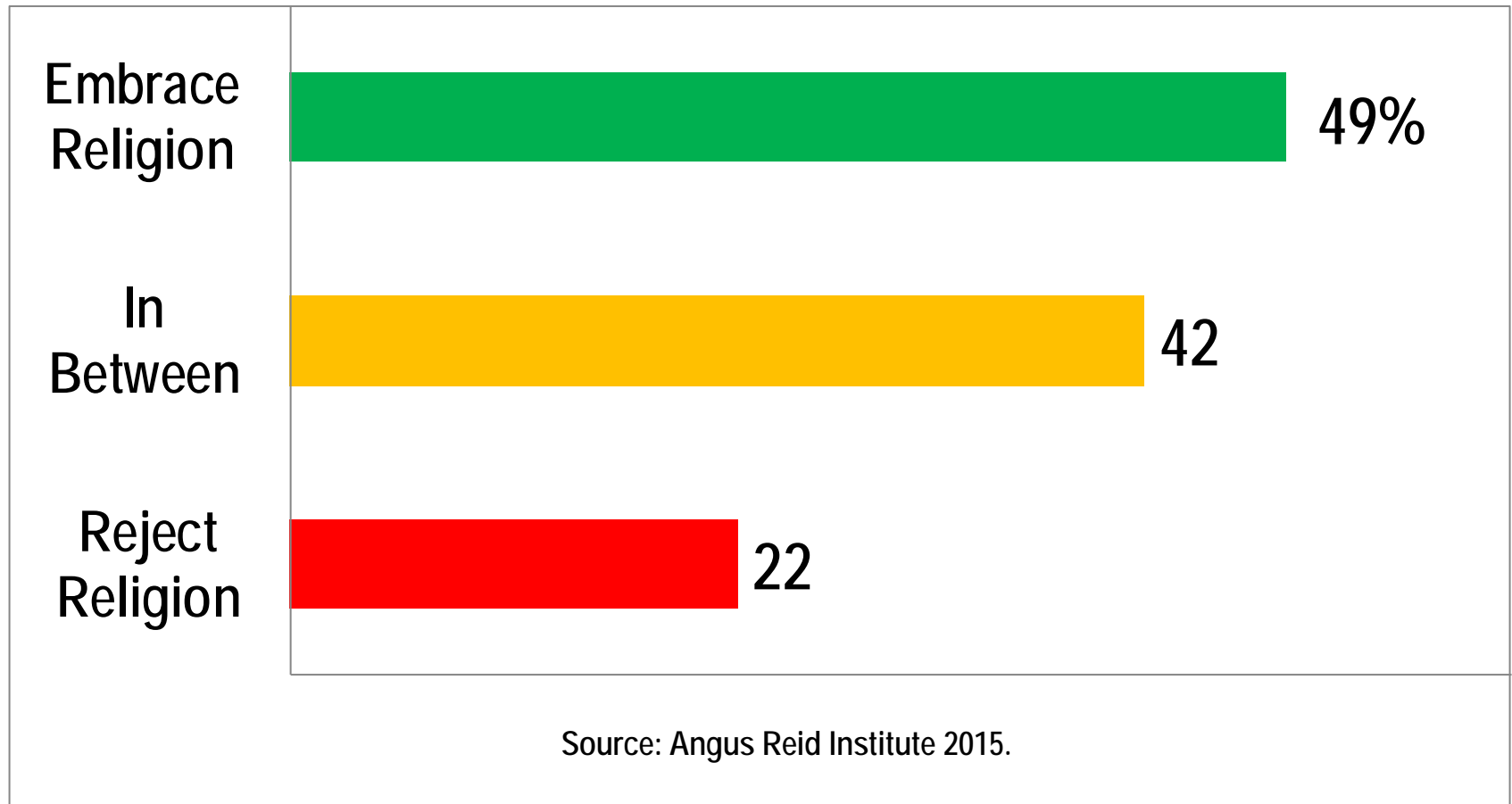
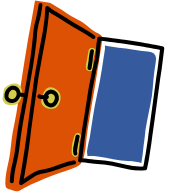
40 40 20 100

*Keep in mind: large numbers of people
in “The Religious Middle” –
even some “at the non-religious end” –
have not shut the door on religion.*



Open to Greater Involvement

"If I found it to be worthwhile"





People are not looking for
CHURCHES.

