

An Introduction to the Life
of the Eastern Synod

*Presentation to the LWF North
American Regional Committee*

Canada's Ten Largest Faith Groups

Group	Membership	% of total population
Roman Catholic	12.8 million	43.2%
No religion	4.8 million	16.2%
United Church	2.8 million	9.6%
Anglican	2.0 million	6.9%
Other Christian, Apostolic, Born-again, Evangelical	780 thousand	2.6%
Baptist	729 thousand	2.5%
Lutheran	607 thousand	2.0%
Muslim	580 thousand	2.0%
Other Protestant	549 thousand	1.9%
Presbyterian	410 thousand	1.4%

RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHICS IN CANADA

Trends in membership of various religions (listed in alphabetic order):

Religion	1981 census data	1991 census data	2001 census data
Atheists, Agnostics , Humanists, no religion, etc.	7.4	12.3%	16.2%
Buddhism	0.2%	0.6%	1.0%
Catholic + Protestants	90.0%	83.3%	72%
Catholic	47.3%	45.2%	43.2%
Protestant	41.2%	34.9%	29.2%
Eastern Orthodox	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%
Other Christian 8		1.3%	2.6%
Hinduism	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%
Islam	0.4%	0.9%	2.0%
Judaism	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%
Sikhism	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%

Lutherans

Statistics Canada indicates that the number of census Lutherans has been declining as a proportion of the population: from 3.3 per cent in 1971, to 2.4 per cent in 1991, to 2 per cent in 2001. In 2001, 606,590 persons identified themselves as Lutheran. Fewer than 300,000, however, are actually included on the membership roles of the two major Lutheran church bodies in Canada.

Lutherans

- The baptized membership of the ELCIC has declined from 210,390 in 1986 to 169,400 in 2006, a decline of almost 20 per cent.
- The organization of new congregations in the ELCIC has dropped from six per year between 1986-1992, to only about one per year 1993-2007.

Activity

In 1986, 28% of respondents said that they attended religious services weekly. In 2001, this declined to 20%. Non-governmental surveys of both the U.S. and Canada have been conducted on a county-wide basis. The number of people entering church were counted on a given Sunday. They reveal that the true percentage of attendees is about half of the stated value. People tend to lie on matters such as church attendance. In 1986, only 26% of adults reported that they had not attended a religious service in the previous 12 months. In 2001, this number increased to 43%.

Membership Declines

Denomination	2001 Membership	Change since 1991
Presbyterian	409,830	-36%
Brethren in Christ	20,590	-22%
Salvation Army	87,790	-22%
Pentecostal	369,475	-15%
Other Protestants	549,205	-13%
Christian Reformed Church	76,670	-10%
United Church	2,839,125	-8%
Jehovah's witnesses	154,750	-8%
Mennonite	191,465	-8%
Anglican	2,035,500	-7%

The ELCIC

ELCIC membership comprises approximately 180,000 baptized members gathered in 630 congregations in 8 provinces and 2 territories of Canada (there are no ELCIC congregations in Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island or in Nunavut).

*A Renewed Vision for Mission in the
Eastern Synod 2006-2008*

A Church in Mission for Others

In Mission for Others

The gospel calls the church to be in mission for others, not for ourselves. Recognizing this, we of the Eastern Synod intend to design and implement mission plans based on the gospel's call to meet the needs of others. We will encourage congregations to engage in a similar programme of mission planning and evaluation. We will likewise encourage our members to more fully claim their daily vocations as being avenues for ministry within the wider community.

**We will strive to be a synod that is
passionate about our relationship
with God, in Christ.**

As a synod, we will encourage one another to be diligent in studying and living out God's word, sharing our faith with others and seeking new ways and opportunities to worship and pray with one another. We will encourage and equip our congregations to bring renewed energy and passion to their services of worship and proclamation of the Word.

**We will strive to be a synod that nurtures
leaders who encourage and equip other
leaders.**

Challenges are evident in all expressions of the church's life. To be effective, our synod's ministries need to identify, call, mentor, and equip the leadership we require to meet these challenges. Moreover, we ought to take seriously the Priesthood of all Believers and the role of the laity in our church's life. To this end, our synod needs to take greater responsibility for providing training that is appropriate to our tasks.

We will strive to be a synod that works in partnership with others.

As a mission focused synod, we will work to strengthen our existing partnerships and develop new ones within and beyond our synod. This includes partnerships with congregations, conferences, other synods, the ELCIC, as well as ecumenical, interfaith and community organizations.

We will strive to be a synod that reflects the diversity of our society

We recognize that our synod's congregational membership does not always reflect the demographics of the communities in which we live. We commit ourselves to be proactive in reaching out to our communities, inviting all people to be involved in the worship, work and service life of our congregations and the Synod.

We will strive to be a synod that is generous

As a generous synod, we will faithfully share our resources of time, talent and treasure in partnership with the ELCIC, our Companion Synod the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and other partner churches. We will strive to allocate resources in ways that provide evidence of our commitment to being in mission for others. We will encourage our congregations and general membership to become more generous in sharing their resources both with and beyond the synod.

We will strive to be a synod that is engaged by challenging questions

As a synod we will promote a spirit of reflective and respectful deliberation on significant questions of life and faith. We will regularly and critically evaluate the programmes and structures of the synod to assess their relevance to those questions. Although the engagement of these questions might change us, we will faithfully explore them and modify our mission in light of them.