

## **Christian Heritage Month in Canada is December**

***Our survey shows almost 70% of Christians "Never heard of it"!***

### **Christianity in Canada**

Christianity in Canada traces its roots back to the arrival of European explorers and missionaries almost 500 years ago. From that time to now, Christians have been sharing the good news... "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life". (John 3:16, The Bible)

Jacques Cartier and others brought Catholicism to the St. Lawrence Valley in the 1500s. By the early 1600s, French Jesuit missionaries brought salvation through Jesus Christ to "New France" or Quebec. As British power replaced French rule after the fall of New France in 1763, evangelicals gained prominence. Early immigrants from Britain, Ireland and the American colonies came to Canada seeking freedom of religion and other freedoms. Christian families established churches, hospitals, schools, businesses and more.

In the early 1800s, revivals swept through Upper Canada (now Ontario) that would influence Canadian moral and political life for generations. In 1866 Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley, a Father of Confederation and devout Christian, is credited with suggesting the name "Dominion of Canada". He was inspired by Psalm 72:8 in the King James Version of the Bible, which states, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea".

By Confederation in 1867, Christianity—both Catholic and Protestant—was deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, shaping education, healthcare, and public morality. Christian churches played a central role in the expansion westward.

Missionaries accompanied settlers into the Prairies and the North, building missions, hospitals, schools and businesses. Christian churches were engines of social reform.

In 1927, the Peace Tower on Ottawa's Parliament Hill was completed as a memorial to Canadians who lost their lives in the First World War and other conflicts. The Peace Tower features three Bible verses inscribed on its exterior, each located above a stained glass window. The verse on the East window is Psalm 72:8. The South window bears Psalm 72:1, "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son". The West window displays Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish".

Throughout the mid-20th century, Christian churches influenced politics, education, and social values. The late 20th century brought renewal. Even as mainstream denominations declined, Christianity in Canada changed to include Evangelical, Pentecostal, and non-denominational movements, particularly among immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. New churches flourished in urban centres, and Indigenous Christians began reclaiming their faith in powerful new expressions of worship.

### **Today**

Today, Christianity remains Canada's largest religion. According to 2021 census data, Christians comprised 53.3% of Canada's population, compared with nearly 90% in the 1970s. The largest Christian denomination in 2021 was the Catholic Church, at about 29.9% of the population. Other denominations or non-denominationalists make up the remaining more than 23% of the population.

A report by Cardus, "The Hidden Economy: How Faith Helps Fuel Canada's GDP" (2020), estimates that religion's annual contribution to Canadian society (including economic, social-service, educational, and health-care activity) is more than CAD \$67 billion annually. The value is even greater considering services like shelters, food and clothing programs, counseling and more – that government might otherwise provide at taxpayer expense.

**Learn more at [FullGospelRegina.ca/CHM](http://FullGospelRegina.ca/CHM)**

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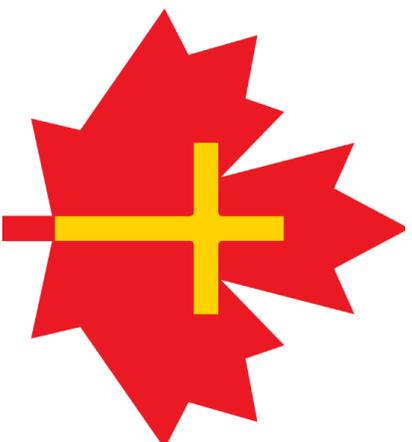
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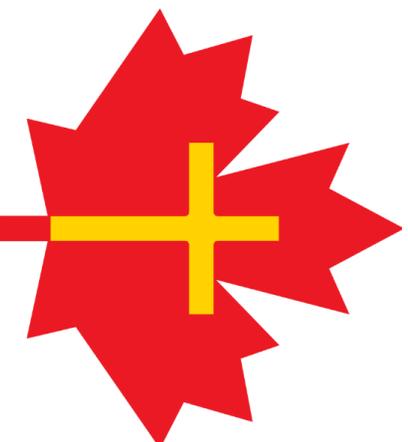
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