

**So You Think You Are Religious,
or Spiritual But Not Religious:
*So What?***

Youth, Religion, and Identity Workshop

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ABSTRACT

So You Think You Are Religious or Spiritual But Not Religious: So What?

The significant post-1960s growth in the proportion of Canadian young people who indicate that they have “no religion” has underlined the increasing dichotomy between those who value religion and those who do not. This conscious polarization has been accompanied by the concomitant emergence of individuals who value spirituality but not religion (SBNR). There is value in cataloguing the population according to such inclinations. However, in addition, there is considerable value in exploring some of the possible correlates of these identity inclinations – including values, attitudes, aspirations, and behaviour – in order to begin to understand some of the possible implications of such components of identity for personal and collective life. In this paper, the author draws on Project Canada, Angus Reid, and General Social Survey data to identify such religious and spiritual inclinations, and explore some of their individual and social correlates.

Good to Be Here



- Reflect with you on youth & religion

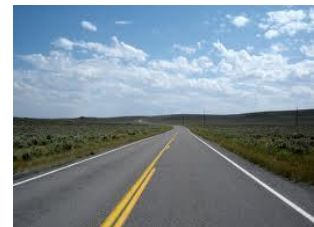
in



and **elsewhere**



- Where things **are**
- Where they seem to be **going**



**We now have
a lot of data.**

In Canada



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Census Data

- 1871 - 2011

General Social Surveys

- Annually, 1985-onward
- Samples: > 20,000

Monitoring Trends: Project Canada Surveys

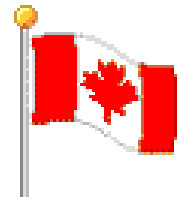
* 7 Adult...1975 → 2005: > 10,000

* 4 Teen....1984 → 2008: > 15,000



■ Readings of

- Boomers * Pre-Boomers * Post-Boomers
- Teens 1980s - Now



■ Ongoing surveys: Angus Reid



Some Invaluable Emerging Global Data Sources

GALLUP WorldView



International Social Survey Programme



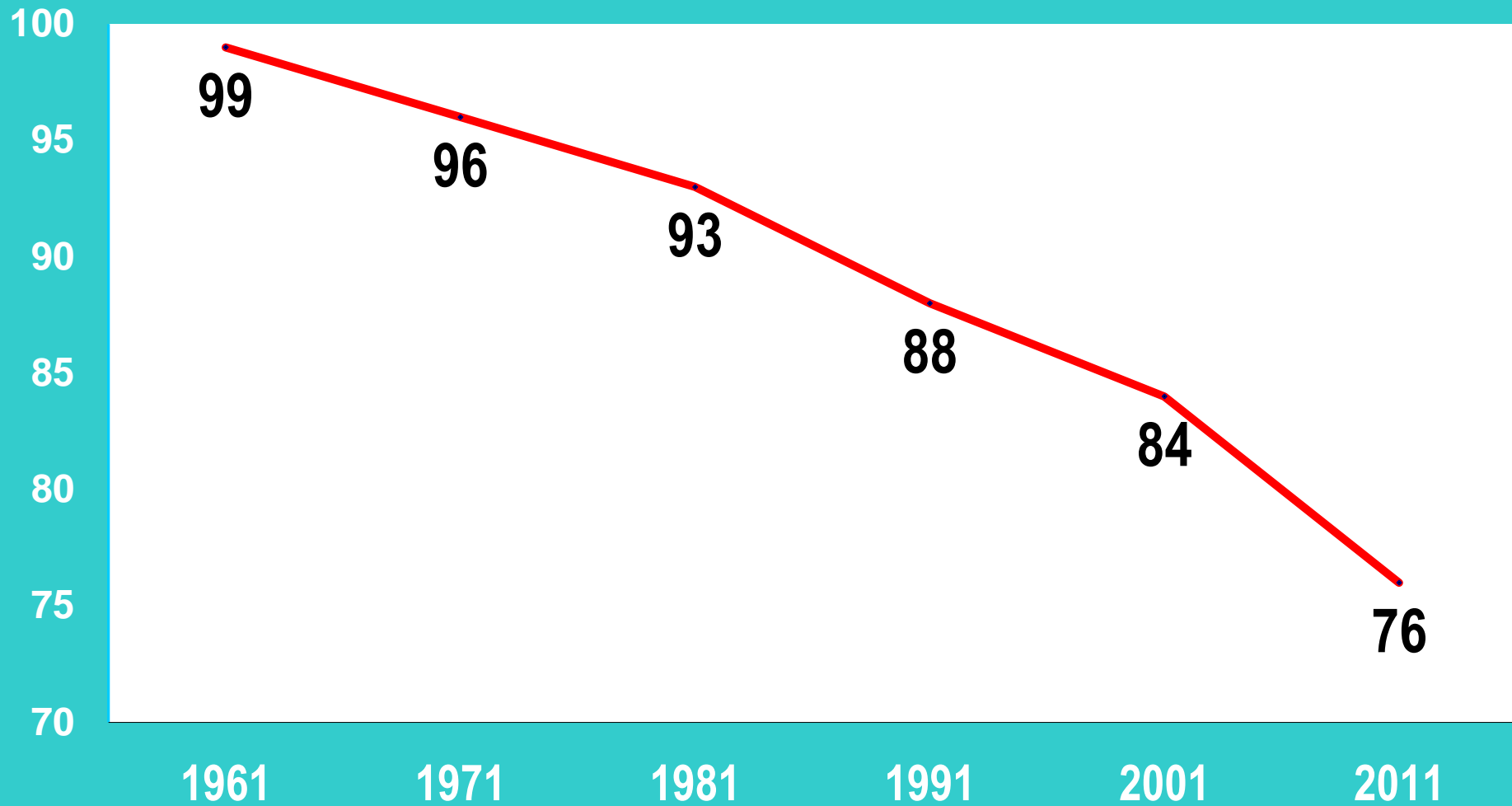


"There's no shortage of data.

