

Evangelicals and the Dissemination of Canadian Census Data

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Global National news anchor Kevin Newman co-wrote and co-produced the *Revealed: Hip 2B Holy* television documentary that aired May 25, 2009 on the Global Television Network. In an interview with the *National Post*, he had this to say about the documentary and Evangelicalism in Canada: “There’s nobody from western rural Canada in this documentary. This [Evangelicalism] is now urban, suburban, small-town. It’s everywhere – and that’s new.”¹ It is curious how Evangelicalism, which has been “everywhere” since Protestants first came to Canada, could have escaped the attention of Mr. Newman up until now. But perhaps some of that apparent obscurity can be traced back to the dissemination of Canadian census data.

Statistics Canada has been measuring religious affiliation since it began taking censuses in 1871. How it has reported those data has varied and often obscured the existence of religious minorities. The criteria for a religious group’s data to be included in census documents have been inconsistent and obscure at times, although many improvements have been made in recent censuses.

Statistics Canada held a consultation on the dissemination of the upcoming 2011 census, a consultation that closed March 31, 2009. What follows is a modified form of the Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism’s written submission, which focuses on the dissemination of the religious affiliation data. This paper provides an overview of the history of the dissemination of the Canadian census with a focus on religious minorities and makes six recommendations for improvements.

The Growth in the Dissemination of Religious Affiliation Data

Since 1981 and especially in 1991 and 2001, Statistics Canada has made tremendous improvements in the dissemination of religious affiliation census data. Specifically, data for more religious code values are published, more cross tabulations with other census variables are provided, and community profiles that include religious affiliation data and many other census documents are now available on Statistics Canada’s website. This is a great asset to Canadians and researchers from here and abroad as both try to understand the Canadian religious landscape. Table 1 shows the growth in the types of cross tabulations that have been disseminated. This growth represents an insightful acknowledgement of the importance of religious affiliation in understanding other census variables.

¹ Larissa Leipins, “Proselytism goes pop!” *National Post*, May 25, 2009: AL2.

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Table 1. Geographic and census variable cross-tabulations with census religious affiliation data disseminated in public census documents, 1911–1961 and 1981–2001

Cross Tabulations	Census Year									
	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1981	1991	2001	
Geographic Cross Tabulations										
Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Provinces, or Provinces and Territories	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Census districts or divisions, or subdivisions	x	x		x	x	x				x
Electoral districts		x								
Principal cities	x									
Cities and towns 5,000 and over		x								
Cities and towns 10,000 and over					x	x				
Cities of 30,000 and over				x						
Census metropolitan areas					x	x		x	x	
Urban / Rural			x	x	x	x	x			
Electronic Community profiles										x
Census Variable Cross Tabulations										
Sex		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Age			x				x	x	x	
Birthplace			x							
Education								x	x	
Farm / Not Farm				x	x	x	x	x	x	
Ethnicity			x	x				x	x	
Immigration status								x	x	
Generation status										x
Mother tongue								x	x	
Marital status										x
Family status										x
Mobility status										x
Knowledge of official languages										x
Citizenship										x
Visible Minorities										x

There are, however, several important ways that the coding and dissemination² of religious affiliation data can be improved. The EFC will recommend improvements in the transparency and consistency of religious affiliation coding decisions and in how Statistics Canada decides what religious code value data to disseminate. We will look at some of the limitations of religious affiliation data without some measure of religious participation and make recommendations for how changes in dissemination practices can, in part, compensate for these limitations. We will also be recommending ways that access to religious affiliation data can be made more equitable for religious minorities.

Three Periods of Dissemination

Recent improvements in the dissemination of census religious affiliation data since 1981 might lead a casual observer to imagine that the process has been getting steadily better over time. However, this has not been the case. Appendix A looks at what may be described as three periods in Canadian census religious affiliation dissemination, 1891–1931, 1941–1971, and 1981–2001.

The first period, 1891–1931, was characterized by diversity in the religious code values disseminated. In 1931 data for 61 religious code values were published in census documents. Of these 61 religious code values, 8 represented religious affiliations that were not Christian or linked to a Western Christian tradition. Canada was overwhelmingly Christian in this period and yet, in comparison with the second dissemination period, the Bureau of Statistics was more open to reflecting the non-Christian religious diversity of the nation in the dissemination of census data.

The second census period of religious affiliation dissemination, 1941–1971, saw a dramatic reduction in the number of religious code values reported. The gaps in religious code value reporting for this period have been shaded in Appendix A in order to highlight the contrast with the dissemination periods that precede and follow it. In 1961 data were reported for only 26 religious code values, less than half the number from 1931. This paper will look at the coding for the 1961 religious affiliation variable later on in order to illustrate some of the problems with the dissemination of religious code value data in this period.

The third census period of religious affiliation dissemination, 1981–2001, saw a return to diversity in religious code value reporting, with many of the values from the first period returning and many new ones being added. It would seem that with the advent of an official federal policy of multiculturalism there was again a greater emphasis on reflecting Canada's religious diversity (which in many cases also means ethnic and cultural diversity) in the dissemination of census documents. It is often asserted that in a situation where one group is dominant in a society, it will use this position to the detriment of minority groups. It is worth noting then that during the first period of census dissemination, in which Canada could be described as being hegemonically Christian, this hegemony was no impediment to the government's reflecting the nation's religious diversity in its public census documents. The question that needs to be answered is "Why did the Canadian Bureau of Statistics, in the second census period, which was arguably a period of secularization in Canada, reduce the diversity of the dissemination of religious code values?" In 1981, public census documents available online

²Coding means the way data is grouped for the purpose of analysis. Dissemination means the ways data is presented and made available to the public.



reported data for 85 religious code values, which increased slightly to 86 in 2001. Once again diversity in the reporting of religious code values was being emphasized, and Statistics Canada has rendered a great service to Canadians in doing so.

