

# Census 2021: Chinese Canadian Population and its Religiosity



加拿大華人神學院 卡加里  
Canadian Chinese School of Theology Calgary

**Author: Enoch Wong**

Design: Daniel Hung

Publisher: Centre for Leadership Study, Canadian Chinese School of Theology, Calgary

Distributor: Centre for Leadership Study, Canadian Chinese School of Theology, Calgary

Publication Date: TBD

Edition: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition

Website: [ccstcal.ca/ccst/centre-for-leadership-studies](http://ccstcal.ca/ccst/centre-for-leadership-studies)

ISDN: 978-1-9994485-7-8

Copy Right: @2025 Enoch Wong

## Table of Figures

Figure 1. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Generation Status.....	10
Figure 2. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Province .....	12
Figure 3. Chinese Population 2001-2021 .....	14
Figure 4. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021 .....	16
Figure 5. Religious Affiliation 2011 vs. 2021 .....	19
Figure 6. Religious “Nones” 1991, 2001, 2011 & 2021 .....	20
Figure 7. Chinese Canadians Religious Affiliation .....	22
Figure 8. Chinese Canadian Religious “Nones” and Christians: 1931 - 2021 .....	24
Figure 9. 2021 Census and Chinese Denominations .....	26
Figure 10. Census 2011 vs. 2021: Chinese Denominations.....	28
Figure 11. Question 30: What is the person's religion? .....	29
Figure 12. Question 30: What is the person's religion? (Explanation) .....	29
Figure 13. <a href="http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-2">www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-2</a> .....	30
Figure 14. Partial Selection of the Denomination .....	30
Figure 15. Breakdown Between Chinese Mainliners and Evangelicals .....	31
Figure 16. Chinese Christian Immigrants: Place of Birth .....	35
Figure 17. Chinese Immigrants Place of Birth: 2021 vs. 2011 .....	36
Figure 18. Chinese Christian 1st Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival – Trends .....	38
Figure 19. Chinese Christian 1st Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival – Totals	38
Figure 20. Census 2021 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)	40
Figure 21. Second and Third Generation (2021 vs. 2011) .....	42
Figure 22. Census 2011 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)	44
Figure 23. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor by Place of Origin, 2022-2024.....	48

## Table of Tables

Table 1. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Generation Status.....	11
Table 2. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Province .....	13
Table 3. Chinese Population 2001-2021 .....	14
Table 4. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021 (MM) .....	15
Table 5. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021.....	17
Table 6. Religious Affiliation 2011 vs. 2021 .....	19
Table 7. Religious “Nones” 1991, 2001, 2011 & 2021.....	20
Table 8. Chinese Religious Affiliation .....	22
Table 9. Chinese Canadian Religious “Nones”: 1971- 2021 .....	24
Table 10. Chinese Canadian Christians: 1931- 2021 .....	25
Table 11. Chinese Christianity Affiliation.....	27
Table 12. Census 2011 vs. 2021: Chinese Denominations.....	28
Table 13. Breakdown Between Chinese Mainliners and Evangelicals.....	31
Table 14. Protestant Chinese by City (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant .	32
Table 15. Protestant Chinese by Province (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant .....	34
Table 16. Protestant Chinese by City (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant .	34
Table 17. Chinese Christian Immigrants: Place of Birth.....	35
Table 18. Chinese Immigrants Place of Birth: 2021 vs. 2011 .....	36
Table 19. Chinese Christian 1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival.....	39
Table 20. Census 2021 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation).	41
Table 21. Second and Third Generation (2021 vs. 2011) .....	42
Table 22. 2011 and 2021 Second Generation Comparison .....	43
Table 23. Census 2011 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation).	45
Table 24. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2022	49
Table 25. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2023	49
Table 26. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2024	49

## About the Author



Dr. Enoch Wong is the Director of Centre for Leadership Studies at Canadian Chinese School of Theology Calgary, and a licensed minister with The Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada. He is passionate in fostering the younger generation and nurturing leaders in Asian diaspora churches in North America through teaching, preaching, and mentoring. Dr. Wong's books include: *How Am I Going to Grow Up?* and *Listening to Their Voices* (both on the faith journeys of Canadian-born Chinese Christians); *General Survey of the Chinese Churches in Canada* (2019); and *Voices of Pastors* (on the wellbeing and leadership ministry of pastors at the Chinese Canadian churches). He is currently completing a study on examining the journeys of North American-born Chinese full-time missionaries from their call to the mission field as well as an analysis on the 2021 Census and the Chinese Canadian population and religious affiliation.

# Preface

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the Chinese population in Canada and its religious affiliation based on data collected in Census 2021. Such data became available from Statistics Canada in January 2023. Though many relevant data in such area of investigation are readily available from the open portal of Statistic Canada, specific data set required for this detailed analysis needed to be obtained from Statistic Canada for a cost. To that end, the following organizations contributed partially to the funding for such a purchase and my gratitude goes to:

- Eastern District of Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada;
- Canadian Pacific District of Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada;
- Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches Association.

In addition, supplemental data from 2022 to 2024 are also analysis based on the Monthly IRCC Updates Open Portal.

Further to the funding organizations, analysis of the data and publication of the report could not have been accomplished without the generous assistance of the following individuals and I want to thank:

- Thomas Chu for processing the data to enable meaningful analysis of the census data
- Daniel Hung for designing and creating the report with tables and graphs.

They have provided not only their professional skills in making the report happen, but their serving attitude in Christ has made our efforts together to make the report now ready for your study a pleasant experience. That said, any errors in the analysis and presentation in this report is the sole responsibility of the author alone.

May this report provide a framework for the Chinese Christian communities in Canada to understand the migration trends of Chinese diaspora in Canada and how the churches can respond to their needs in a holistic manner.

**Enoch Wong**

Director, Centre for Leadership Studies  
Associate Professor, Practical Theology  
Canadian Chinese School of Theology – Calgary

# Introduction

According to Statistics Canada, “the origins and religions of the population have been measured by the Canadian census since 1871.”<sup>1</sup> While national census data was collected once a decade since then, effective 1951 census data began to be collected every five years. However, questions about religious affiliation continued to be queried only once every decade. “For example, Canadians were asked about their religious affiliation in the 2001, 2011, and 2021 censuses, but not in 2006 or 2016.”<sup>2</sup> Consequently, data from 2021 Census captures the most up-to-date snapshot of the landscape of religious affiliation of Canadians. While such data for the Canadians and ethnocultural diversity are available readily from Statistics Canada open portal, specific data relative to their status such as immigrants vs. non-immigrants, period of arrival for immigrants and age against geographical regions such as provinces, cities (census metropolitan areas) are not. Hence, a customized dataset on the religious affiliation relative to Visible Minority/Immigrant Status and Period of Immigrations/Generation Status, Age, Place of Birth, Religion, Gender as distributed across Provinces, Territories and Selected Census Metropolitan Areas was purchased from Statistics Canada in February 2023 for analysis.<sup>3</sup>

This set of data is then examined against another set of data on the same parameters for the Canadian National Household Survey 2011 (purchased in 2013)<sup>4</sup> for compare-and-contrast purposes in order to identify changes of religious affiliation for the Chinese in Canada specifically over the decade that both Census covered. The analysis is further augmented and enriched by data obtained from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada’s (IRCC) open portal from 2022 to 2024 to explore the migration trends specifically related to diaspora Chinese with Canada as their country of destination for their migration journey. As will be seen later in this report, the analysis portrays a landscape dotted with a variety of highlights on the religiosity of Chinese Canadian, particularly those of Christian