They are looking for
MINISTRY.

The Point of Connection

Key Q. What is the tangible bridge?



Answer?

MINISTRY

“What would make greater involvement worthwhile?”

- Spirituality
- Personal
- Relational

Our Research → Axiomatic Conclusion:

*Nothing More Important to Canadians
Than Their Families*

If we want to have an impact on
people's lives,
have an impact on their families.

The Youngest & Oldest



...and Those in Between



Not Secularization...

Religious



Not Religious

But Polarization...

Pro-Religious

Low Religious

No Religious

**There still is a sizable core
who value faith...open to Church**

Moreover...

**Reinforcements
are on the way**

World-wide Religious Vitality

Christianity largest religion in world...slightly ahead of Islam

- “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 → >1 billion
- 1900-2000: Pentecostals: from zero → half a billion
- key growth: Africa, Asia, Latin America
- by 2050: could be 220 million Christians in China – 15% of pop

The Global Take of a Prominent Observer

“Contrary to the constant predictions that religion is doomed, there is abundant evidence of an ongoing world-wide religious awakening.”



Size & Projected Growth of Major Religious Groups: 2010-2050

	% World 2010	2010 Pop (Millions)	% World 2050	2050 Pop (Millions)	Growth 2010-50
WORLD	---	6.896	---	9.307	2.411
Christians	31	2.168	31	2.918	750
Muslims	23	1.600	30	2.761	1.162
No Religion	16	1.131	13	1.230	99
Hindu	15	1.032	15	1.384	352
Buddhists	7	488	5	486	-1.5
Jews	.2	14	.2	16	2

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

Global Distribution of Catholics: 1910 and 2010

	1910		2010	
Latin America	24%	71 million	39%	426 million
Europe	65%	189 million	24%	257 million
Sub-Saharan Africa	<1%	1 million	16%	172 million
Asia-Pacific	5%	14 million	12%	131 million
North America	5%	15 million	8%	89 million
Middle East-North Africa	<1%	1 million	<1%	6 million

Source: Pew Research Center, February 13, 2013.

“Catholic Church membership was 70% European and North American in 1900. Today, close to 70% reside in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.”

Premature Eulogies



Catholic journalist and trends analyst *John Allen, Jr.:*

“Even the most committed agnostic or atheist would have to admit that confident predictions made not so long about the inevitable decline of religion have proven stunningly false. The late twentieth and early twenty-first century have witnessed a powerful resurgence of religion as a driving force in human affairs.”