Coding of the Religious Affiliation Variable

There is a great diversity of religious groups in Canada, among which evangelical Christian groups figure importantly. This diversity, however, has not generally been acknowledged in scholarly discourse on Canadian religious history. To some extent this is because scholars have been working with Canadian census data from the second, less diverse, dissemination period. Tables in the second dissemination period comparing religious data from earlier censuses used the contemporary, more restricted, categories. The table “Numerical and percentage distribution of the population by religious denominations, Canada, 1871–1951”³ lists 105,937 persons under the religious code value of “Other” for 1951. The corresponding “other sects” religious code value from 1931 lists only 4,014. Clearly 101,923 persons who had been listed under a wider range of religious code values in the 1931 dissemination had been conflated into an almost useless aggregate comparative statistic for the 1951 dissemination.

The half-century gap between the more diverse disseminations of 1931 and 1981 created a climate in which a less diverse religious portrait of Canada could solidify. Census volumes from 1931 and earlier are not widely available, and comparative charts disseminated since 1981 go back only a few decades and are constrained by the less diverse data and categories of the second period. Therefore, unless Canadians have access to a library with a comprehensive deposit of census documents, it is unlikely that they will encounter data earlier than 1981 that reveal the broader diversity of religious affiliation in Canada.

The EFC’s Centre for Research on Canada Evangelicalism obtained a copy of the *1961 Census of Canada Population Code Book – Religion* from Statistics Canada. This document helps us to understand the extent to which the diversity of the religious landscape was hidden in aggregate categories. What follows is a list of all the 1961 religious code values that were coded as “Other.” The list is long and would usually be consigned to an appendix. It has been included in the body of this paper, however, to underscore the magnitude of the loss of diversity.

1961 Religious Affiliation Responses that were coded as “Other”:

Aboriginal; Absolute; Absolute Scientist; Absolute Truth; African Methodist Episcopal; African Orthodox; Agnostic; Alone with God; Amana Church Society; A.M.E. (Methodist Episcopal); American Methodist Episcopal; A.M.O.R.C. (Rosicrucians); Apostolic; Apostolic Brethren; Apostolic Catholic; Apostolic Church; Apostolic Lighthouse; Apostolic Mission; Armenian Orthodox; Assembled Body of Christ; Associated Gospel; Assyrian Jacobite; Assyrian Jacobite Apostolic; Baha’is; Barthian; Believer; Bethany; Bethel; Bethel Gospel; Bethelite; Bible Church; Birth of Christ; Body of Christ; Bohemian Brethren; Brahman (Hindu); Buehmanites (Oxford Group); Burning Bush; Canadian Temple; Carmelite; Catholic Apostolic; Central Christian; Central Gospel; Children of God; Children of Light; Chinoquist; Christadelphian; Christian; Christian Apostle; Christian Assembly; Christian Association; Christian Believer; Christian Body; Christian Disciple; Christian Doctrine; Christian Endeavour; Christian Faith Doctrine; Christian Fellowship; Christian Gathered in the name of the Lord; Christian Orthodox;

³ *Census of Canada, 1951*, vol 1, table 37.