*There's a shortage of
good ideas."*

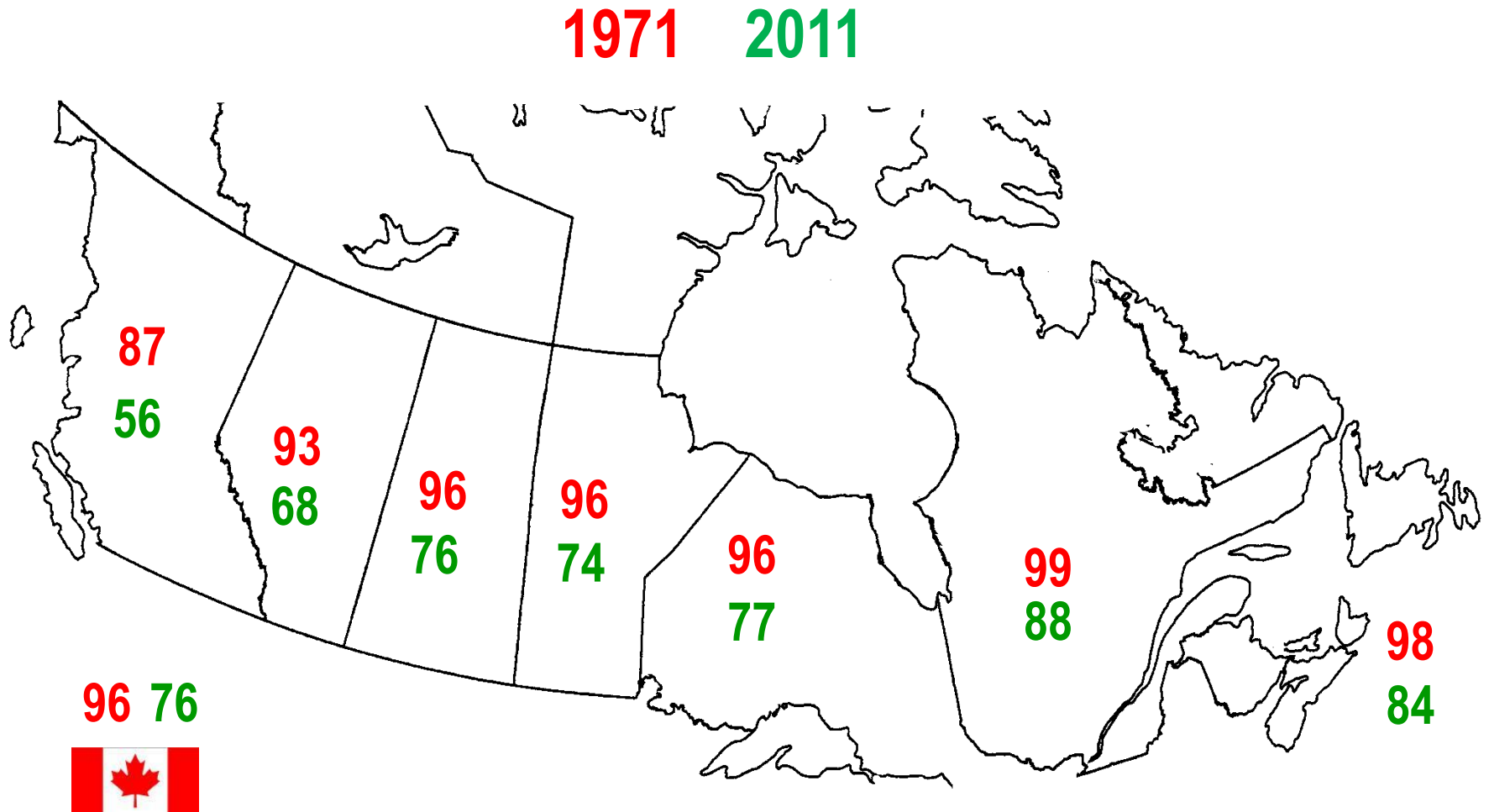
1. An Overview of Identity Trends

Adults With A Religion: 1961-2011 (%)



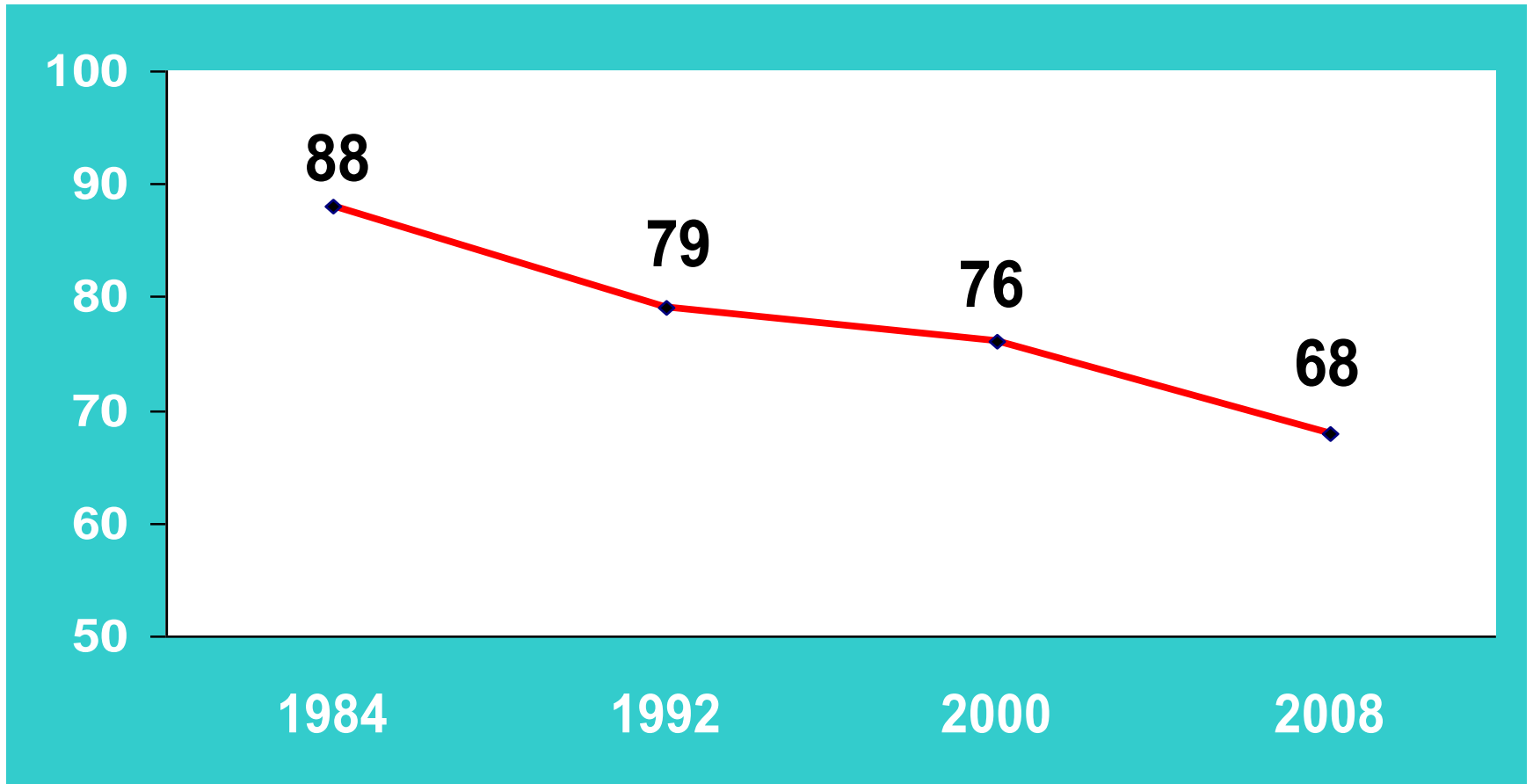
Source: Statistics Canada, Census Data.