As for *Catholic numbers globally,*

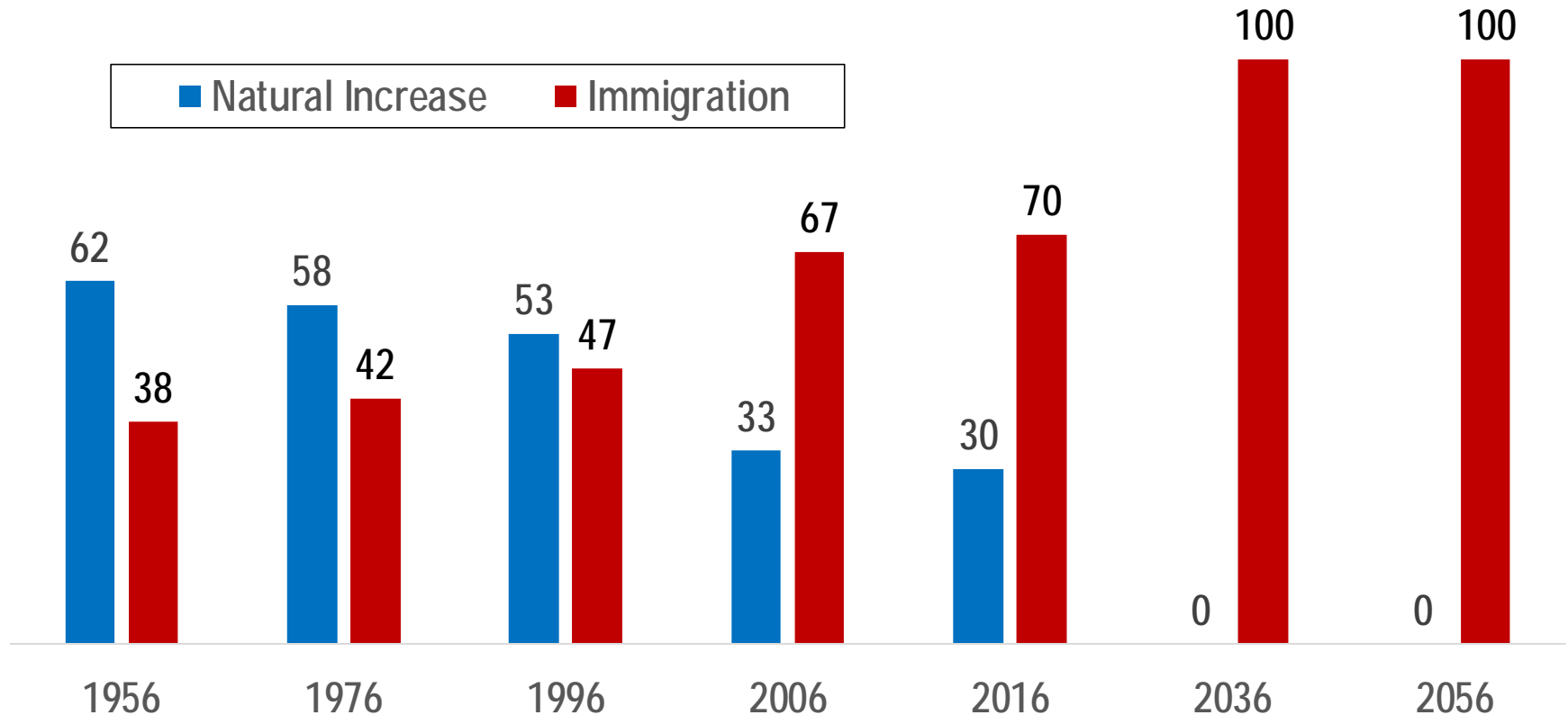
“Anybody who thinks this is an era of Catholic decline needs to get out more often.”