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Christian Reliance; Christian Religion; Christian Saints; Christian Sectarian; Christian Socialist; Christian Standard; Christian Union; Christian Universalist; Christian Worker; Church in the Home; Church of Faith; Church of First Born; Church of God; Church of Jerusalem; Church of Jesus; Church of the Living God; Church of New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian); Church of the Redeemed; Church of Truth; Community Church; Confessional; Congregational (Toronto, Kingston & Stratford); Connectional; Conservative Friends; Cosmopolitan; Daniel's Band; Danish Evangelical Free Church Association; Darby Brethren; Deist (Indians); Dissenters; Divine Revelation; Door of Hope; Druid; Druise; Dutch Church; Dutch Reform; Elimite; Elin; Elin Chapel; Esoteric Law (Theosophist); Evangelical and Reformed; Evangelical Mission Covenant; Evangelical Unity of Bohemian and Moravian Brethren; Evangelist; Evangelist Association; Evangelist Church; Evangelist in Gilead; Evening Lights; Evolutionist; Faith; Faith Healers; Faith of Christ; Faith of Jesus; Father Divine; Federated; Fellowship; First Brethren; First Christian; Followers of Christ; Followers of God; Followers of Ideas; Followers of Jesus; Four Square; Four Square Gospel; Free Brethren; Free Christian; Free Church of England (Reformed Episcopal); Free Thinker; Friends (Quaker); Fundamentalists (Buchmanism); God and Christ; God's Children; God, Deist; God's Way; Golden Rule; Go Preacher; Gospel; Gospel Assembly; Gospel Association; Gospel Believer; Gospel Brethren; Gospel Church; Gospel Evangelist; Gospel Fellowship; Gospel Friends; Gospel Hall; Gospel Mission; Gospel Preacher; Gospel Trumpet; Gospel Workers; Goughite; Go Ye; Grace and Truth; Greek Independent; Gregorian; Guild of Health; Heathen; Hermetic (Theosophist); Hicksite; Higher Metaphysics; Higher Thought; Hindu; Holiness; Holiness Church; Holy Ghost; Holy Gospel; Hope Gospel; Hornerites (Standard Church); House of David; House of God; Huguenot; Humanitarian; Hussite; I am Activity; Independent; Independent Brethren; Independent Greek; Infinite Science; Inner Light; Interdenominational; Interdenominational Four Square; Irvingites (Apostolic Catholic); Islam (Mohammedan); Italian Christian; Jacobite Church; Jains (India); Jansenist; Jesus Only; Jesus Way; Jesus Word; Joculist; Johannite; Kabalarian; Kedron; Kingdom; Kingdom of God Fellowship; Knight of God; Knight of Plymouth; Labour Church; Last Message of God; Latitudinarian; Latter house of Israel; Liberal Catholic; Lighthouse Mission; Lithuanian National Catholic; Longhouse (Deist, Indians); Lord's Church; Lot of Jesus; McQuinnite; Marantha Hall (Toronto); Materialist; Mazdaism; Megiddo; Messiah; Methodist (African); Methodist (Wesleyan); Mission; Mission Brothers; Mission Church; Mission Covenant; Mission Friends; Mission Workers; Modern Church; Mohammedan; Monist; Moravian; Moravian Brethren; Moslem; Muslim; Name of the Lord; National Catholic (Polish); Nationalist; Neutral; New Apostolic; New Church (Swedenborgian); New Gospel; New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian); New Light (Swedenborgian); New Reform; New Testament; New Testament of Christ; New Testimony; New Thought; New Thought Science; New Truth; No Church; Non Conformist; Nondenominational; Non Sectarian; No Preference; Occult; Oliver Gospel; Open Bible; Open Door Mission; Orthodox Conservative Friends; Oxford Group (Buchmanites); Pagan; Pantheist; Pilgrim Brethren; Pilgrim Holiness; Pillar of Fire; Polish National Catholic Church; Practical Christianity; Practical Metaphysics; Prairie Bible Institute; Primitive Brethren; Primitive Church; Primitive Friends; Prodigal; Publican; Puritan; Quakers (Friends); Radical; Rationalist; Reconciliationist; Redeemer; Reformation; Reformationist; Reformed Baptist Alliance; Reformed Church; Reformed Church (Dutch); Reformed Church of France; Reformed Episcopal; Reformist; Religious Brethren; Religious Society of Friends; Religious Thought; Remonstrant; Reorganized Labour Church; Restitutionist; Romanoff; Rosicrucian; Rotarian; Round Church; Russian Protestant; Russian Schism; Sabbath Keeper; Saints; Samaritan; Saved by Grace; Schismatic; Schonweiser; Schwenkfelders; Secularist; Shakers; Sharon Bible Institute; Shinto; Sikh; Sikh Temple; Singh; Skeptic; Socialist; Society of Friends; Solomon Reformist; Spiritualist; Standard Church; Students of Right; Sun Worshipper; Swedenborgian (New Church); Swedenborgian (New Jerusalem); Swedenborgian (New Light); Taoist (Chinese); Temple (Canadian); Temple of Abundant Life; Temple of God; Temple of Jesus; Temple Society; Testimony of Jesus; Therapeutic; Theosophical Society; Theosophist; Theosophy; Thinker; True Gospel; True Way; Truth; Two by Two; Ukrainian National; Unattached; Union; Union Gospel; Union Society; United Church of Christ; United Evangelist; United Friends; United Missionary Church; Unity; Universalist; Vedanta Society; Volunteers of American; Welsh Independent; Wesleyan; Wesleyan Methodist; Wesleyan Methodist Connection; Wilburite (Friends); Worker; Zen Woo Society; Zion; Zion Chapel; Zion Evangelist; Zion Reform; Zoroaster; Zwingli.

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Not only does the preceding list represent a loss of diversity in religious code values; it also groups the religious code values in a way that few of the adherents of the religious traditions so portrayed would recognize as valid.

In 1961 there were 415,062 religious affiliation responses coded as “Other.” Size, however, does not appear to have been the criterion by which it was decided to break a group out of this “Other” category and publish its data in public census documents. Religious code values with counts less than 15,000, such as Confucian (5,089) and Free Methodist (14,245), were disseminated. Groups with larger counts, however, were excluded from 1961 public census documents. For example, various “Brethren” groups were contained in the 1961 “Other” category. It is difficult to say what the count for Brethren would have been in 1961 but we can interpolate an estimate by using the 1931 and 1981 values. There were 13,472 affiliates recorded as Brethren in 1931 and 22,260 affiliates recorded for the Brethren in Christ in 1981.⁴ Brethren in Christ is a more restrictive category than just Brethren, and so the lack of complete identity of terms between the two lists will only strengthen the interpolated estimate that Brethren would have had at least 18,000 affiliates in 1961. In 1961 the Christian Reformed Church was also coded as “Other.” A comparative table from 1971, however, lists the 1961 count for the Christian Reformed Church as 62,257, a number that is larger than 42% of the 1961 religious code values that were disseminated. Clearly not all religious code values were coded as “Other” because they were too small to merit being commented on. Some other rationale was being employed.

It would appear, in fact, that in the second dissemination period, religious diversity was being intentionally hidden and in some cases counts were distorted so that the numbers for what were known as “Principal” denominations were inflated. For example, in 1941, after the 1925 creation of the United Church of Canada, of which the Methodist Church of Canada and the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec became a part, the census did not disseminate data for *any* Methodist or Congregational groups at all—although some did continue after church union. While we do not know for sure, it is reasonable to conclude that the many smaller and often evangelical Methodist and Congregational groups had their counts absorbed into the count for the United Church.