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (Canada 2022-10-26) *The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity*, 2022-10-26. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on February 20, 2024 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Kalbach, Warren E., James-Abra, Erin, Edmonston, Barry, Canadian Census Published Online. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Retrieved on February 20, 2024, from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/demographic-data-collection>.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. Contract EO3590 - Visible Minority/Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration/Generation Status (156), Age group (9), Place of Birth (6), Religion (148), and Gender (3) for Persons in Private households in occupied private dwellings of Canada, Provinces, 2023). Purchased from Statistics Canada Feb 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. Contract EO2062 - Visible Minority/Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration/Generation Status and Age groups (97), Country of Birth (5), Selected Religions (15), and Sex (3), for Persons in private households of Canada, Provinces, Territories, and Selected 2013). Purchase from Statistics Canada Feb 2013.

faith. This report provides the salient findings of such analysis with key implications identified for further research and ministerial practices. In summary, the findings/observations are:

1. Chinese population in Canada continues to rise, albeit at a lower rate over the last 5 years.
2. Chinese population in Canada projection forecast made in 2021 is higher than the one made in 2011
3. Overall Canadian Christian affiliation has declined from 2011 to 2021, while Religious “Nones,” those who registered themselves with no religious affiliation, continue on the rise
4. Chinese in Canada has recorded a higher number of registrations with Christian faith in 2021 than 2011, though its percentage of the overall Chinese population has declined. However, similar to their Canadian counterpart, Chinese Religious “Nones” in Canada continue to be on the rise.
5. The breakdown of Christian denomination is problematic based on a design bias for selection that presents difficulty in navigation of the Censuses survey.
6. ~98% of Chinese Canadians and Chinese Canadian Protestants reside in 5 provinces; and ~94% of them residing in 7 census metropolitan areas (CMA), while 42.2% of Chinese immigrant believers are from China with 34.6% from Hong Kong.
7. 91% of 1st Gen Hong Kong Chinese immigrant Christians emigrated to Canada prior to 2000, while 57.3% of Mainland Chinese immigrant Christians emigrated during the two decades of 2001 to 2021. However, 25.8 % of the latter cohort moved to Canada in the decade of 1991-2000.
8. Local-born as a cohort has increased in number, only because of the addition of the 0-15 cohort, but aged with many having kept their faith and growing within age bracket



# Census 2021: Chinese Canadian Population and its Religiosity

## Part 1 – Findings



## Finding 1

### Chinese population in Canada continues to rise, albeit at a lower rate over the last 5 years.

According to the 2021 Census, there are 1,715,775 Chinese people residing in Canada in 2021, according to the visible minority grouping concept, representing 4.7% of the total population. Together with South Asians (2.6 million people; 7.1%) and Black people (1.5 million; 4.3%), these three racialized groups represented 16.1% of Canada's total population in 2021, with each group's population topping 1 million.

From the perspective of generation status, the population of 1,715,775 Chinese comprises 1,228,970 (or 71.6%) first generation immigrants and non-permanent residents, including 1,088,535 first generation immigrants; 427,135 (or 24.9%) second generation non-immigrants; and 59,665 (or 3.5) of third or more generation (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

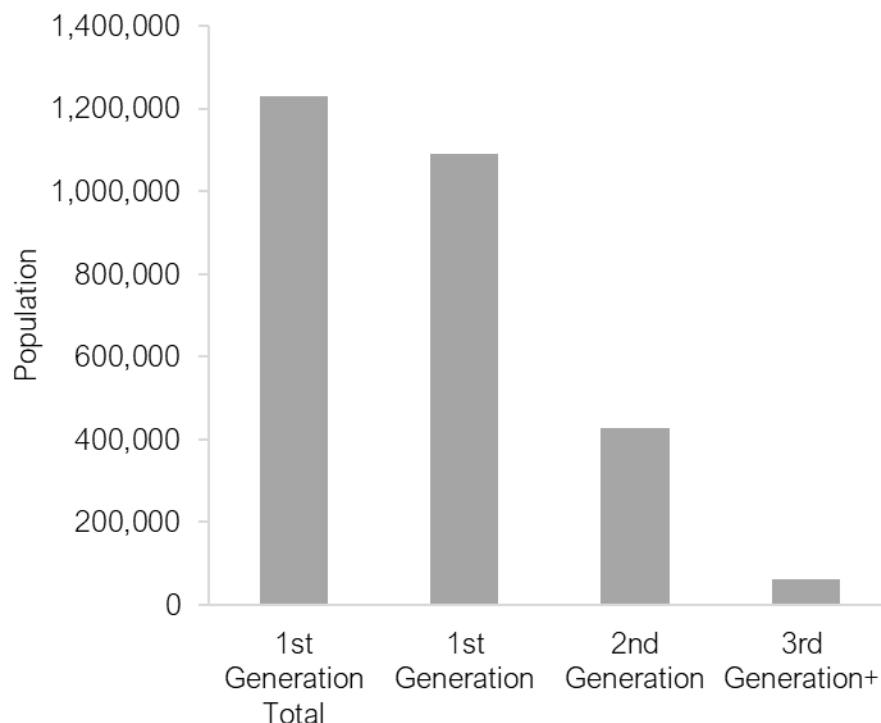


Figure 1. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Generation Status

*Table 1. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Generation Status*

<b>Total<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1,715,775</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
First Generation - Total Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration <sup>6</sup>	1,228,970	71.6%
First Generation <sup>7</sup>	1,088,535	63.4%
Second Generation	427,135	24.9%
Third Generation or More	59,665	3.5%

As for the provinces where they are situated, according to Census 2021, almost half of the Chinese are located in Ontario (820,245, 47.8%) and almost one-third in British Columbia (550,590, 32%), representing ~80% of the Chinese population in Canada. Alberta (164,230, 9.6%) and Quebec (115, 235, 6.7%) are the distant third and forth provinces the Chinese reside in (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

---

<sup>5</sup> Total is the sum of First Generation – total immigrant status, Second Generation and Third Generation or more.

<sup>6</sup> Total – Immigrant status and period of immigration: “Immigrant status refers to whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant, or a non-permanent resident.” Religion by immigration status and period of immigration and place of birth: Canada, provinces and territories  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810034301>