The World is Coming



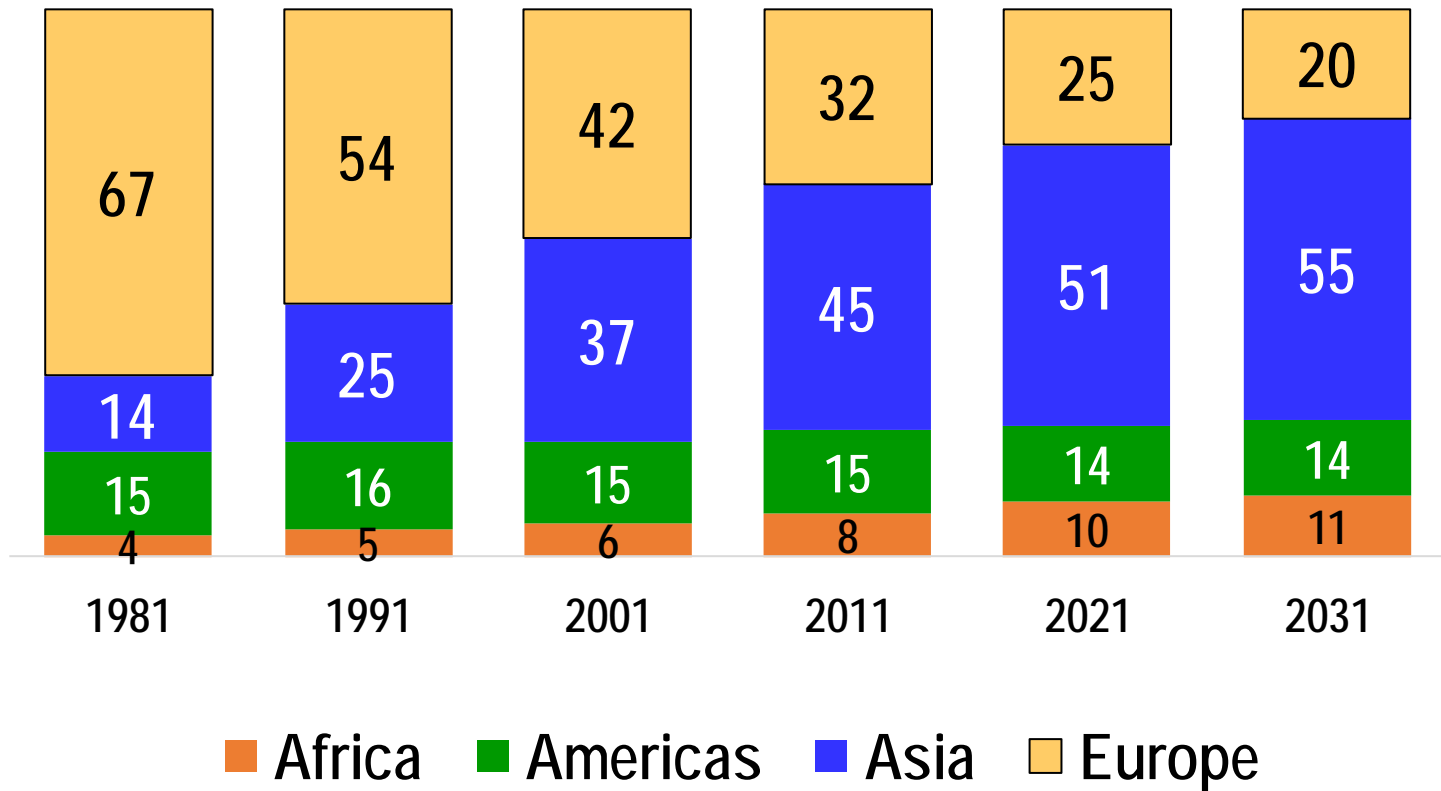


Population Growth through Natural Increase & Immigration: 1956-2056



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

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



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



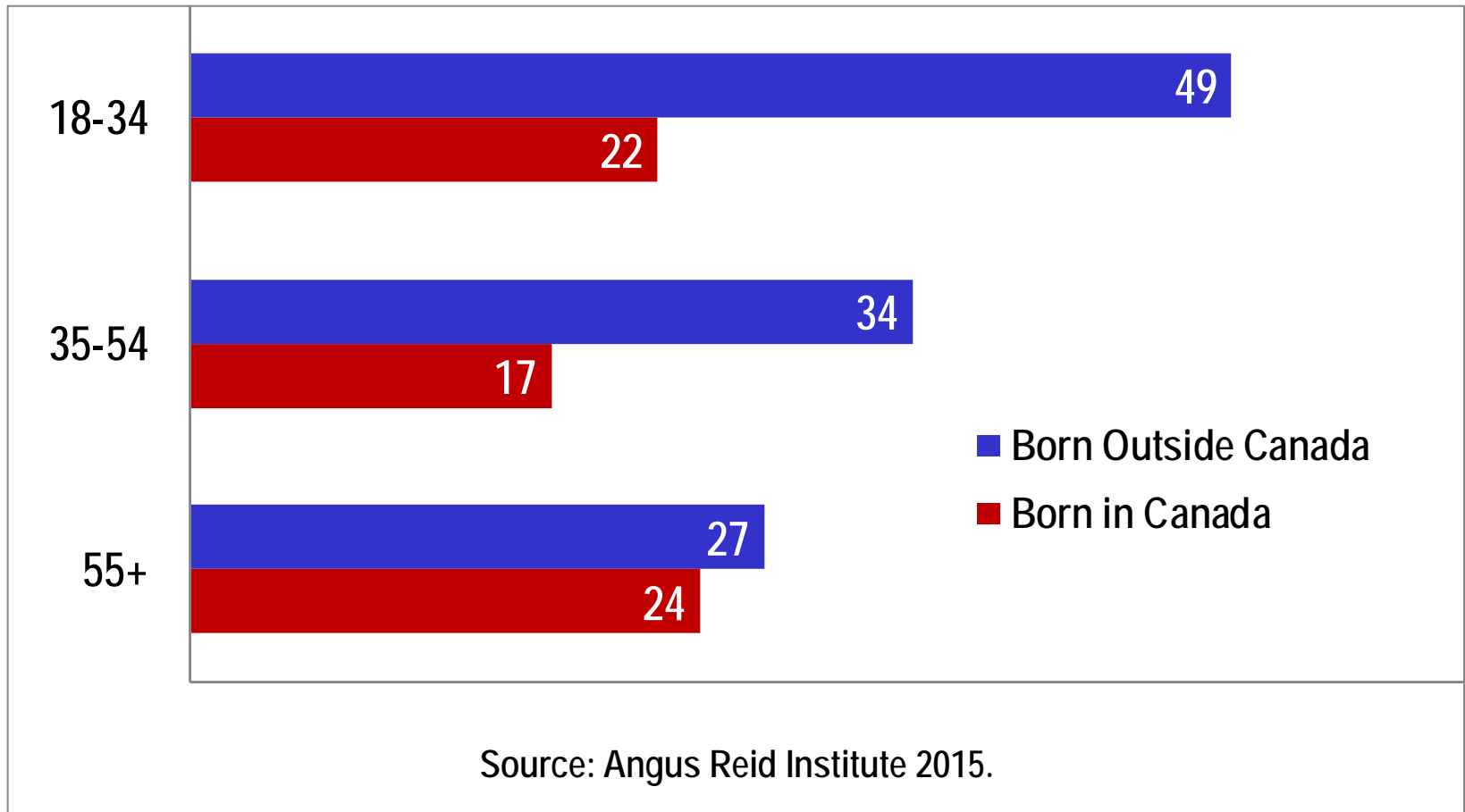
Immigrant Totals: 2001-2011

(In 1000s & Median Age)

Roman Catholic	478	43
No Religion	442	33
Muslim	388	29
Christian, <i>n.i.e.</i>	162	32
Hindu	154	34
Christian Orthodox	108	42
Sikh	107	33
Buddhist	62	38
Pentecostal	41	36
Anglican	23	51
Jewish	21	45
Presbyterian	17	48
United Church	10	52
Lutheran	7	46



Monthly-Plus Attendance by Birthplace & Age: 2015



3 Inclinations by Birthplace (%)

Embrace Middle Reject Totals

Born in Canada	29	45	26	100
Born Outside Canada	38	38	24	100

A Critically Important Slide on Religion's Future in Canada

Current and Projected Sizes of Major Religious Groups in Canada: 2010 to 2050

	2010	2030	2050
1. Christians	69%	64	60
2. No Religion	24	25	26
3. Muslims	2	4	6
4. Hindus	1	2	3
5. Buddhists	1	1	2
6. Jews	1	1	1
7. Other	2	3	2

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

- **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 individual futures
are anything but guaranteed



*The twin realities of religious polarization
and the rejuvenation of religion
as a result of immigration
call for responses.*

*The market will be there;
the question is who will the suppliers be.*

This brings me to
Quebec & Montreal

My latest surveys with Angus Reid help to document three important realities