The “Principal” Protestant denominations of Canada have often been described as United Church, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Baptist. These have been customarily included on census questionnaires because of their large counts on the previous census, and this pattern continued on the 2001 questionnaire with the exception of Presbyterian, which was dropped. Looking at table 2 (below) we can see the 1961 coding assignments for these principal denominations.

⁴ Brethren is an adjective used by several denominations that vary in cultural and theological distinctives. We know that the 1931 term Brethren and Brethren in Christ from 1981 both exclude Plymouth Brethren, whose data were reported separately. Documents from 1931 record data for the smaller groups Apostolic Brethren (2,329) and United Brethren (1,647), which were not included in 1981. The term Apostolic Brethren did not appear in the 2006 T3010A data and does not have an obvious Internet presence. The United Brethren were either coded, inaccurately, as Brethren in Christ or were coded in some aggregate category. In either case, the 1981 Brethren in Christ occupies the religious code value space carved out by the 1931 Brethren religious code value.

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Table 2. Religious affiliation responses that were coded as one of the “Principal” Protestant denominations for the 1961 Canadian census

Principal Protestant Denomination	Religious Affiliations Coded as Part of the Principal Protestant Denomination
United Church	All Peoples Church; All Peoples Mission; Bible Christian; Church of all Nations; Congregational (except Toronto, Kingston & Stratford); German United; Methodist (not Free or Wesleyan); Methodist Bible Student; Methodist Chapel; New Connection Methodist; Practical Methodist; Primitive Methodist; Reformed Methodist; Salem Church (Methodist); Swedish Methodist; United Church; United Church of Canada; United Church Mission; United Presbyterian; Welsh Church (Congregational).
Anglican	Anglican; Anglican Mission; Anglo Catholic; Church of England; Church of England Mission; Church of Ireland; Episcopalian; Grenfell Mission; Protestant Episcopal.
Presbyterian	Calvinist; Church of Scotland; Covenanter; Farrington Independent; Free Church; Free Church of Scotland; Free Evangelical; Free Presbyterian; German Presbyterian; Calvinist; Kirk; MacDonaldite; McLean Mission; New Free Church; Presbyterian; Presbyterian Church of Canada; Reformed Presbyterian; United Free; United Free Church of Scotland.
Lutheran	American Lutheran; Apostolic Lutheran; Church of Denmark; Church of the Lutheran Brethren; Church of Sweden; Danish Evangelical Free Church Association; Denmark Church; Estonian Church; Evangelical Lutheran; Finnish Apostle; Finnish Apostolic Lutheran; Finnish Evangelical Lutheran; Free Lutheran; Friends of Augsburg; German Church; German Evangelical; German Evangelical Lutheran; German Free; Gospel Lutheran; Kirchen; Lutheran; Lutheran Evangelical; Lutheran Reform; Norwegian Church; Norwegian Synod; Reformed Lutheran; Scandinavian Evangelical; Slovak Lutheran; Swedish Church; United Danish Evangelical Lutheran.
Baptist	American Baptist; American Baptist Association; Baptist; Baptist Mission; Bullockites; Canolite; Christian Baptist; Christian Unity; Coloured Primitive Baptist; Free Baptist; Free Will Baptist; French Baptist; General Baptist; General Six Principal Baptist; German Seventh-Day Baptist; Independent Baptist; Independent Baptist Church of America; Memorial Institute (Toronto); Negro Baptist; New Baptist; Old School Baptist; Predestinarian Baptist; Primitive Baptist; Regular Baptist; Separate Baptist; Stundist; Swedish Baptist; Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian; United American Free Will Baptist, Coloured; United Baptist.

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These lists highlight one of the issues in coding religious groups, namely, how to code ethnically based religious groups. Currently Statistics Canada is employing two different approaches. In the case of Orthodox Christians, census documents have moved from aggregating all Orthodox groups under “Greek Church” or “Greek Orthodox” to breaking them out into their respective ethnic expressions of Orthodoxy. With Lutherans, however, Statistics Canada persists in grouping all ethnic expressions of Lutheranism in one religious code value.

There seems to be a tacit understanding that religious movements that were established in Canada with older, albeit diverse, waves of immigration should be presented as a cohesive group. This remains true even if particular expressions of the religious movement, such as German, Swedish, and Danish Lutherans, consciously and expressly delineated their boundaries along ethnic lines. It also remains true among Baptists who, although they share a general doctrine concerning adult baptism, have several distinctly ethnic expressions. Furthermore, among different Baptist groups there are also substantive doctrinal and cultural differences that belie the unity suggested by the single religious code value presented in census documents. Moreover, this single religious code value actually obscures a proper understanding of the different streams in the wider Baptist movement.

An effect of publishing a large aggregate number under a single “Principal” denominational name is to give a disproportionate influence to groups who claim to speak in that name. It also tends to amplify their cultural influence because of the effect of having their name suggested on the census questionnaire. We can see the corollary effect in the decadal growth rate for the religious groups in table 3 which were on the 1991 census questionnaire and were subsequently dropped in 2001. There are many factors that contribute to a denomination’s growth rate besides a position on the census questionnaire, of course. However, we would expect the decadal growth rate for attendance to be in the same direction as the religious affiliation measure on the census. In all cases, except for Presbyterian, the growth trajectories for the two measurements are reversed, in two cases dramatically so, and in the case of the Presbyterians the attendance numbers suggest a much more modest decline. Having your name on the census questionnaire will tend to inflate your census scores because it suggests an answer, and in the absence of a perfect match where a close enough fit is suggested, it is more likely to be chosen.