<sup>7</sup> See EO3590

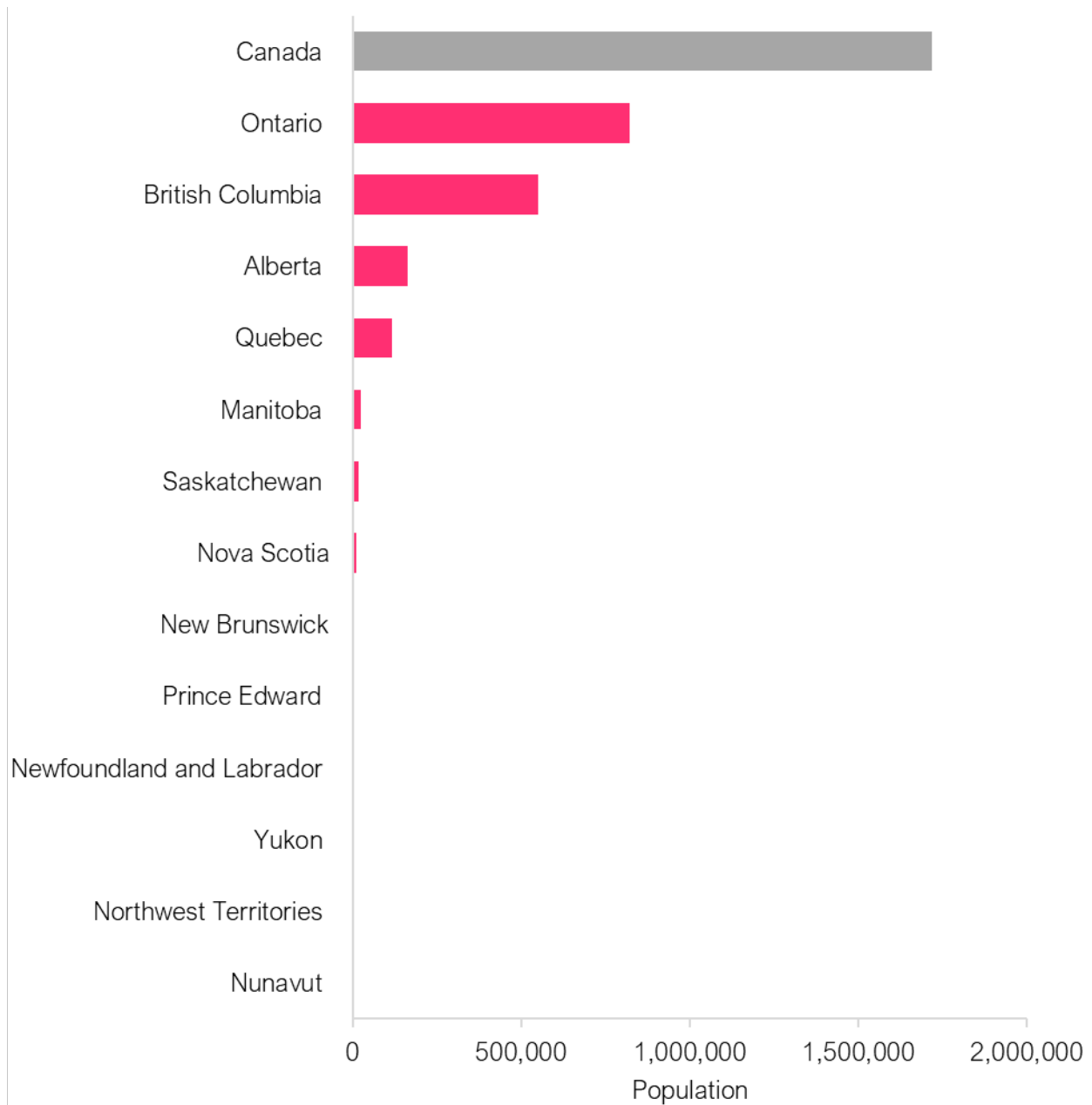


Figure 2. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Province

*Table 2. Chinese Population in Canada: Census 2021 – Province<sup>8</sup>*

Province	Chinese
Canada	1,715,775
Ontario	820,245
British Columbia	550,590
Alberta	164,230
Quebec	115,235
Manitoba	25,395
Saskatchewan	18,005
Nova Scotia	11,595
New Brunswick	4,090
Prince Edward	3,340
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,000
Yukon	645
Northwest Territories	335
Nunavut	65

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810035101>

Looking back to the last two decades, the Chinese population has been on the rise, though not in a linear manner. The population in 2021 does go up in the last 5 years, albeit in a slower pace compared to the rate of increase between 2011 to 2016 (see Figure 3 and Table 3).

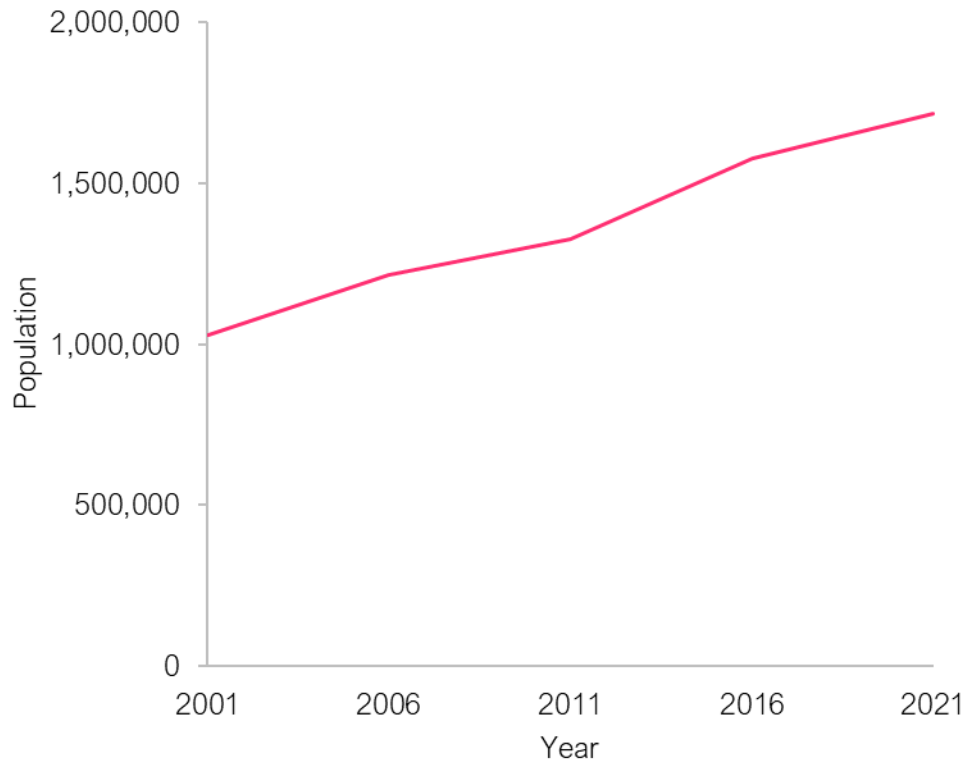


Figure 3. Chinese Population 2001-2021

Table 3. Chinese Population 2001-2021

Year	Population	% Increase (over 5 years)
2001	1,029,400	N/A
2006	1,216,600	18%
2011	1,324,745	4%
2016	1,577,060	19%
2021	1,715,775	9%

## Finding 2

### Chinese population in Canada projection forecast made in 2021 is higher than the one made in 2011.

Looking forward, Chinese population projection suggested in 2021 appears to be higher than the one reported a decade ago in 2011. For example, Chinese population in 2036 was forecasted to be at 2.451 MM<sup>9</sup> in 2011 but revised higher to be 2.85 MM<sup>10</sup> in 2021 (see Table 4). However, the projection is even higher for 2041 with 3.082MM,<sup>11</sup> fueled by the growth of second generation and arrival of first-generation immigrants (see Figure 4 and Table 5).

*Table 4. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021 (MM)*

2036 (in MM)			
Forecasted in	S1 (Reference)	S2 (Low Immigration)	S3 (High Immigration)
2011	2,451	2,126	2,625
2021	2,850	2,637	2,951

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. (Statistics Retrieved on May 31, 2024)Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on May 31, 2024, from [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-551-x/2017001/tbl/tbl\\_05-eng.htm](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-551-x/2017001/tbl/tbl_05-eng.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada. (Statistics, Population projections on immigration and diversity: Interactive Dashboard Retrieved May 31, 2024). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on May 31, 2024, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2022012-eng.htm>

<sup>11</sup> See Population projections on immigration and diversity: Interactive Dashboard.