First, Catholicism in Quebec continues to be not only the predominant religion of choice but also the predominant religion of identity

Second, Catholics born in Quebec value religion, but consume it in à la carte fashion

Third, there is a demand problem:

it's not at all clear that that there would be a great acceleration in religious mobilization if

- (a) *the Catholic Church* came alive and did a much-improved job of ministering to people or
- (b) *other religious groups* ramped up their marketing efforts and greatly increased the level of competition

1. They continue to value being Catholic

- Some **88%** of Quebecers **from Catholic homes** view selves as **Catholic** vs. **77%** of counterparts elsewhere in country
- **84%** of Quebec adults **under 35** raised in Catholic homes ID as RCs vs. **71%** in rest of Canada
- **Legacy of Church's role** in Quebec life: **fusion with French identity**
- **Not something** many Quebec-born Catholics **want to leave behind**
 - ✓ **98% monthly-plus** attenders **not open** to switching
 - ✓ also true of **97%** of those **who attend less often**

Quebec Religious Identification: 2011

In 1000s

Roman Catholic	5,776	75%
Protestant	581	5
<i>Anglican</i>	74	1
<i>Pentecostal</i>	41	<1
<i>Baptist</i>	37	<1
<i>United</i>	33	<1
<i>Presbyterian</i>	11	<1
<i>Lutheran</i>	7	<1
<i>Other</i>	249	3
Muslim	243	3
Christian Orthodox	130	2
Jewish	85	1
Buddhist	52	<1
Hindu	34	<1
Sikh	9	<1
Indigenous Spirituality	2	<1
No Religion	938	12

Source: 2011 National Household Survey.