Religious Identity: 1971-2011 (%)



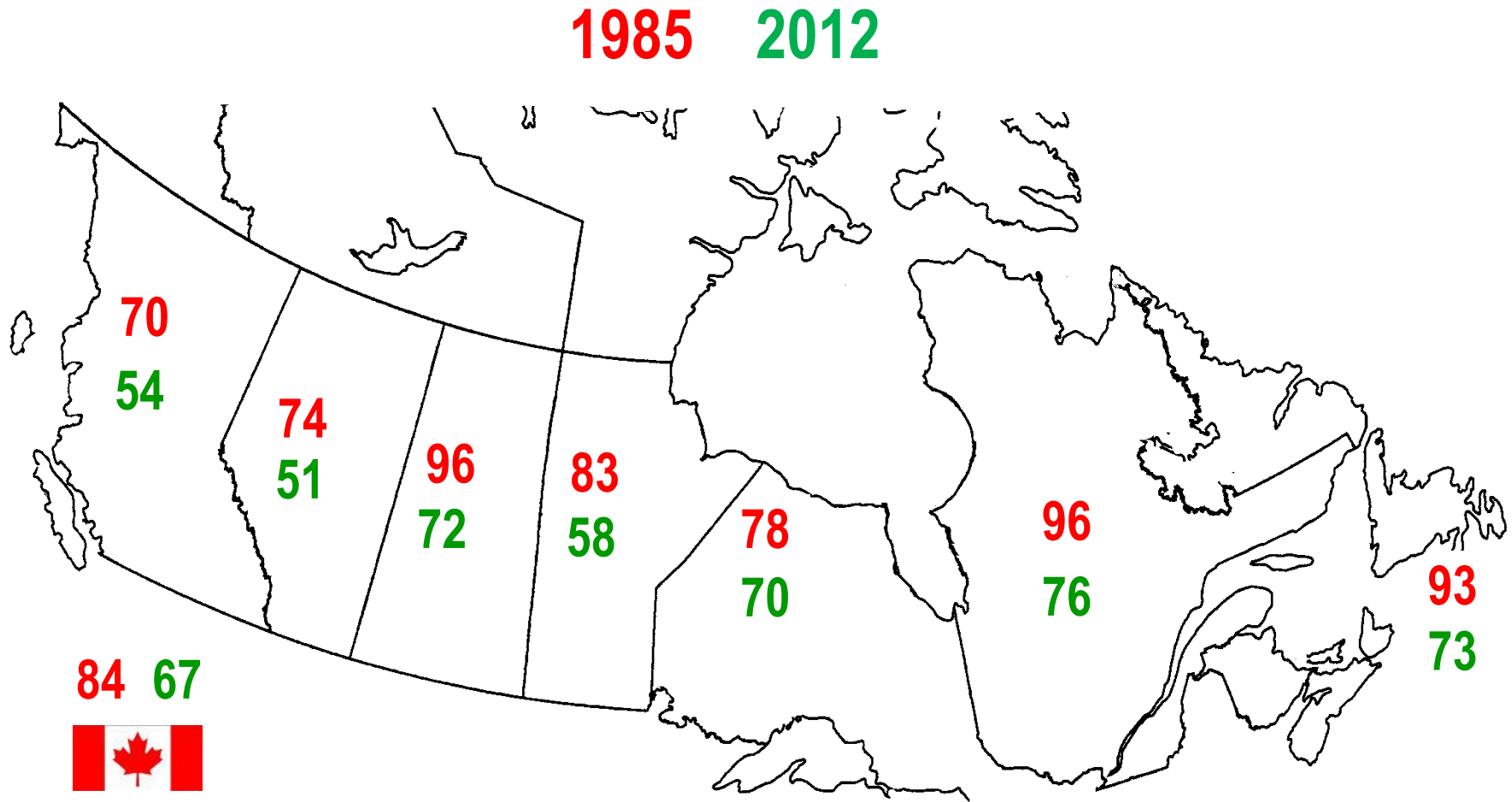
Source: 1971 and 2011 census data.

Teenagers With A Religion: 1984-2008



Source: Reginald Bibby, Project Teen Canada Survey Series.

Religious Identity, Teens 15-19: 1985-2012 (%)



Source: GSS 1985 & 2012.