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Table 3. Comparison of 1991 and 2001 decadal growth rates for denominations that were included on the 1991 census questionnaire but were dropped from the 2001 questionnaire

Religious Group or Denomination	Religious Affiliation			Attendance Reported by Denominations ^a		
	1991 Census	2001 Census	Change	1991	2001	Change
Mennonite ^b	207,970	191,465	-7.9%	106,846	125,213	17.2%
Pentecostal ^c	436,435	369,480	-15.3%	247,661	330,414	33.4%
Presbyterian	636,295	409,830	-35.6%	102,669	96,077	-6.4%
Salvation Army	112,345	87,790	-21.9%	25,956	26,143	0.7%

^a From tables compiled by Bruce L. Guenther and the Research Department of Outreach Canada.

^b Mennonite here includes Bergthaler Mennonite Churches; Brethren in Christ, Canadian Conference; Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches; Chortizer Mennonite Conference; Christian Anishinabec Fellowship; Church of God in Christ (Mennonite); Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario; Conservative Mennonite Fellowship; Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church; Evangelical Mennonite Church; Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference; Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches; Markham-Waterloo Mennonite Conference; Mennonite Church Alberta; Mennonite Church British Columbia; Mennonite Church Eastern Canada; Mennonite Church Manitoba; Mennonite Church Saskatchewan; Mennonite Churches independent/unaffiliated; Midwest Mennonite Fellowship; Nationwide Fellowship of Churches (Mennonite); Northwest Mennonite Conference; Sommerfelder Mennonite Churches; United Brethren in Christ (Ontario); Western Conservative Mennonite Fellowship; Mennonite (Other) which includes Beachy Amish Mennonite Church, New Reinland Mennonite Church of Ontario, Old Colony Mennonite Church, Old Order Amish Church, Old Order Mennonite Church, Reformed Mennonite Church, Reinland Fellowship Mennonite Church, Reinland Mennonite Church.

^c Pentecostal includes Apostolic Church in Canada; Apostolic Church of Pentecost; Apostolic Faith Church; Association of Vineyard Churches Canada; Canadian Evangelical Christian Churches; Canadian Fellowship of Churches and Ministers; Church of Pentecost Canada, Inc.; Elim Fellowship of Evangelical Churches and Ministers; Fellowship of Christian Assemblies; Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada; Independent Assemblies of God; Italian Pentecostal Church; Open Bible Faith Fellowship; Partners in Harvest; Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada; Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland; Pentecostal Holiness Church of Canada; Sovereign Grace Ministries; United Church of Jesus Christ (Apostolic); United Pentecostal Church; Victory Churches International.

Generally speaking, the religious code values with the largest counts from the previous census supply the list of religions for the next census questionnaire (see table 4 below). However, if individual denominational size alone were to determine a place on the list, one would expect the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, who had a membership of 228,003 in 2001, to edge out the largest Baptist group, the Convention Baptists, who had a membership of 114,881.⁵ If the size of a broader theological tradition were the criterion we would still expect a place for Pentecostals, who had a membership of 404,916 in 2001 (compare with the Baptists, with 225,516).⁶

⁵ From tables compiled by Bruce Guenther and the Research Department of Outreach Canada.

⁶ Ibid.

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Table 4. Religious code values listed on the 2001 Canadian census questionnaire and their 1991 and 2001 census counts listed in order that they appear on the questionnaire

Religious Code Value	1991	2001
Roman Catholic	12,203,625	12,793,125
Ukrainian Catholic	128,390	126,200
United Church	3,093,120	2,839,125
Anglican	2,188,110	2,035,500
Lutheran	636,210	606,595
Baptist	663,360	729,475
Greek Orthodox	231,635	215,170
Jewish	318,185	329,990
Islam	253,265	579,640
Buddhist	163,415	300,345
Hindu	157,010	297,205
Sikh	147,440	278,415

While the census questionnaire from census to census plays a role in establishing which are Canada's "primary" religions and how they maintain those positions, the disseminated census documents function in a similar way.

Historian Robert Burkinshaw, responding to his fellow historian Mark Noll's *What Happened to Christian Canada?* writes:

Canadian Evangelicalism, from the 1920s onward, was characterized by a high level of relatively recent immigration, which magnified the influence of the already much higher proportion of immigrants in Canada compared with the United States in that period. *Consequently, according to Noll's account, in the crucial decades of the 1960s and 1970s, some of the larger evangelical groups (in most of western Canada, much of Ontario, and smaller pockets elsewhere) were still, in a number of ways, cultural outsiders – perhaps more than Noll's study recognizes.*⁷ (emphasis added)

Burkinshaw points out that in the 1960s and 1970s evangelical immigrants were cultural outsiders. They were also, for the most part, conspicuously absent from census documents in those decades and had been since 1931. A legitimating function provided by being included in publicly disseminated census documents aids identifiable groups, including religious minorities, in becoming part of the cultural mainstream. Along with the normal cultural barriers encountered by all newcomers and the tendency to look to your own subculture for support, the publicly disseminated Canadian census documents' persistent lack of recognition of these immigrant religious affiliation groups contributed to maintaining this "outsider" status. As appendix A shows, many evangelical denominations had established congregations in Canada for almost a century. By the 1970s, however, they had been removed from the public record of the Canadian census for decades.

⁷ Robert Burkinshaw, "Mark Noll, *What Happened to Christian Canada?* A response from an Evangelical perspective," Church & Faith Trends 2:1 (October 2008): 1.