Montreal Religious Identification: 2011

In 1000s

Roman Catholic	2,372	63%
Protestant	296	8
<i>Anglican</i>	34	1
<i>Pentecostal</i>	26	<1
<i>Baptist</i>	24	<1
<i>United</i>	18	<1
<i>Presbyterian</i>	8	<1
<i>Lutheran</i>	5	<1
<i>Other</i>	181	3
Muslim	221	6
Christian Orthodox	122	3
Jewish	83	2
Buddhist	47	1
Hindu	32	1
Sikh	9	<1
Indigenous Spirituality	<1	<1
No Religion	561	15

Source: 2011 National Household Survey.

2. They value their à la carte faith.



- In **next few weeks** going to do something most of them only do about 2 times a year...**go to church**
 - ✓ Quebec: attendance jump from 10% → 35%; elsewhere → 50%
 - ✓ In Quebec about 2 million, Montreal 800,000
- **Predictable interpretation:** is not about religion; *“just culture”*
- **Reg/Reid surveys:** suggest is much more to story...
- Little doubt religion à la carte rampant...since at least the 1960s
- But Québécois Catholics still **taking lots of things from the table**
- People **believe** and **pray** and find faith to be a **resource for living**



Catholics in Quebec and Elsewhere in Canada

	Québec	Outside Québec
<i>Beliefs</i>		
That God or a higher power exists	81%	86
In life after death	72	74
That Jesus was the Divine Son of God	70	75
God/higher power cares about you personally	72	73
You yourself have spiritual needs	70	74
We can have contact with the spirit world	59	53
<i>Pray</i> privately weekly or more	37	45
Feel <i>strengthened</i> by your faith: monthly-plus	33	46
Have been <i>protected</i> by a guardian angel	70	55
Have <i>experienced</i> God's presence	55	54
<i>Embracing</i> religion	27	42
<i>Rejecting</i> religion	19	10
<i>In-between</i>	54	48
<i>Attend services monthly or more</i>	16	32





- Is why show up at Christmas, few other times a year
- Faith is important to most of them.
- But extensive involvement in the Church is another matter: 8% weekly
- Detachment from Church: apparent not only in lack of attendance
- Also in their à la carte approach to Church teachings
 - ✓ Similar to Canadians as whole, Quebec Catholics influenced by post-50s' emphases on themes like pluralism, individualism, freedom, and choice
 - ✓ Frequently take different positions from Church on everyday issues... role of women, divorce, sexual orientation, contraception, abortion, non-marital sex, cohabitation, and physician-assisted dying



Catholic Views on Some Specific Moral Questions

	Québec	Outside Québec
<i>“Approve and accept”*</i>		
Unmarried people under 18 having sex	46%	28
Unmarried adults having children	88	65
Same-sex couples marrying	62	58
Same-sex couples adopting children	54	55
A woman being able to obtain a legal abortion if her own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy	91	81
A woman being able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason	49	41
There are some circumstances in which a doctor would be justified in ending a patient’s life	82	76
<i>“Agree”</i>		
What’s right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion	63	52
The Ten Commandments still apply today	62	84

*Response options: 1 Approve and accept, 2 Disapprove but accept, 3 Disapprove and do not accept.

A Capsule



- 6 in 10 agree “the Ten Commandments” “still apply today.”
- 6 in 10 agree “*what is right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion*”
- In both instances: 6 in 10 agree with the opposite statement

❖ In theory, The Ten Commandments remain sacred for the majority;
in practice, personal opinion rules

- **Note:** in keeping with what Rod says is the case everywhere:

Catholics outside Quebec –

living in religiously competitive regions of Canada –

typically exhibit higher levels of piety & conformity than Quebec Catholics



3. Only a minority are open to greater involvement – *regardless* of what the Church might do.

- **On surface**, fact so many inactive Quebec Catholics continue to see themselves as Catholic and are not turning elsewhere: would seem to point to **a supply problem**: the Catholic Church needs to do a better job of engaging them
- More bluntly, **the Church needs to do a better job** as the prime and preferred “religious supplier
- **Was position Reg took** in his 2008 *Globe* paper
- Such an **argument receives some important empirical support** from **Reg’s 2015 survey with Angus Reid**

- **Outside Quebec**, where religious competition is intense, no less than **50%** of Catholics indicate open to greater involvement
- **In Quebec**, where religious competition is far less intense, only about **20%** open to more involvement – just 18% of yearlys, 8% of nevers

Attendance and Greater Involvement Among Catholics

“I’d be open to more involvement with religious groups if I found it worthwhile”

	ALL	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Outside Quebec					
<i>Current involvement</i>	--	22	10	51	17
Openness to more involvement	50	54	63	51	35
Quebec					
<i>Current Involvement</i>	---	8	8	62	22
Openness to more Involvement	21%	52	50	18	8

Source: ARI 2015 Religion Survey with Reginald Bibby.