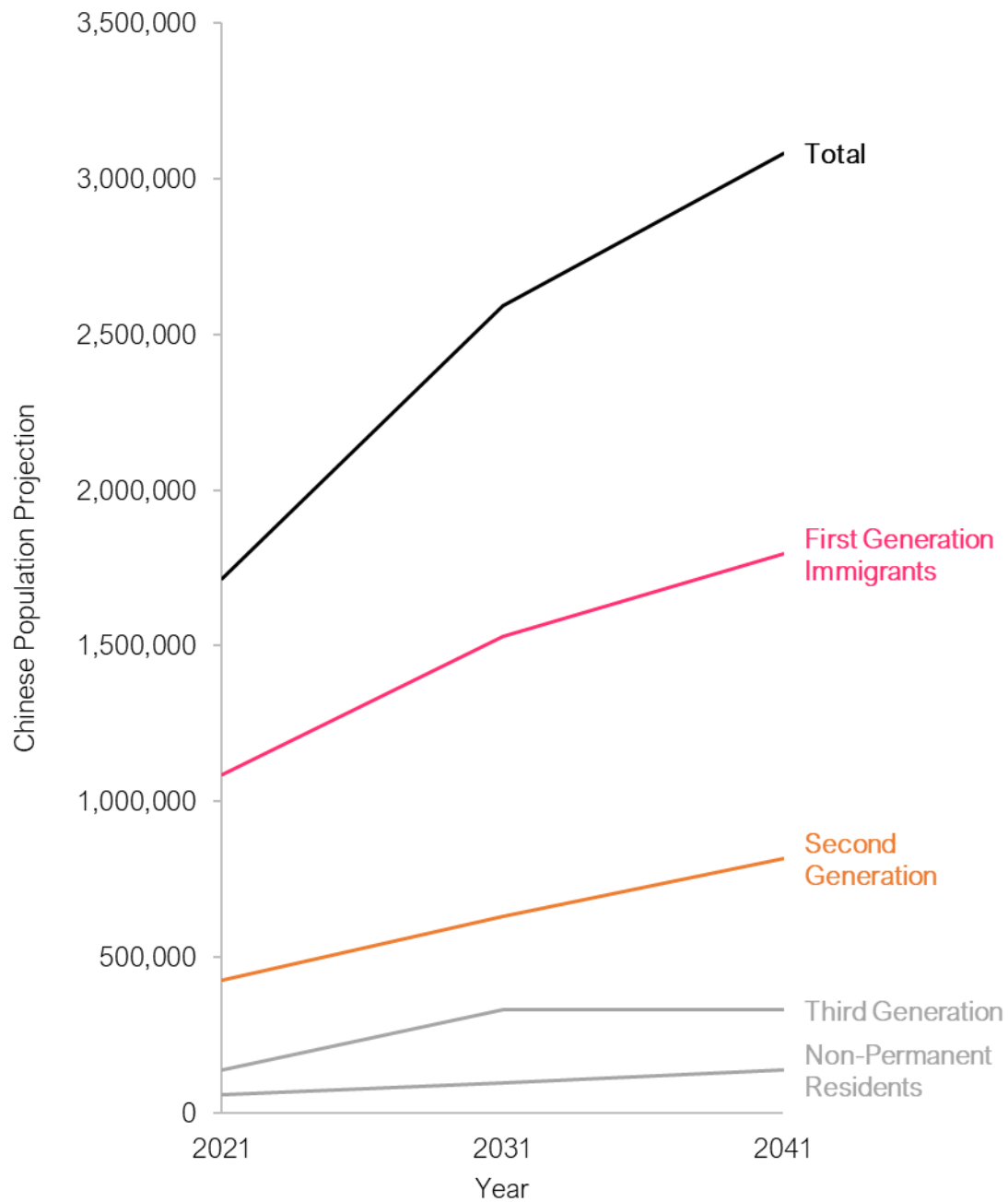


Figure 4. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021



*Table 5. Chinese Population in Canada: Projection – 2011 vs. 2021*

Chinese Population Projection	2021	2031	2041
Total	1,715,775	2,591,000	3,082,000
First Generation Immigrants	1,088,535	1,529,000	1,796,000
Second Generation	427,135	633,000	816,000
Third Generation	59,665	98,000	139,000
Non-Permanent Residents	140,440	331,000	331,000

## Finding 3

Overall Canadian Christian affiliation has declined from 2011 to 2021, while Religious “Nones,” those who registered themselves with no religious affiliation, continue on the rise, and so are the Muslims.

Looking at the overall religiosity of Canadians, Census 2021 reports that 19,274,805 (or 53.06% of the total population)<sup>12</sup> Canadians identify themselves as Christians, dropping from 22,102,745 (or 67.28% of the total population)<sup>13</sup> reported in 2011, and 22,846,270 in 2001<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, Muslim population in Canada rises from 1,053,945 (3.21%)<sup>15</sup> in 2011 to 1,775,715 (4.89%)<sup>16</sup> in 2021 (see Figure 5 and Table 6). However, Muslim’s increase is dwarfed in comparison with the rising of the “Religious Nones,” those who register themselves to have no religion or with any religion on a secular perspective, with 12,577,475 (or 34.62%)<sup>17</sup> in 2021 compared to 7,850,610 (23.9%)<sup>18</sup> registered in 2011, extending an upward trend compared to 3 decades ago in Census 2001, which reported ~4,800,000 (or ~16.5%)<sup>19</sup> registering no religious affiliation, and ~3,300,000<sup>20</sup> (or ~12.1%)<sup>21</sup> in 1991 (see Figure 6 and Table 7).

---

<sup>12</sup> See EO3590

<sup>13</sup> See EO2062

<sup>14</sup> See Beyer, Peter. (Beyer 2008) (Statistics, The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity Retrieved May 31, 2024) (Statistics, 2001 Census: Analysis series Religion in Canada Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001015 Retrieve May 31, 2024) (Statistics, 1991 Census Highlights Catalogue 96-304E Retrieve May 31, 2024) (Peter 2024) In Bramadat, Paul & Seljak, David (Ed.) *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*. ON: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Pp. 437- 440.

<sup>15</sup> See EO2062

<sup>16</sup> See EO3590

<sup>17</sup> See EO3590

<sup>18</sup> See EO2062

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. *The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity*. P. 13. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on May 31, 2024, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.pdf?st=u6BcTd-r>

<sup>20</sup> See Statistics Canada. *2001 Census: analysis series Religions in Canada Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001015* p.9. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on May 31, 2024, from <https://publications.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/96F0030X/96F0030XIE2001015.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Census 1991 reports a Canadian population of 27,296,859. See Statistics Canada. *1991 Census Highlights Catalogue 96-304E*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved on May 31, 2024, from [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf)