Again, this expunging of minority religious groups from public census records went further than simple omission from contemporary documents. Where charts with historical comparisons were generated, evangelical groups that were recorded in census documents before 1941 were conflated into “other” categories. The retelling of Canadian religious history in the second census dissemination period made many religious minorities vanish. Many new evangelical groups continue to be founded within ethnic immigrant communities especially in major census metropolitan areas, and the same can be said for new religious movements in Canada generally. In 2006, “94.9% of Canada’s foreign-born population and 97.2% of recent immigrants who landed in the last five years lived in either a census metropolitan area or a census agglomeration.”⁸ Small, ethnic minority religious movements will not generally be included in public census documents. The effect of their exclusion is not limited, however, to hindering their participation in Canadian society as insiders; it distorts the portrait of the Canadian religious landscape because newcomers and participants in new religious movements tend to have higher levels of religious participation.

Handy et al., in a study of Canadian ethnic congregations, found that “members of ethnic congregations are twice as likely to attend weekly religious services and volunteer as compared with other Canadians who attended religious services.”⁹

Clark and Schellenberg, commenting on the difference between the religious behavior of new immigrants and those who are Canadian-born, write:

Since 1985, a widening divergence in the public religious behaviours of immigrants and persons born in Canada has also emerged. The percentage of Canadian-born 15-59 – year-olds with no religious affiliation or not attending religious services has increased from 33% in 1985 to 48% in 2004. In contrast, immigrants in this age group have changed very little, from 36% to 35%. All in all, public religious behaviours among persons born inside and outside Canada became more dissimilar, although this diversity conceals considerable diversity in levels of religiosity among immigrants from different regions of the world.¹⁰

By not reporting religious affiliation data for immigrant minority religious groups, the portrait of the religious landscape is distorted. This distortion is compounded; however, because these very affiliates tend participate at higher levels than their Canadian-born neighbours, who are more likely to be counted as part of a religious denomination whose data are disseminated.

Moreover, religious affiliation data on their own also distort the Canadian religious portrait among those groups that currently appear in published census documents. Table 5 points to a very different portrait of the Canadian religious landscape if attendance at religious services, the standard measure of religious participation, were to

⁸ Statistics Canada, “Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Immigrants in metropolitan areas,” http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census06/analysis/immcit/city_life.cfm (accessed March 18, 2009).

⁹ Femida Handy, Lisa Diniz, and Leona Anderson, “How Ethnic Congregations Help Immigrants Integrate into Canada,” (Imagine Canada, 2005): 2. http://nonprofitscan.imaginecanada.ca/files/kdc-cdc/fs_handy_congregations_eng.pdf (accessed March 28, 2009).

¹⁰ Warren Clark and Grant Schellenberg, “Who’s religious?” Canadian Social Trends (Summer 2006): 2-3. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2006001/pdf/9181-eng.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2009).

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be taken into account. What table 5 does not show is what the ratio of affiliates to attenders would be for recent immigrant religious groups. If Clark and Schellenberger's work is any indication, this ratio will be much closer to one-to-one.

Table 5. Religious affiliation and attendance in 2001 for select denominations/affiliate groupings and the ratio of affiliates to attenders

Denomination	Religious Affiliation	Attendance	Ratio of Affiliates to Attenders
United Church of Canada	2,839,125	270,361	10.5
Lutheran	606,590	69,841 ^a	8.7
Anglican	2,035,500	287,394	7.1
Presbyterian	409,830	96,077 ^b	4.3
Roman Catholic	12,936,905	3,451,874	3.7
Baptist	729,470	218,483	3.3
Mennonite	191,465	125,213 ^c	1.5
Church of the Nazarene	13,960	12,102	1.2
Vineyard Christian Fellowship	2,595	2,297 ^d	1.1
Pentecostal	369,475	330,414 ^e	1.1
Christian and Missionary Alliance	66,280	80,282	0.8
Associated Gospel	7,735	20,477	0.4

Sources: Religion (95) and Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration (11) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census – 20% Sample Data, Catalog no. 97F0022XCB2001004. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=55824&APATH=3&GID=431515&METH=1&PTYPE=55440&THEME=56&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=0&GK=0&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0> (accessed March 17, 2009) and “Denominations in Canada” table compiled by Bruce Guenther and the Research Department of Outreach Canada.

^a Lutheran/Reformed

^b Presbyterian/Reformed

^c Evangelical and non-evangelical Mennonites

^d Association of Vineyard Churches Canada

The Canadian census does not ask a question on religious participation. Given this reality, one of the best remedies for this deficiency is to reflect the religious affiliation data for those groups that are most religiously active in as much detail as possible in the census dissemination. **The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) recommends that responses be coded for any group for which there are 50 or more responses and disseminated for any group with 100 or more. Furthermore, the EFC recommends that responses**



of 250 or greater be published in public census documents including cross tabulations with other census variables (where privacy considerations allow).