- What has to be disconcerting for Quebec Catholic leaders: finding that only 1 in 5 yearlys and 1 in 10 nevers indicate open greater involvement, *even if* the Church responded well to their alleged interests and needs



- **Rod quick to interject:**

“Now hang on a moment: potential receptivity of 1 in 5 yearlys and 1 in 10 nevers = numbers not inconsequential”

Works out to about 600,000 yearlys and 700,000 nevers – 1.3 million

- Since these receptive, inactive Catholics not about to turn elsewhere, **onus on Catholic Church “to come through”** – to attempt to respond to varied spiritual-personal-relational needs they are expressing
- **If Church is able to do that**, noteworthy numbers can be expected to become more involved in parishes

A Summary of the Situation

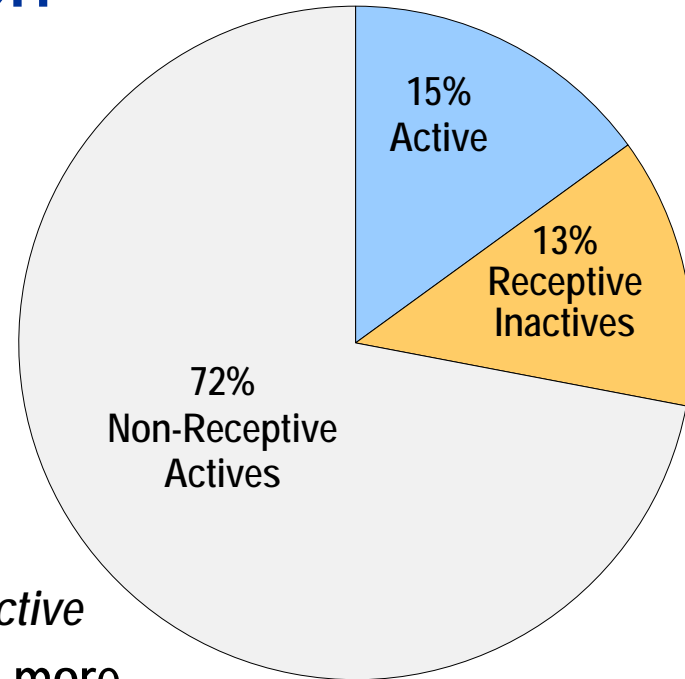
- **15%** Quebec Catholics **active**, **85%** inactive
- **TWO categories** of inactives:

1. **"The Receptive"** – 13% of "yearlys" & "nevers"

- a market that the Catholic Church can target, will see some become more involved

2. **"The Non-Receptive"** – 72% remainder of the inactive

- **issue not supply but demand:** do not want much more
- **good news:** not lost either to "no religion" or competitors
 - ✓ **what want** – occasional services, rites of passage, support for beliefs and private practices – are being provided
 - ✓ **what 's required:** for Church to do what is currently doing: pastoral role; no illusions most will ever want much more



Pastoral role...some hope of greater
involvement

It doesn't add up to
a particularly pretty picture.

Basic Quebec Catholic Demographics

Statistics Canada

Quebec

- 6 million Catholics
- 400,000 English-speaking

Greater Montreal

- 4.1 million people, 2.4 million Catholics
- ESC = 200,000
- Immigration roots of most: Canadian, British, Italian

Extent to Which Quebec CMA Catholics Attend Monthly-Plus

StatsCan 2012

TOTAL	15		
18-34	4	Widowed	38
35-54	10	Married	21
55-plus	25	Common-law	4
Female	17	Sep-Divorced	7
Male	13	Never married	10
English only	23	Born in Canada	13
French only	13	Born Elsewhere	43
Other language	56		
English & French	34		