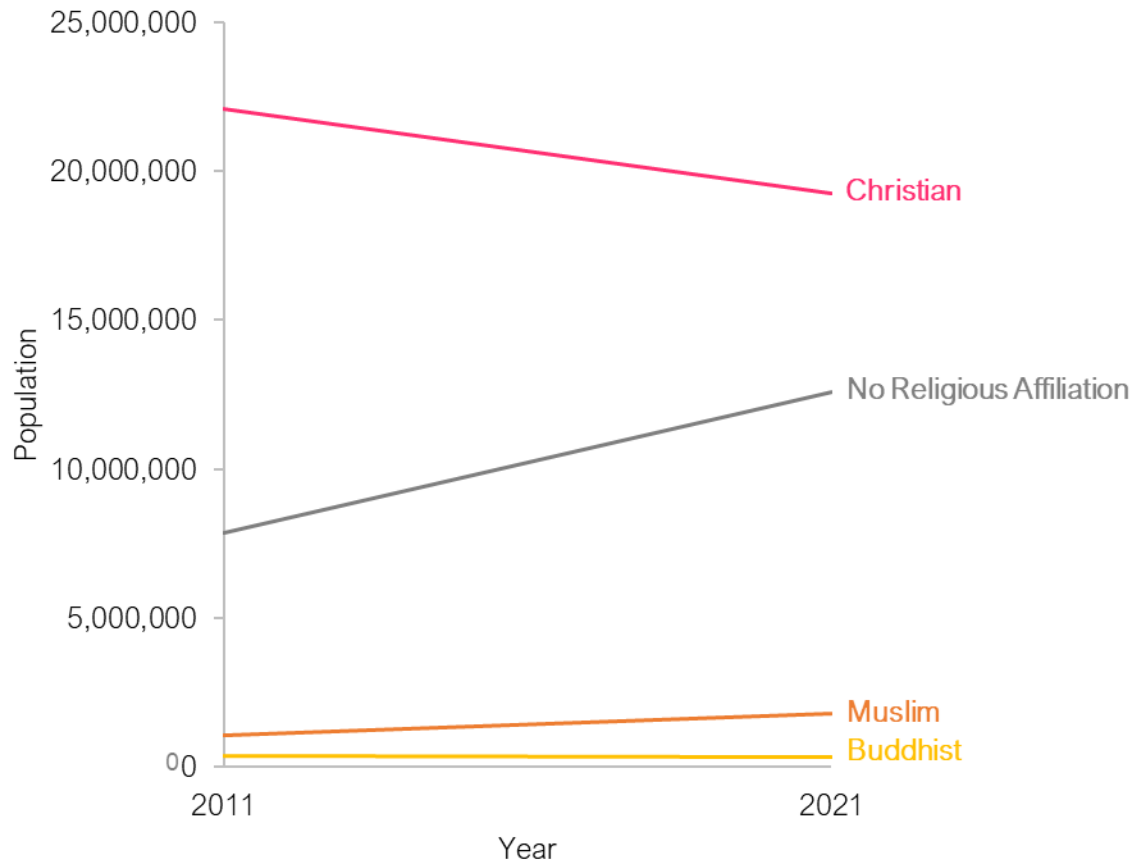


Figure 5. Religious Affiliation 2011 vs. 2021

Table 6. Religious Affiliation 2011 vs. 2021

	2011*	2021*	2011%	2021%
Christian	22,102,745	19,274,805	67.28%	53.06%
No Religious Affiliation	7,850,610	12,577,475	23.90%	34.62%
Muslim	1,053,945	1,775,715	3.21%	4.89%
Buddhist	366,830	356,975	1.12%	0.98%
Total Population	32,852,325	36,328,475	100.00%	100.00%

\*Hindus and Sikhs not included in the breakdown

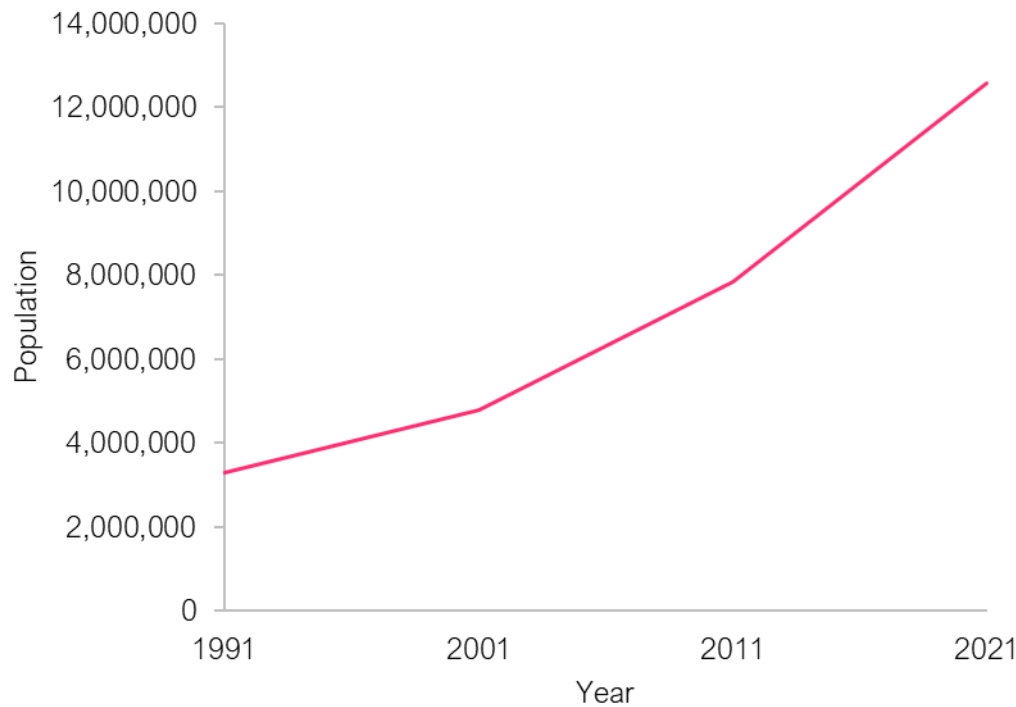


Figure 6. Religious "Nones" 1991, 2001, 2011 & 2021

Table 7. Religious "Nones" 1991, 2001, 2011 & 2021<sup>22</sup>

No Religious Affiliation	1991	2001	2011	2021
# of Registration	~3,300,000	~4,800,000	7,850,610	12,577,475
% of Population	~12.1%	16.5%	23.9%	34.6%

As for the driver that fuels the rise of the religious "Nones" in Canada, Statistics Canada speculates that the "main reason for the growth in the population with no religious affiliation is likely related to the fact that many people who reported a religious affiliation in the past now report no religious affiliation. The decline in religious affiliation is consistent with other findings that fewer people reported the importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in their lives, down from 71.0% in 2003 to 54.1% in 2019."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <https://publications.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/96F0030X/96F0030XIE2001015.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> See The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity. P. 13

## Finding 4

Chinese in Canada has recorded a higher number of registrations with Christian faith in 2021 than 2011, though its percentage of the overall Chinese population has declined over the last decade. However, similar to their Canadian counterpart, Chinese Religious “Nones” in Canada continue to be on the rise.

When it comes to religiosity among Chinese Canadians, the Census 2021 reports that of the population of 1,717,775, 347,200 (or 20.24%) identifies themselves as Christian, with 122,975 (or 7.17%) being Buddhist and 2,020 (0.12%) Muslim. However, Religious “Nones” amounts to 1,230,525 (or 71.71%) (see Figure 7 and Table 8).<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> See EO3590

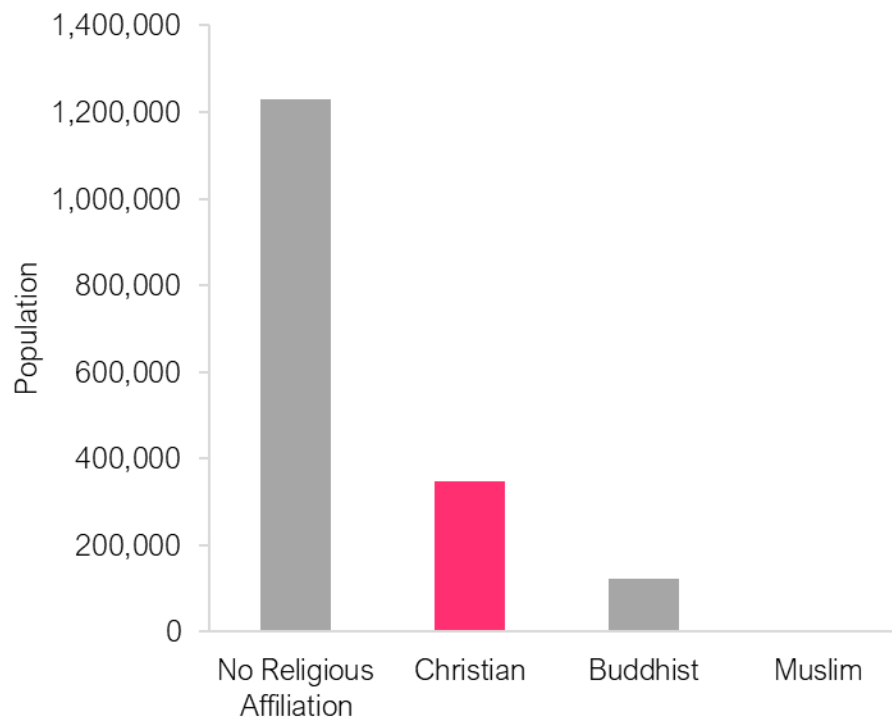


Figure 7. Chinese Canadians Religious Affiliation

Table 8. Chinese Religious Affiliation

	2021	%
No Religious Affiliation	1,230,525	71.71%
Christian	347,200	20.24%
Buddhist	122,975	7.17%
Muslim	2,020	0.12%
Total	1,715,775	100.00%