Inequality in Access to Religious Affiliation Data

Setting a low and fixed numerical threshold for the dissemination of religious affiliation data will also help redress the inequitable financial burden borne by minority religious groups when trying to access religious affiliation data. It will mean that those in minority religious groups will not have to incur the burden of paying for custom or semi-custom tables in order to see themselves reflected in the Canadian religious portrait. Currently the minimum cost is \$1,115 for the creation of a custom table and \$305 for a semi-custom cross tabulation. Minority religious groups are often found among immigrant communities that lack the financial resources of larger majority religious groups to be able to pay for custom or semi-custom tables. Furthermore, it is a barrier that is inequitably borne by some religious minority groups and not others. In 2001 Statistics Canada published religious affiliation data with counts as low as 545 (Shinto) and 775 (Mission de l'Esprit Saint) but did not for other groups that through denominational information we know are much larger.¹¹

Population Code Book for the Religious Affiliation Variable

While it may not be possible to disseminate public religious affiliation data for all religious code values, **the EFC would like to see Statistics Canada publish the complete religious affiliation population code book in the 2011 Census Dictionary and not merely a list of religious code values for which data have already been disseminated.** The Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism in particular is interested in how many Canadians responded with a religious affiliation code value of "Evangelical." In 2001 the count of 24,825 was recorded for "Evangelical, n.o.s." There was no Statistics Canada document, however, that indicated that this religious code value existed. The Centre tried several times, unsuccessfully, to obtain a copy of the 2001 population code book for the religion variable. It was only by chance, in a conversation with a Statistics Canada analyst, that we were able to learn of the existence of the 2001 "Evangelical, n.o.s." religious code value.

Researchers, and all Canadians, need to know what religious code values are available and how they are aggregated into other groups. Publishing this information will have several public benefits. First it will let those who are interested in religious affiliation data know what is available. Second, it will allow the public, religious leaders, and researchers comment on the quality of Statistics Canada's coding assignments, thereby allowing for collaborative improvement of Canadian religious affiliation representations. Third, researchers will better understand how to work with the data that are available to them. There were many problems with the 1961 and 1971 population code book for the religious affiliation variable. The religious landscape in Canada is constantly evolving. **Statistics Canada should be transparent in how it does its religious affiliation coding so that others can help it improve its coding and so that researchers will better understand how to work with the data that are available to them.**

¹¹ From tables compiled by Bruce Guenther and the Research Department of Outreach Canada.



Large Independent Congregations

Large independent congregations, sometimes referred to as “mega-churches” (although mega-churches can be denominational as well) are increasingly common in Canada. Using 2006 Charitable Information Return data, the Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism identified upwards of 380 Canadian evangelical churches with a total revenue (line 4700 on the T3010A form) of \$1 million or greater. Of these, 55 had a total revenue of \$3 million or greater. Congregational revenue is not a direct measure of religious affiliation, but it stands to reason that, all things being equal, a greater number of active affiliates are required to finance a larger congregational budget through donations.

Given the way religious affiliation data are currently disseminated, a congregation could have upwards of several thousand active affiliates and not be reflected in public census data. There is historical precedent for disseminating data for what is in all likelihood a single large congregation. For example, there are several Canadian congregations with a name like “The People’s Church” but the largest of these is the congregation on Sheppard Avenue in Toronto (whose name actually is “The Peoples Church”). “People’s Church” data have been disseminated in public census documents three times in 1921, 1981, and 1991.

The combination of community profiles with low coding and dissemination thresholds for religious affiliation data will allow researchers to identify and study these large independent congregations.

Recommendations

The EFC would like to thank Statistics Canada for the excellent work it does in the dissemination of census religious affiliation data. In consideration of how this dissemination might be further improved, we make the following recommendations:

- 1. The EFC recommends that the 2011 Data Dictionary publish both all the religious code values that it collects and all the religious code values that are available for dissemination in custom products. Furthermore, the EFC requests that the 2011 Data Dictionary indicate how unpublished religious code values are aggregated in published religious code values. Statistics Canada should be transparent in how it does its religious affiliation coding so that others can help it improve its coding and so that researchers will better understand how to work with the data that are available to it;**
- 2. The EFC recommends that the criteria for the creation of aggregate categories be transparent and consistently applied;**
- 3. The EFC recommends that the criteria for deciding when religious code values are disseminated be transparent and consistent. Furthermore, the EFC recommends that the criteria for deciding which religious code values are included on the census questionnaire be transparent and consistently applied;**

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- 4. The EFC recommends for the religious affiliation variable that 50 responses be coded and that 100 responses be available for dissemination. Furthermore, the EFC recommends that responses of 250 or greater be published in public census documents, tables and cross tabulations with other census variables (where privacy considerations allow);**
- 5. The EFC recommends that religious affiliation data be disseminated so that religious minorities do not bear disproportionate financial and technical barriers to accessing data that would allow them to see themselves in the portrait of the religious landscape. Furthermore, we recommend that where barriers to access are erected that there be consistent and transparent criteria for doing so; and**
- 6. The EFC recommends that census religious affiliation data be presented with measures of religious participation where possible. 🌱**

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Appendix A. Religious code values for which Canadian census data were published, 1891–2001

Religious Affiliation Code Value (year work began in Canada)	Religious Affiliation Subgroup Code Value	Census Year											
		1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Roman Catholic		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Polish National Catholic Church											x	x	x
Other Catholic													x
Church of England (Anglican)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Reformed Episcopalian			x			x							
Presbyterian	Presbyterian	x											
	Reformed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Other	x											
Methodist	Methodist	x											
	Bible Christian	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
	Primitive	x											
	Other	x											
United Church of Canada						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Union Church				x									
African Methodist						x							
Free Methodist (1860)						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Wesleyan Methodist (Wesleyan) (1892)						x					x	x	x
Holiness Movement (Hornerites) / Standard Church (1916)			x	x	x	x					x	x	x
Evangelical (Methodist)											x		
Methodist Episcopal											x		
Church of the Nazarene (1908)											x	x	x
Salvation Army (1882)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Brethren		x	x	x	x	x							
United Brethren			x	x		x	x						
United Brethren in Christ					x								
Plymouth Brethren			x	x	x	x					x	x	
Christian Brethren				x									x
Apostolic Brethren					x	x							
Brethren in Christ (1788)											x	x	x
Lutheran		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Baptist (1760s)	Baptist	x	x										
	Freewill	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Tunkers	x	x										
Congregational / Congregationalist		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			
Christian Congregation											x	x	
Christian Congregational													x
Disciples		x	x	x									
Disciples of Christ					x								
Church of Christ			x	x	x								
Church of Christ, Disciples						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