Characteristics of Quebec CMA Catholics Who Attend Monthly-Plus

StatsCan 2012

TOTAL	100		
18-34	7	Married	56
35-54	26	Widowed	16
55-plus	67	Common-law	7
Female	59	Sep-Divorced	7
Male	41	Never married	14
French only	76	Born in Canada	78
English only	8	Born Elsewhere	22
Other language	10		
English & French	6		

Catholic Attendance by Language

Bibby-Reid 2015-16

	Weekly	Monthly	Less	Totals
Montreal Catholics	9	8	83	100
<i>French-speaking</i>	6	6	88	100
<i>English-speaking</i>	14	7	79	100

Stats Canada 2012: Household Language

Quebec CMA Catholics	9	6	85	100
<i>French-speaking</i>	6	6	88	100
<i>English-speaking</i>	9	13	78	100
<i>Other languages</i>	39	16	45	100

Cash crunch puts 40 per cent of Montreal's English parishes in jeopardy



BY ALAN HUSTAK, CATHOLIC REGISTER SPECIAL

November 17, 2016



MONTREAL – Montreal's community of English-speaking practising Catholics has shrunk to the point that 14 of the archdiocese's 34 parishes could face eventual closure barring an unexpected turnaround in fortunes.

"I wouldn't say the glass is empty, there are resources we can tap, we just have to figure a way to turn on the tap," Bishop Thomas Dowd told *The Catholic Register*.

"The Lord needs a lot of parishes, but realistically, He doesn't need a lot of buildings. Finances are a real distraction. Given the demographics we can perhaps sustain 20 parishes. At the moment there are 34."

Although Montreal has 201,760 registered English-speaking Catholics, only about five per cent attend Mass on any given Sunday. Only 18 parishes on the Island have a priest they can call their own.

"Non-practising Catholics are now the largest denomination in Quebec," Dowd told a weekend conference.

He said there are 141,230 English-speaking Catholics who "don't participate at all."


A Central Conclusion

**as in the rest of Canada,
much of the hope for the
revitalization of the Catholic Church
in Quebec & Montreal
lies with immigration**

The good news
is that it can happen.

Destinations of Immigrants

Annual Number In 1000s

	2008-2009	2035-2036
NATIONALLY	245	334
Ontario	107	166
British Columbia	42	61
	46	53
Alberta	24	30
Manitoba	13	13
Saskatchewan	6	4
Nova Scotia	2	3
New Brunswick	2	2
Prince Edward Island	2	1
Newfoundland-Labrador	<1	<1
The Territories	<1	<1

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Demography Division,
2012: Cat. No. 91-520-X. Table 1.4.

Projections for 2036...

*CMA's with highest
proportion of immigrants*

1. Toronto 48%
2. Vancouver 45%
3. Calgary 36%
4. Montreal 31%

Recent Immigration: 2011-2016

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Countries	Numbers	Religions
1. Philippines	188,000 16%	81% RC 11 Prot, 6 Mus
2. India	147,000 12	80% Hindu 14 Mus, 6 Ctn-Sikh-Bud
3. China	129,000 11	52% None 18 Bud, 5 Ctn, 2 Mus
4. Iran	42,000 3	99 % Muslim
5. Pakistan	41,000 3	96% Muslim 3 Ctn-Hin-Sik

Source: Statistics 2016 Census

Immigration to Montreal: 2011-2016

Regions and Countries of Origin: Total 180,000

Source: Origin ad Numbers Statistics 2016 Census; Religious varied.

Origin	Numbers	Religions
AFRICA	60	
Algeria	15	99% Muslim
Morocco	12	93% Muslim
ASIA	47	
China	10	52% None, 18 Bud, 5 RC, 2 Mus
Syria	6	85% Muslim, 10% Ctn
Philippines	5	81% RC, 11% Ev, 6% Muslim
AMERICAS	40	
Haiti	16	85% RC
Columbia	5	80% RC, 13% Ev
Mexico	4	83% RC, 10% Ev
EUROPE	32	
France	15	51% RC, 40 None, 6 Muslim

*In Canada , Quebec, Montreal –
contrary to rumour – religion is far
from a thing of the past.*

*And with immigration,
it will continue to have an important
presence in the future.*

Conclusion

*In the beginning,
immigration brought religion*

- to Quebec
- to Montreal
- to Canada

*In the foreseeable future,
immigration may revive religion
in all three places...*