In fact, the Religious “Nones” in the Chinese population has been rising since 1971, as can be seen in see Figure 8, steadying around mid 50% from 1971-2001,<sup>25</sup> but rising to 65%<sup>26</sup> and 71.71%<sup>27</sup> in 2011 and 2021 respectively (see Figure 8 and Table 9). In contrast, the percentage of Christian community in the Chinese population has been on the decline though the actual numbers have been on the rise, except for the decade between 2001 and 2011, reflecting the reality that the Chinese population has been rising in a higher pace than the Chinese Christians in Canada over the last five decades.

However, looking further back to a century, similar growth pattern can be detected. As Chinese Christians in Canada was on the rise from 1931 to 1941, their population rose as high as 54.9% of the overall Chinese population in part due to the lasting effect of the Chinese Exclusionary Acts<sup>28</sup> that thwarted the new arrival of Chinese immigrants, but equally important was the anti-assimilation sentiment of mainstream Caucasian Canada (e.g., Chinese people being labelled as the “Yellow Peril,”<sup>29</sup> which saw the local-born not being able to easily incorporated into the mainstream society, resulting in the rising of the local born population in the Chinese Christian communities in Canada. For example, of the 31,950 Chinese Christians in 1961, 40% of them are local born.<sup>30</sup> The rising growth trend of the Chinese Christians was bucked in 1971, not because the actual numbers had decreased (57,817 Chinese Christians in 1971 vs, 31, 950 in 1961),<sup>31</sup> but rather due to the changing immigration policy in 1967 which replaced the a long-held intake system that aimed at privileging applicants based on their country of origin that had favoured mostly Caucasian Europeans with the new policy that championed a universal point system that assessed, among other things, applicants’ education and training, adaptability, occupational demands and skill, age, and employment opportunities in the area of destination. This shift threw the door wide open for the Chinese, both from the diaspora and from China to emigrate.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the Chinese population grew from 58,197 in 1961 to 124,600 in 1971 (see Table 10). Since then, though the actual numbers of

---

<sup>25</sup> Li, Eva Xiaoling & Li, Peter S. “Religious affiliation and propensity to Christianity of Chinese in Canada” in Tan, Chee-Beng (Ed.) *After migration and religious affiliation: Religion, Chinese identities and transnational networks* (pp. 169-183), Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> See EO2062

<sup>27</sup> See EO3590

<sup>28</sup> See Li, P. S. “Chinese Immigrants on the Canadian Prairie, 1910-47.” *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (1982): 527-540, and Roy, P. E. *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 18 (Roy 1989) (Wang 2006)58-1914.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Wang, J. “His Dominion” and the “Yellow Peril.” *Protestant Missions to Chinese Immigrants in Canada 1959-1967.* Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Wong, Enoch; Tam, Jonathan; Hung, Kwing; Tsui, Tommy; Wong, Wes. (Enoch Wong 2019) (Wong 2021) Toronto: CCCOWE Canada, 2019), 8.

<sup>31</sup> For data from 1971-2001, see Li, Eva Xiaoling & Li, Peter S. “Religious affiliation and propensity to Christianity of Chinese in Canada.

<sup>32</sup> Wong, Enoch. *How Am I Going to Grow Up?* Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs, 2021, 40.

Chinese Christians have increased, except for 2011, their percentage of the overall Chinese population has decreased as indicated before.

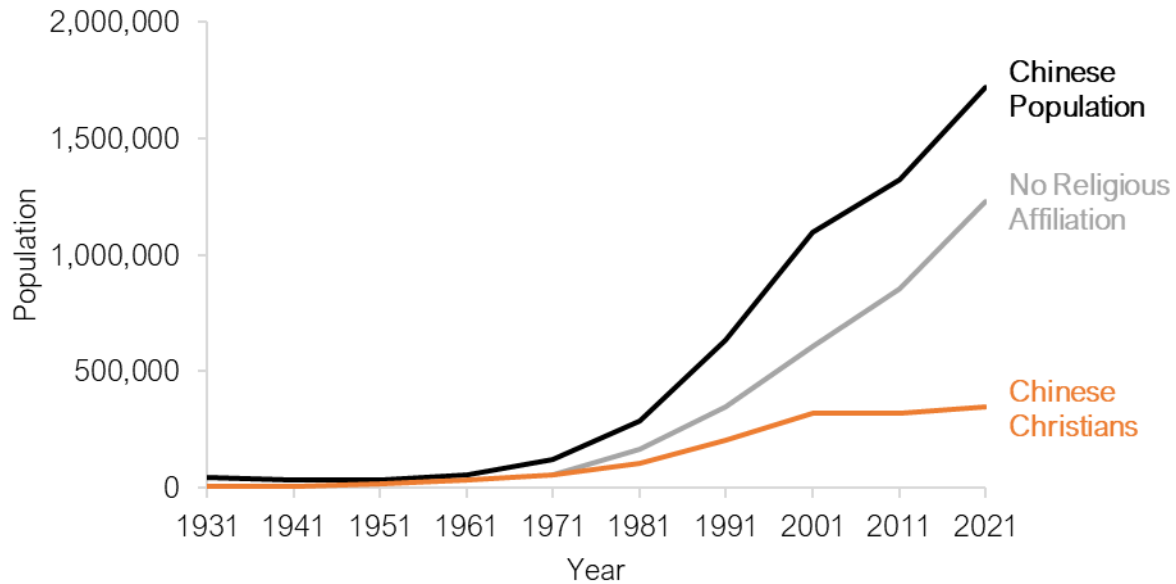


Figure 8. Chinese Canadian Religious "Nones" and Christians: 1931 - 2021

Table 9. Chinese Canadian Religious "Nones": 1971- 2021

Year	Chinese	No Religious Affiliation	%
1971 <sup>33</sup>	124,600	54,450	43.70%
1981	285,800	164,050	57.40%
1991	633,931	350,564	55.30%
2001	1,094,638	608,619	55.60%
2011 <sup>34</sup>	1,324,745	852,740	65.00%
2021	1,715,775	1,230,525	71.71%

<sup>33</sup> For 1971 to 2001's data, see Li, Eva Xiaoling & Li, Peter A (2014) "Religious affiliation and propensity to Christianity of Chinese in Canada" in Tan, Chee-Beng (Ed.) *After migration and religious affiliation: Religion, Chinese identifies and transnational networks* (pp. 159-183), Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co.