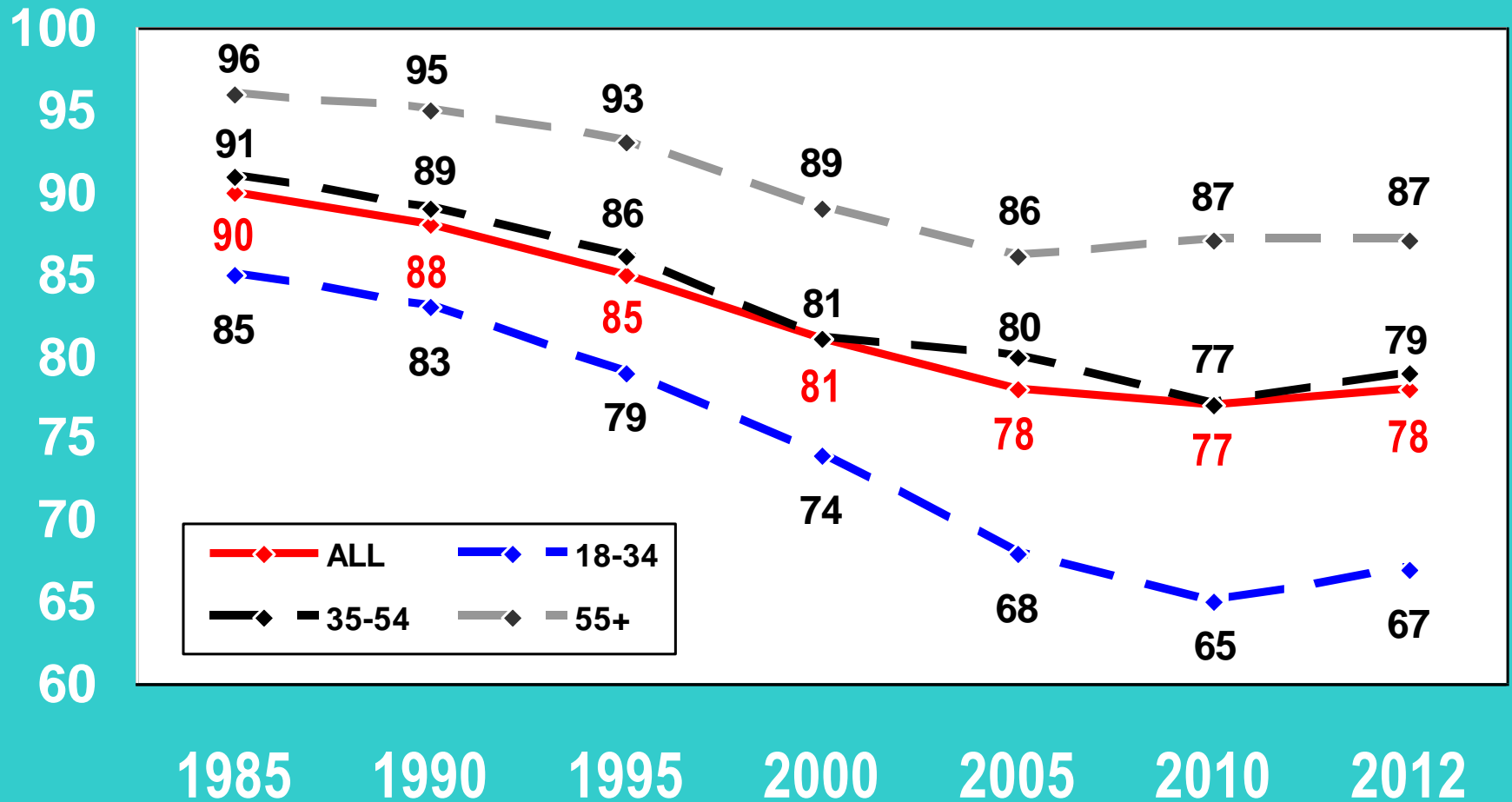
Religious ID of Teens: 1984 & 2008

	1984	2008
NONE	12%	32
Roman Catholic	50	32
<i>Outside Quebec</i>	29	23
<i>Quebec</i>	21	9
Protestant	35	13
United	10	1
Anglican	8	2
Baptist	3	1
Lutheran	2	1
Presbyterian	2	1
Christian <i>unspecified</i>	--	3
Other Faiths	3	16

Almost breathtaking
ID declines of

- ✓ Quebec Catholics (21% to 9%)
- ✓ United Church (10% to 1%)
- ✓ Anglican Church (8% to 2%)

Adults With A Religion by Age: 1985-2012 (%)

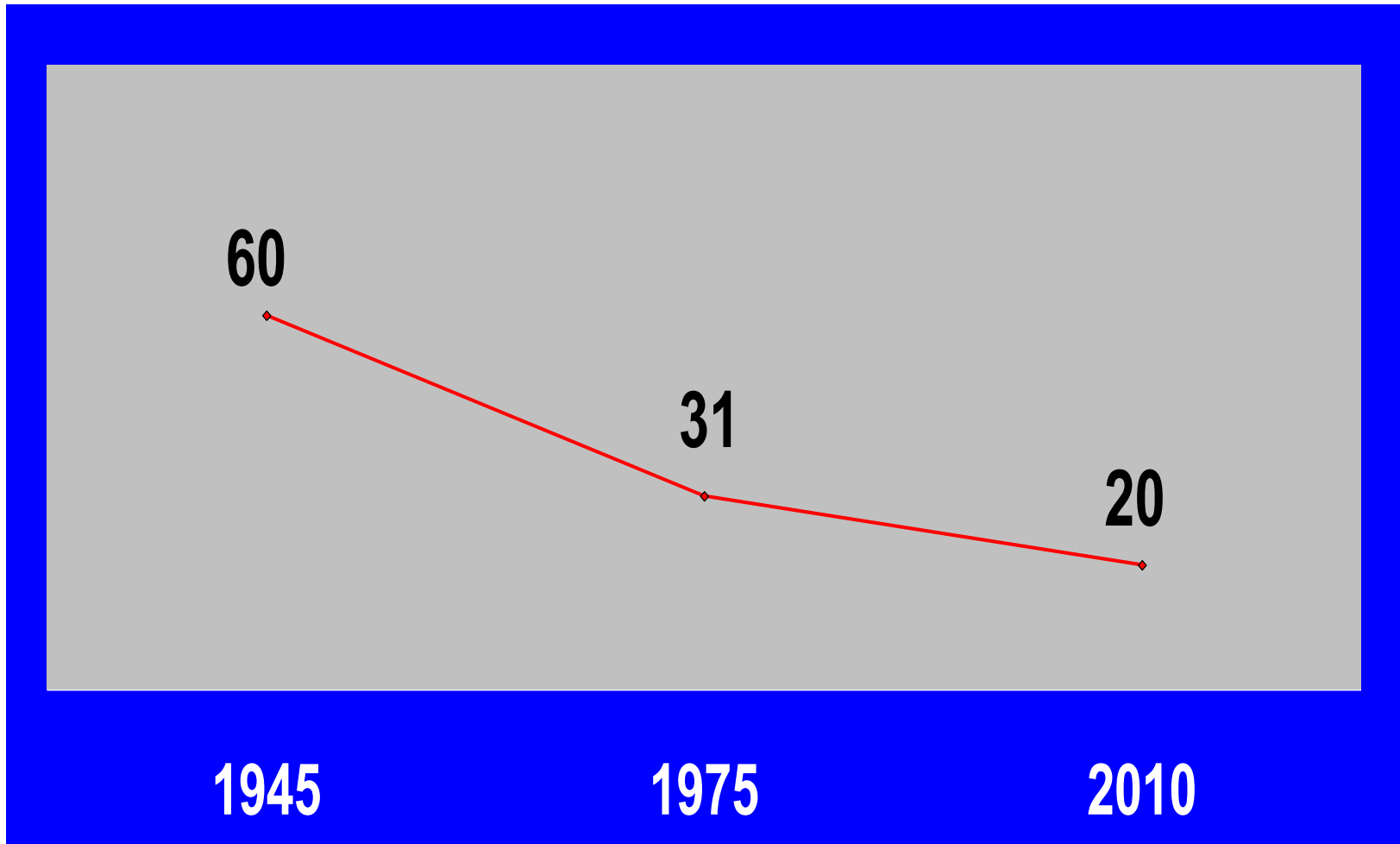


Sources: General Social Surveys.