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Appendix A. (continued)

Religious Affiliation Code Value (year work began in Canada)	Religious Affiliation Subgroup Code Value	Census Year											
		1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Adventist		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Protestant / Protestant, n.o.s.		x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Quaker (Friends)		x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x
Not Specified or Not Stated		x	x	x	x	x	x						
Catholic Apostolic (Irvingites)			x	x	x	x							
Christian / Christian, n.o.s.			x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Other Christian											x	x	x
Church of God			x	x	x	x					x	x	x
Evangelicals			x	x									
Greek Church			x	x	x								
Greek Orthodox						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Greek Catholic								x					
Other Greek Catholic								x					
Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic								x	x	x	x	x	x
Ukrainian Orthodox											x	x	x
Armenian Orthodox											x	x	x
Serbian Orthodox											x	x	x
Russian Orthodox											x	x	x
Romanian Orthodox											x	x	x
Antiochian Orthodox Christian											x	x	x
Coptic Orthodox												x	x
Orthodox, n.o.s.												x	x
Mennonite	Mennonite		x	x						x	x	x	x
	Mennonite including Hutterite				x	x	x	x					
Hutterite										x	x	x	x
Doukhobor	Orthodox		x	x	x	x					x	x	
	Reformed							x	x	x	x	x	x
Other denominations		x											
Various sects, Other Sects, or Other			x	x	x	x							
Other (Other, not elsewhere classified)								x	x	x	x	x	
Other, non-religious											x	x	
Zionite			x										
Believer				x	x	x							
Bible Christian				x									
Christian Worker				x									
Free Church				x									
Pentecostal (1919 ^a)				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Gospel People				x	x	x							
Vineyard Christian Fellowship (1984)												x	x
Charismatic Renewal											x	x	x

^a Year for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC).

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Appendix A. (continued)

Religious Affiliation Code Value (year work began in Canada)	Religious Affiliation Subgroup Code Value	Census Year											
		1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Reformed Church				x	x	x							
Christian Reformed (1905)					x					x	x	x	x
Dutch Reformed					x	x					x	x	x
Canadian Reformed											x	x	x
American Reformed												x	
Other Reformed (n.i.e.)											x	x	x
Calvinist				x									
Christian (and Missionary) Alliance (1887)					x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Christian Church					x								
Evangelical Association					x	x							
Evangelical Church							x	x					
Evangelical Free Church (1911)											x	x	x
Christian Assembly												x	
Moravians (1896)					x	x					x	x	x
People's Church					x						x	x	
Followers of Christ						x							
Apostolic Christian (Church)											x	x	x
New Apostolic											x	x	x
Associated Gospel (early 1890s)											x	x	x
Missionary Church											x		
Evangelical Missionary Church (1993 ^b)													x
Mission Covenant											x		
Mission de l'Esprit Saint											x	x	x
World Wide Church of God											x	x	x
Non-conformist				x	x	x							
Dissenter				x									
Farrington Independent				x									
Independent				x	x	x							
Undenominationalist /non-denominational				x	x	x					x	x	x
Interdenominational											x	x	x
Millennial Dawnite				x									
Mission				x	x	x							
Bible Students (International Assoc.)				x	x	x	x						
Jehovah's Witness								x	x	x	x	x	x
Christadelphian				x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Christian Scientist				x	x	x	x	x	x				
Latter Day Saints (Mormons)	LDS Reorganized			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Non-sectarian				x	x	x							
No Religion				x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
No religious preference											x		

^bThe Evangelical Church in Canada and the Missionary Church of Canada merged in 1993 to become the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

Appendix A. (continued)

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Religious Affiliation Code Value (year work began in Canada)	Religious Affiliation Subgroup Code Value	Census Year											
		1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Unitarian		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Universalist		x	x	x	x	x							
Agnostic			x	x	x						x	x	x
Atheist					x						x	x	x
Deist			x		x	x							
Mohammedan / Islam / Muslim			x	x	x	x					x	x	x
Shinto				x	x	x						x	x
Sikh				x	x	x					x	x	x
Hindu				x	x	x					x	x	x
Jain												x	x
Jew / Jewish		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Confucian and Buddhist	Confucian		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
	Buddhist		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Taoist											x	x	x
Baha'i											x	x	x
Pagan			x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x
Other Eastern Non-Christian / Eastern Religion, n.i.e.											x	x	x
Free Thinker					x								
Truth						x							
Labour Church					x								
Humanist												x	x
Socialist				x									
Unionist				x									
Other para-religious groups											x	x	
Native Indian or Inuit (Aboriginal Spirituality)											x	x	x
Spiritualist			x	x	x	x					x	x	x
Theosophist (Theosophical groups)			x	x	x	x					x	x	
New Church (Swedenborgian)			x	x	x						x	x	x
New Thought (-Unity-Metaphysics)					x	x					x	x	x
Saints				x		x							
Fourth Way											x	x	
Kabalarian												x	
New Age												x	x
Rastafarian												x	x
Satanist												x	x
Scientology												x	x
Gnostic													x
Other, n.i.e.												x	x

Abbreviations: n.i.e., not included elsewhere; n.o.s. not otherwise specified.