<sup>34</sup> For 2011 and 2021's data, see EO2062 and EO3590



Table 10. Chinese Canadian Christians: 1931- 2021

Year	Chinese Population	Chinese Christians	%
1931 <sup>35</sup>	46,519	8,354	18.0%
1941	34,627	9,841	28.4%
1951	32,528	16,231	49.9%
1961	58,197	31,950	54.9%
1971 <sup>36</sup>	124,600	57,815	46.4%
1981	285,800	104,603	36.6%
1991	633,931	205,394	32.4%
2001	1,094,638	319,635	29.2%
2011 <sup>37</sup>	1,324,745	318,935	24.1%
2021	1,715,775	347,200	20.2%

---

<sup>35</sup> For 1931 to 1961's data, see Enoch Wong, *Listening to their Voices*, Table 1:1 Chinese Population in Canada. Local-born, and Chinese Christian in Canada.

<sup>36</sup> See Note 33.

<sup>37</sup> For 2011 to 2021's data, see E02062 and E03590

## Finding 5

The breakdown of Christian denomination is problematic based on a design bias for selection that presents difficulty in navigation of the Census survey.

Taking a deeper dive into the denominational association of the Chinese Christians in Canada, the 2021 Census data presents different nuances their faith affiliation, as it registers a much lesser Evangelicals and Mainlines<sup>38</sup> at the expense of the Christian n.o.s.: 57,030 versus 158,525 (see Figure 9 and Table 11), whereas the numbers of Evangelicals and Mainlines in 2011 are 184,965<sup>39</sup> (see Figure 10 and Table 12).

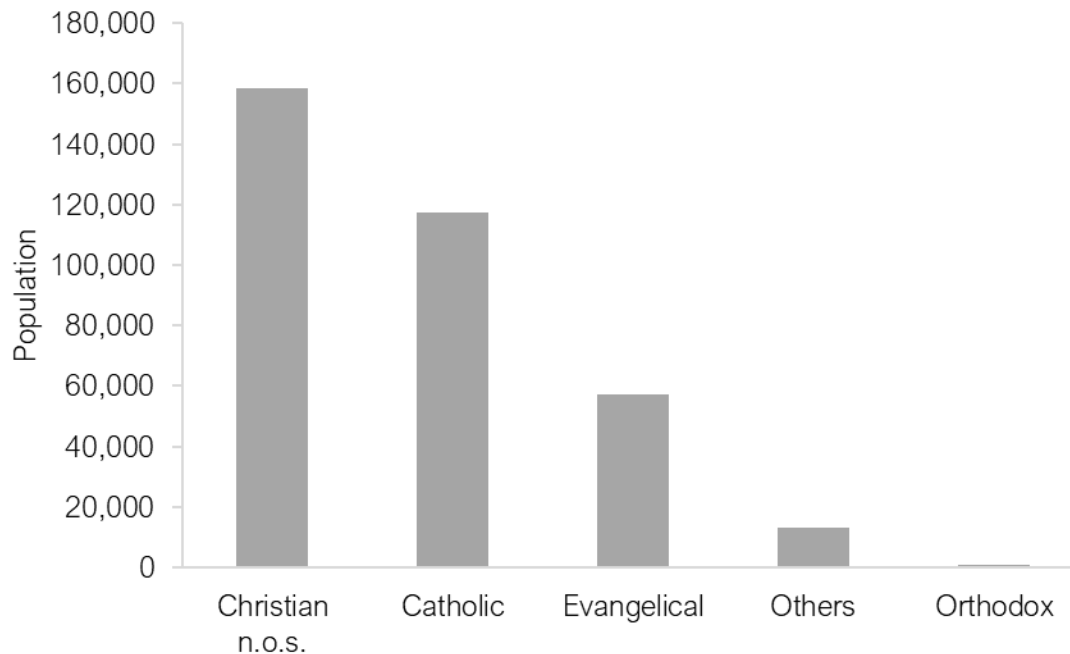


Figure 9. 2021 Census and Chinese Denominations

---

<sup>38</sup> An assumption is made that members of Anglican, United, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Mennonite are of Evangelical conviction. See Guenther, Bruce. L. "Ethnicity and Evangelical Protestants in Canada." In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, edited by P. Bramadat and D. Seljak, 365-414. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). For Evangelical grouping, see Beyer, Peter. "Appendix: The Demographics of Christianity in Canada."

<sup>39</sup> See E03590

*Table 11. Chinese Christianity Affiliation*

	2021	%
Total	347,200	100.0%
Catholic	117,390	33.8%
Orthodox	880	0.3%
Others	13,350	3.9%
Evangelical <sup>40</sup>	57,030	16.4%
Christian n.o.s.	158,525	45.7%

---

<sup>40</sup> See Note 38.

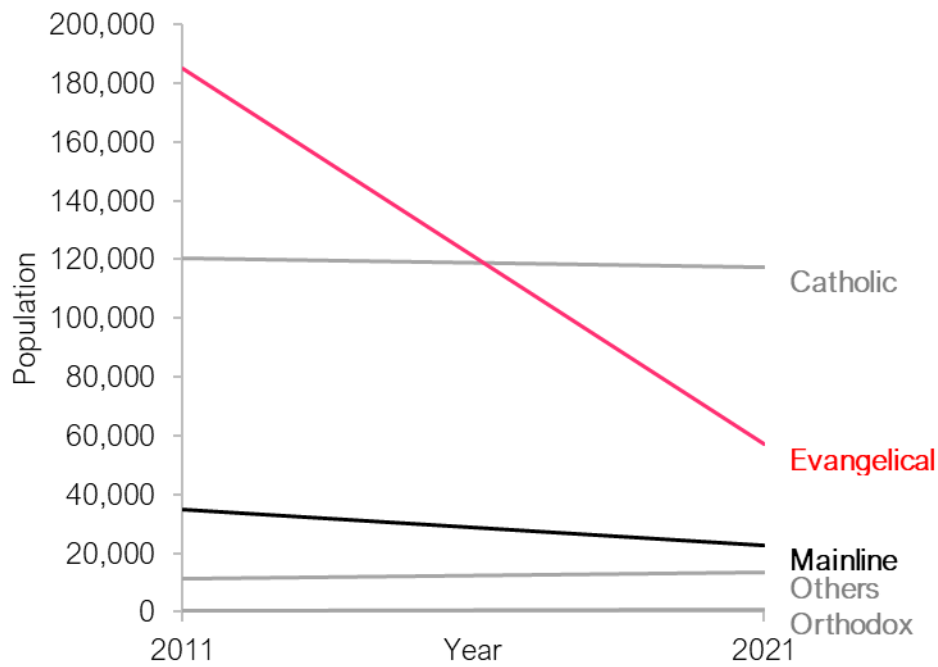


Figure 10. Census 2011 vs. 2021: Chinese Denominations

Table 12. Census 2011 vs. 2021: Chinese Denominations

	2011	2021	2011%	2021%
Total	318,935	347,200	100.0%	100.0%
Catholic	120,260	117,390	37.7%	33.8%
Orthodox	575	880	0.2%	0.3%
Others	11,130	13,350	3.5%	3.8%
Mainline <sup>41</sup>	34,920	22,640	10.9%	6.5%
Evangelical <sup>42</sup>	184,965	57,030	58.0%	16.4%
Christian n.o.s.	N/A	158,525	N/A	45.7%

<sup>41</sup> An assumption is made that members of Chinese Anglican, United, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Mennonite are of Evangelical conviction, since many of the Chinese Mainline ministers received evangelical training. See Guenther, *Ethnicity and Evangelical Protestants in Canada*, in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, (2008). For definition of evangelical, see Peter Beyer (Appendix, *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, 2008)

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

This can perhaps be explained by the designed bias of the questionnaire when it comes to the section of selecting one's denomination, the question is presented as follows (see Figure 11 and Figure 12):

**30 What is this person's religion?**

Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practising member of that group.

For example, Roman Catholic, United Church, Anglican, Muslim, Baptist, Hindu, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, etc.