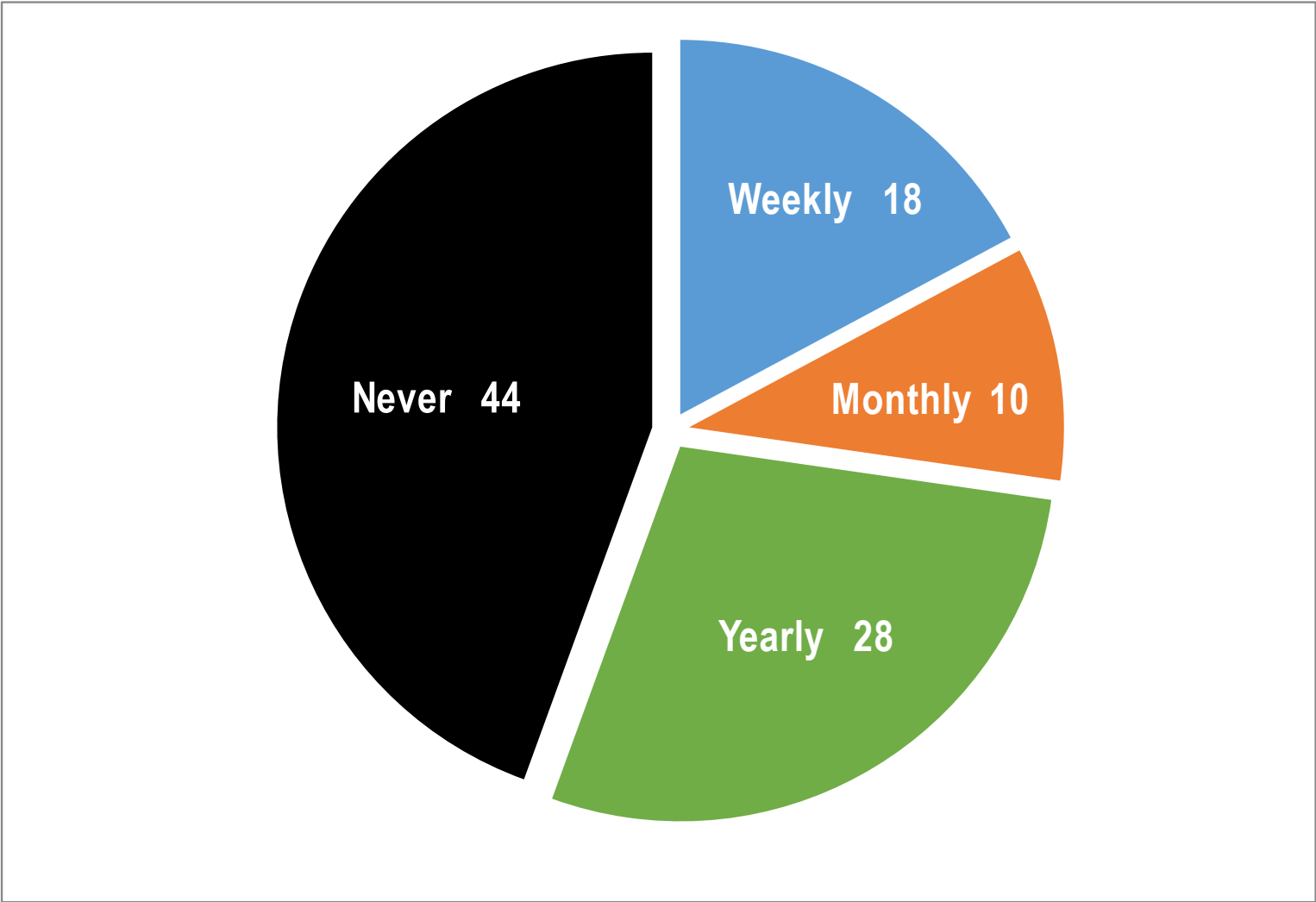
2. Participation Correlates

The Attendance Situation

Weekly Attendance: 1950s and Now

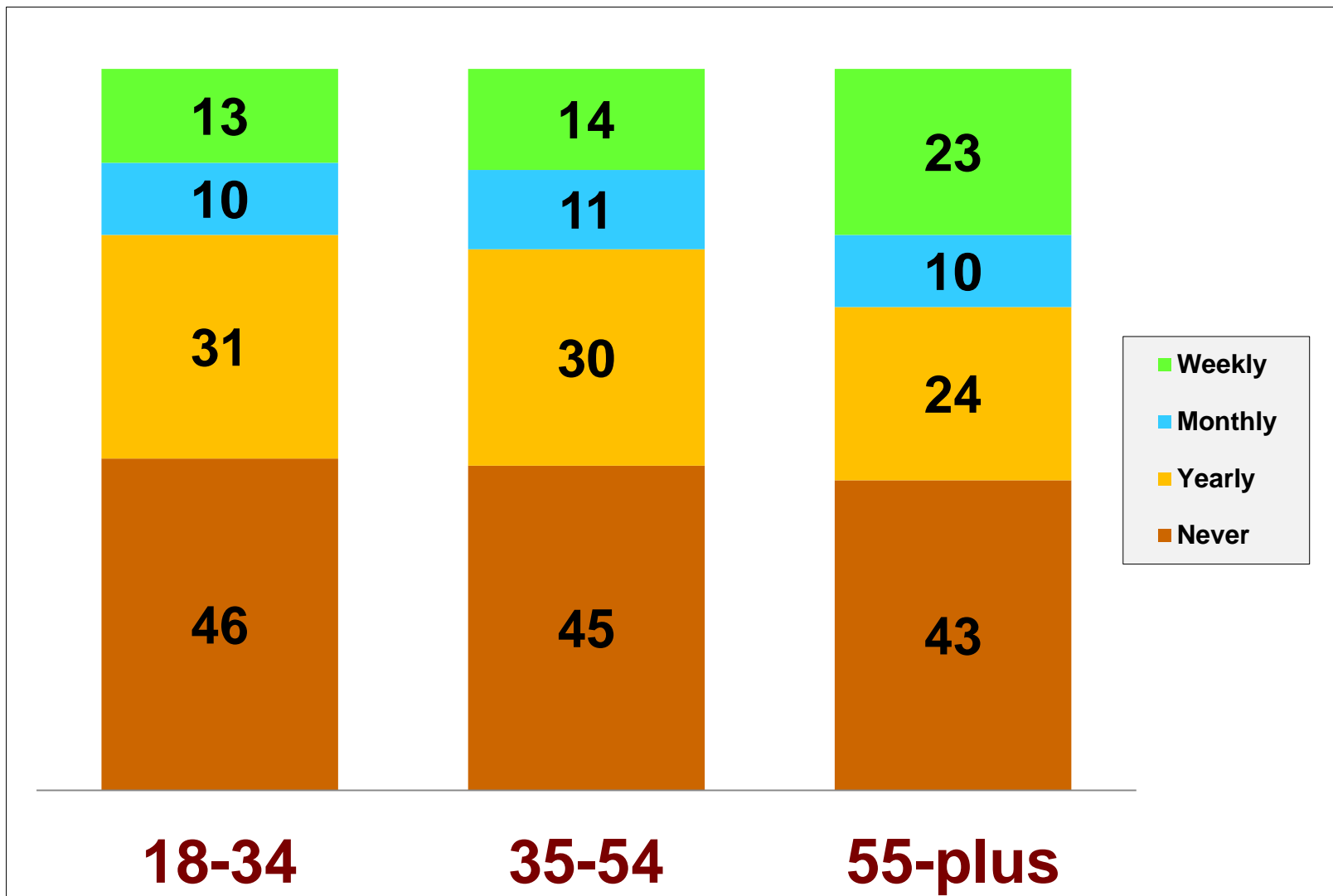


Canadian Service Attendance: 2012



Source: General Social Survey 2012

Attendance by Age: 2012



Source: General Social Survey 2012.

These findings suggest...

***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 situation adds up not to linear-like

SECULARIZATION,

but rather to

POLARIZATION.

The Polarization Continuum



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

3. Global Patterns

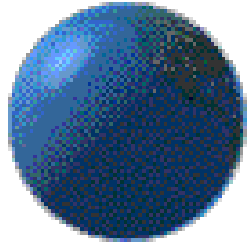


***To look at things globally
is to come to a very obvious conclusion.***

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

The pattern holds across the planet.

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
CANADA	26	84
France	20	57
Cuba	20	90
U.K.	20	77
Sweden	17	75
Russia	15	52
China	09	07

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

Not this...



Religious \longrightarrow **Not Religious**

But this...

Religious \longleftarrow **Not Religious**

Not
Secularization

But
Polarization



Religious

Ambivalent Middle

Not Religious

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.

We'd expect the same pattern of
POLARIZATION
to characterize young people.



4. Persistent and Emerging Identities

An Important Question



How does the issue of

SPIRITUALITY

factor into all this?

**Would assume R & S...
not necessarily mutually exclusive...
*then again...***

- ✓ **Religious and spiritual**
- ✓ **Spiritual** but not religious
- ✓ **Religious** but not spiritual
- ✓ **Neither** spiritual nor religious

*Through the Lens of
Angus Reid*

Self-Descriptions: Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain (%)

			
Spiritual but not religious	41	33	27
Religious and spiritual	24	43	17
Religious but not spiritual	7	7	10
Neither spiritual nor religious	28	17	46
Totals	100	100	100

Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Polls, December 2013.

Self-Descriptions of Religious Nones (%)

			
Neither spiritual nor religious	61	50	76
Spiritual but not religious	38	38	22
Religious and spiritual	1	6	2
Religious but not spiritual	<1	6	<1
Totals	100	100	100

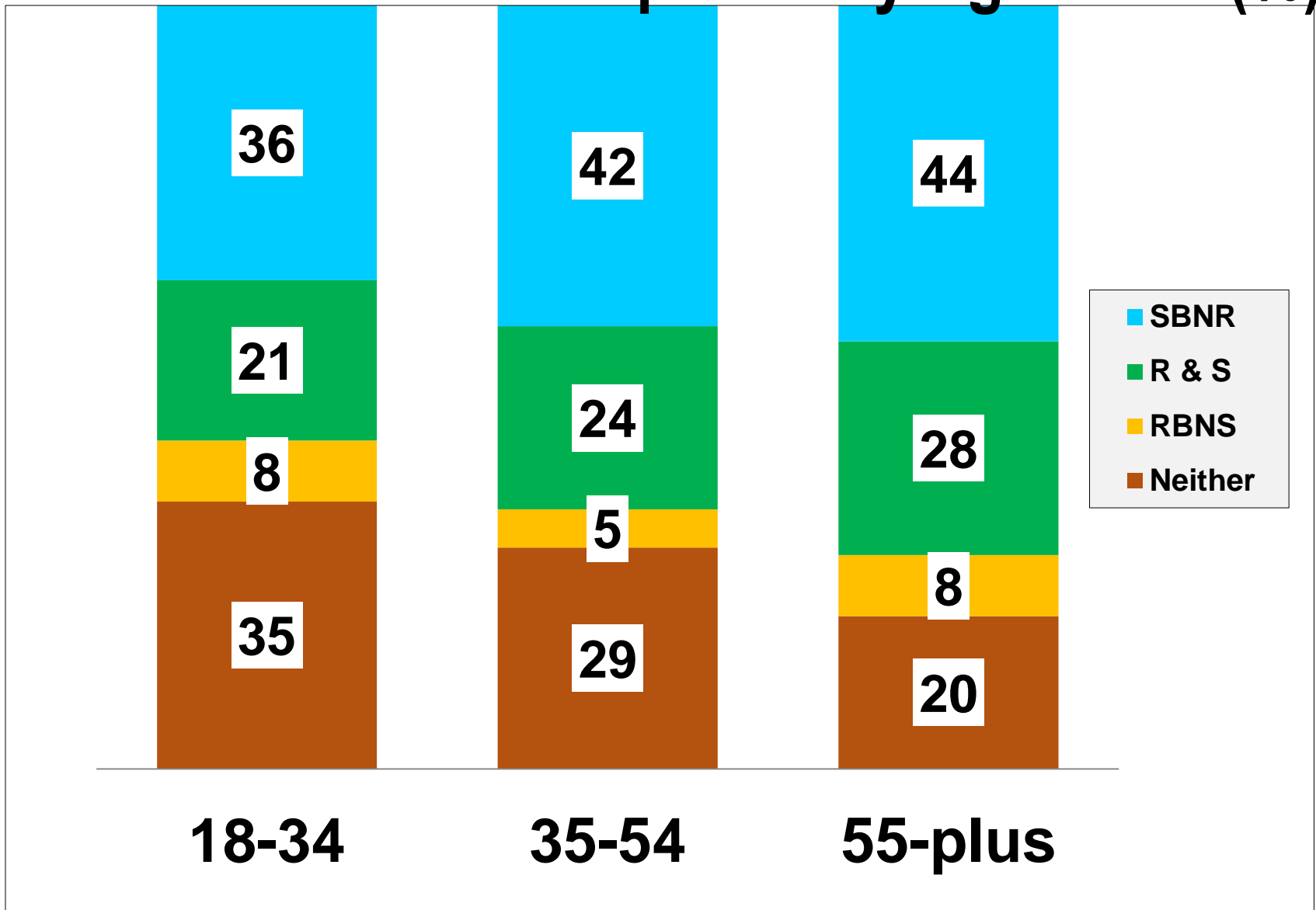
Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Polls, December 2013.

Self-Descriptions: Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain, 18-34-Year-olds (%)

			
Spiritual but not religious	36	33	24
Neither spiritual nor religious	35	23	45
Religious and spiritual	21	36	19
Religious but not spiritual	8	8	12
Totals	100	100	100


Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Polls, December 2013.

Canadian Self-Descriptions by Age: 2012 (%)



Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.

Canadian Self-Descriptions: 18-34-Year-olds by Region (%)

		BC	PR	ON	QC	AT
Spiritual but not religious	36	53	37	34	31	39
Neither spiritual nor religious	35	27	32	31	43	42
Religious and spiritual	21	18	27	21	21	8
Religious but not spiritual	8	2	4	14	5	11
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.

Canadian Self-Descriptions: 18-34 Year-olds by Gender* (%)

		Females	Males
Spiritual but not religious	41	46	36
Neither spiritual nor religious	28	22	34
Religious and spiritual	24	27	21
Religious but not spiritual	7	5	9
Totals	100	100	100

*Data available for females and males only.

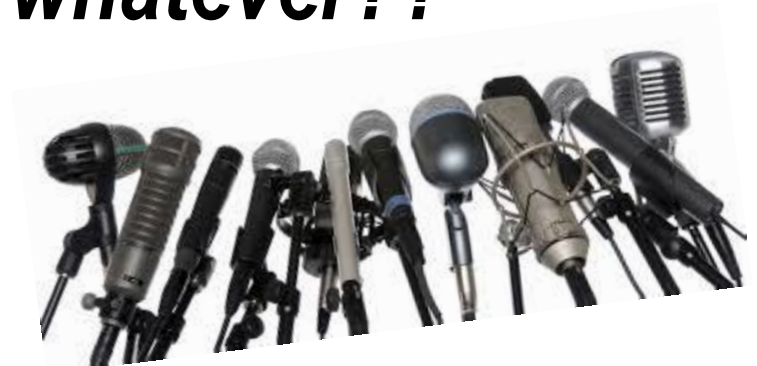
Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.



So what are the bottom lines?

***“How many Canadians – young and older –
are into what...***

***identifying themselves as
religious, spiritual, or whatever??”***



Toward a Synthesis of

Religious ID and R & S Self-Descriptions: 18-34 Year-olds

<i>Religious ID</i>	SBNR	R & S	R not S	Neither	Totals
Yes	36%	33	12	19	100
No	36	1	0	63	100

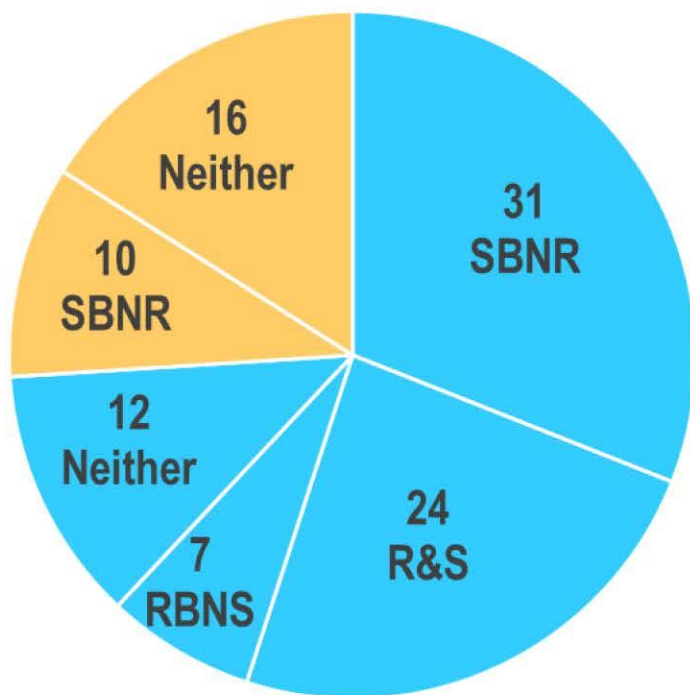
Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.

Religious IDs and S & R Self-Descriptions of Canadians (%)

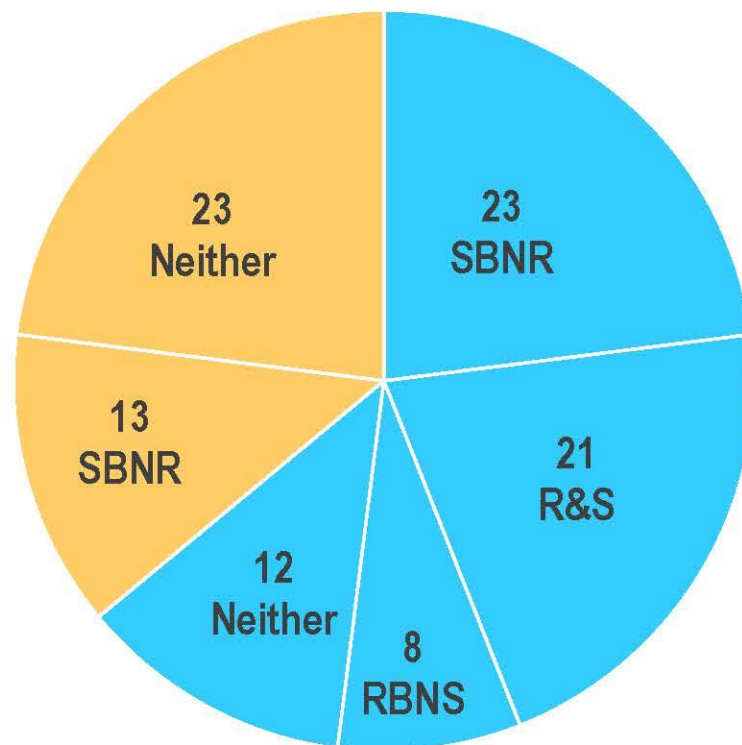
Religious ID

No Religious ID

ALL




18-34



Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.

Religious IDs and S & R Descriptions by Region (%)

Religious ID	No Religious ID		BC	PR	ON	QC	AT
Spiritual but not religious		31	32	29	31	32	37
Religious and spiritual		24	19	23	26	24	26
Religious but not spiritual		7	7	7	7	6	4
Neither spiritual nor religious		12	7	9	13	15	13
Spiritual but not religious		10	14	12	9	8	8
Neither spiritual nor religious		16	21	20	14	15	12
Totals		100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, December 2013.

5. A/The Critical Question: ***“So What?”***



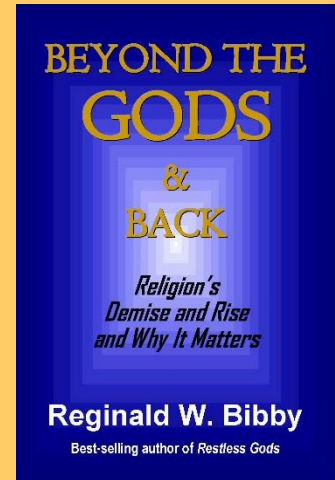
*What are the implications for
Canadian life...
Canadian lives?*



Beyond the Gods analyses...

Noteworthy contributions:

1. Personal well-being
2. Spirituality




Unique contributions:

1. Social well-being
2. Death...*response to*

*Through the Lens of
Angus Reid*

Some Christmas Correlates of Religious IDs and S & R Descriptions: 18-34 Year-olds

Religious ID No Religious ID

		SBNR	R&S	RBNS	Neither	SBNR	Neither
Practices							
Raised in Christian home attended church	51%	54	81	59	35	30	38
Will attend a special Christmas service	26	31	49	45	13	13	8
Attend services monthly or more	21	18	58	25	<1	2	12
Christmas Practices							
Will have a Christmas tree	79	87	73	72	77	93	72
Will sing Christmas carols	40	49	55	34	28	32	31
Will say table grace at a Christmas dinner	39	33	77	67	19	27	22
Social Compassion							
Will donate food or money to a food bank	51	68	48	59	33	67	35
Will donate to other charities that help the poor	54	60	66	69	36	54	42
Will donate to an aid organization (e.g., WVision)	27	33	32	21	19	34	20

Some Fast Cause for Pause Observations


- **SBNR individuals frequently have come from religious homes**
- **There are frequent cultural carry-overs when it comes to a special religious season like Christmas**
- **The carryovers may include social compassion**



*Through the Lens of the
General Social Survey*

Importance of Religious or Spiritual Beliefs to Canadians: 2012

“How important are your religious or spiritual beliefs to the way you live your life?”

	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Totals
	32%	31	17	20	100
Religious ID	38	34	17	11	100
No Religious ID	12	18	18	52	100

Source: General Social Survey, 2012.

Some Correlates of Religious IDs and Importance of R or S Beliefs: 18-34 Year-olds

	Religious ID		No Religious ID		
		High	Low	High	Low
Practices					
Engaged in religious or spiritual activities monthly+ in 2011	42%	79	16	40	5
Attend services monthly or more	23	50	5	1	1
Personal Characteristics					
I am usually happy and interested in life	81	84	78	81	78
In general, my mental health is: <i>excellent or very good</i>	73	75	73	65	72
Satisfaction with my life as a whole: <i>high</i> [8-10 out of 10]	68	70	70	57	66
In general, my physical health is: <i>excellent or very good</i>	68	69	71	59	67
Social Support & Social Compassion					
Are plenty of people I can rely on when I have a problem	85	85	86	88	82
In the past month, have done a favour for a neighbour	55	59	53	64	49
In the past month, a neighbour has done a favour for me	51	56	50	51	45
Have provided end-of-life care during the past 12 months	43	48	32	55	40
In past year, helped someone with health or aging problems	19	21	19	17	15

Some Fast Cause for Pause Observations

- **Religious practices are high (80%) among people who have a religion & view beliefs as important to how they live their lives**
- **Spiritual practices are also noteworthy (40%) for those who do not have a religion but see their beliefs as salient to them**
- **Limited differences in personal characteristics**
- **Some differences in social compassion for the religious & non-religious who view R or S as NB**



Through the Lens of the

**PROJECT CANADA
SURVEY SERIES**

PROJECT CANADA SURVEY SERIES


	Religious ID	No Religious ID
<i>Personal Importance Placed on Spirituality</i>		
High importance		47%
Low importance		21
High importance		11
Low importance		21
Totals		100

Source: Reginald W, Bibby, Project Teen Canada 2008.

Select Practices & Beliefs by Religious IDs & Importance of Spirituality


15-19 Year-olds

Religious ID No Religious ID

		<i>Importance of Spirituality</i>			
		High	Low	High	Low
Practices					
Attend services monthly or more	34%	59	20	13	5
Pray privately weekly or more	31	55	14	17	3
Read the Bible or other Scriptures weekly or more	14	27	3	7	<1
Expect have a religious wedding ceremony carried out	85	92	89	69	70
Beliefs					
There is life after death	75	88	74	71	51
God or a higher power exists	68	92	64	50	26
God or a higher power cares about you	63	88	58	45	21
All world religions are equally valid	61	60	61	66	58

Select Personal Traits, Values, & Attitudes by Religious ID and the Importance of Spirituality

15-19 Year-olds

		Importance of Spirituality			
		Religious ID	No Religious ID	High	Low
Personal Traits					
I am well-liked	93%	94	93	93	91
All in all, I am very happy or pretty happy	90	92	90	87	88
I try to stay out of trouble	81	86	78	76	73
I can do most things very well	80	82	78	78	77
Highly Value					
Honesty	81	87	76	84	73
Being loved	79	88	72	82	67
Family life	67	80	58	69	48
Concern for others	65	74	53	71	54
Attitudes					
Racial and cultural diversity is a good things for Canada	80	83	76	83	77
Global warming: "very" or "fairly" concerned	79	80	80	85	76
What's right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion	64	60	66	71	65
World events: follow "very" or "fairly" closely	56	61	51	60	48

Some Fast Cause for Pause Observations

- Among young people, religious identification seems particularly NB to practices
- Beliefs in LAD and God/Supreme Power are highly pervasive regardless of ID or valuing of spirituality
- Little differences exist re: personal characteristics
- Valuing of spirituality is associated with greater valuing of interpersonal traits, regardless of whether or not teens have or do not have a religious ID