For additional examples of denominations and religions, visit [www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e)

**Specify one denomination or religion only.**

**OR**

☐ No religion

Figure 11. Question 30: What is the person's religion?

**30. What is this person's religion?**

Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practising member of that group.

For example, Roman Catholic, United Church, Anglican, Muslim, Baptist, Hindu, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, etc.

For additional examples of denominations and religions, visit [www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e)

- Specify one denomination or religion only.
- **or**
  - No religion

Figure 12. Question 30: What is the person's religion? (Explanation)

When they follow the instructions to go to [www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-e), the respondents will immediately see the following:

### **Christianity**

- Christian
- Anabaptist

*Figure 13. [www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-2](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/religion-2)*

Only after the respondent has scrolled down to more than 100 entries will he/she come to see the evangelical denominations such as Christian and Missionary Alliance if the respondent happens to be part of that cohort (see Figure 14).

- United Church
- Other Christian and Christian-related traditions
  - Associated Gospel Churches
  - Association chrétienne pour la francophonie (ACF)
  - Brethren
  - Calvinist
  - Christadelphian
  - Christian and Missionary Alliance

*Figure 14. Partial Selection of the Denomination*

Respondents are likely to select something that is easier to find at the top of the selection than going down to the list of more than a 100 selection of selection theirs. Thus, the number of Christian n.o.s. tends to be very high as it is situated right at the beginning of the selection (see Figure 14).

To further differentiate the Mainlines and Evangelicals, here are the breakdown (see Figure 15 and Table 13).<sup>43</sup>

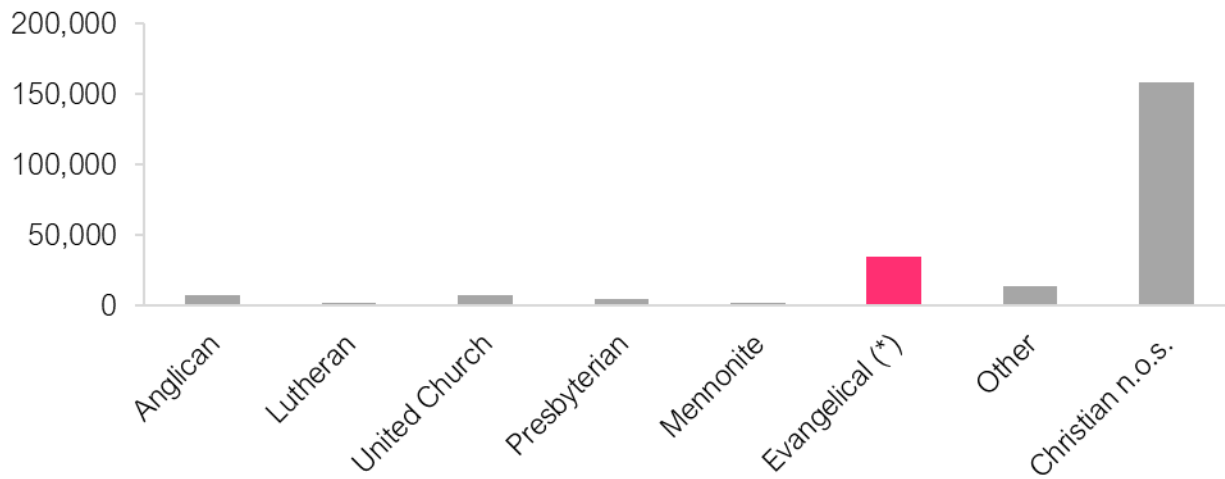


Figure 15. Breakdown Between Chinese Mainliners and Evangelicals

Table 13. Breakdown Between Chinese Mainliners and Evangelicals

	2021	%
Total Protestant	228,845	100.0%
Anglican	6,950	3.1%
Lutheran	2,220	1.0%
United Church	7,505	3.3%
Presbyterian	4,460	2.0%
Mennonite	1,505	0.7%
<b>Evangelical<sup>44</sup></b>	<b>34,390</b>	<b>15.2%</b>
Other	13,290	4.6%
Christian n.o.s.	158,525	69.9%

<sup>43</sup> See E03590

<sup>44</sup> For definition of evangelical, see Peter Beyer (Appendix, Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada, 2008)

When the data of the 2021 Census on 1<sup>st</sup> Generation<sup>45</sup> immigrants Protestant Chinese is deciphered further based on the second major cities, here is the result:<sup>46</sup>

	<b>Total Chinese</b>	<b>Protestant</b>	<b>% of Chinese</b>	<b>Anglican</b>	<b>Lutheran</b>	<b>United Church</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>Mennonite</b>	<b>Evangelical*</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Christian n.o.s.</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1,715,695</b>	<b>228,755</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>6,950</b>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>7,505</b>	<b>4,460</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>34,280</b>	<b>13,290</b>	<b>158,530</b>
Toronto	679,710	89,135	13.1%	2,870	380	2,100	2,165	220	14,325	4,600	62,475
Vancouver	512,240	75,345	14.7%	1,915	965	1,895	990	1,000	10,130	3,550	54,900
Calgary	93,505	13,950	14.9%	290	185	655	105	20	2,245	970	9,480
Edmonton	62,670	9,185	14.7%	280	170	340	25	0	1,560	765	6,045
Montreal	103,500	7,690	7.4%	160	85	115	325	15	960	960	5,070
Ottawa	50,035	6,080	12.2%	260	40	585	175	25	775	280	3,740
Winnipeg	23,040	2,180	9.5%	70	80	145	0	60	175	80	1,570

Table 14. Protestant Chinese by City (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant

(\*) Non immigrant = 2nd Gen + 3rd Gen or more

(!) Immigrant refers to "whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant or a non-permanent resident"  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810034301>)

<sup>45</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Generation is different from Total Immigrants (i.e., Immigrant), which includes 1st generation, non-immigrants and non-residence  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810034301>).

<sup>46</sup> See E03590



## Finding 6

~98% of Chinese Canadians and Chinese Canadian Protestants reside in 5 provinces; and ~94% of them residing in 7 census metropolitan areas (CMA), while 42.2% of Chinese immigrant Protestant believers are from China with 34.6% from Hong Kong.

As we take a different look at the data, it is clear that ~98% of the Chinese Protestant population resides in the following five provinces: Ontario; British Columbia; Alberta; Quebec and Manitoba (see Table 15).<sup>47</sup>

And ~94% of them reside in the following seven cities: Toronto; Vancouver; Montreal; Calgary; Edmonton; Ottawa and Winnipeg (see Table 16).

In the following tables:

(\*) Non immigrant = 2nd Gen + 3rd Gen or more

(!) Immigrant refers to "whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant or a non-permanent resident"

(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810034301>)

---

<sup>47</sup> ibid.

Table 15. Protestant Chinese by Province (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant

	Protestant	Chinese	%	Protestant	Non-Immigrant (*)	%	Protestant	Immigrant (!)	%
Total (17) City	213,890	1,627,945	13%	60,815	456,260	13%	152,805	1,171,625	13%
Toronto	88,545	679,730	13%	23,685	185,165	13%	64,865	494,535	13%
Vancouver	74,645	512,260	15%	20,330	137,220	15%	54,300	375,020	14%
Calgary	13,580	93,510	15%	4,885	32,950	15%	8,690	60,560	14%
Edmonton	9,060	62,675	14%	3,350	22,670	15%	5,680	40,000	14%
Montreal	7,590	103,500	7%	1,775	26,825	7%	5,810	76,675	8%
Ottawa	6,085	50,035	12%	2,165	16,260	13%	3,895	33,770	12%
Kitchener-Waterloo	2,245	17,185	13%	760	4,480	17%	1,475	12,705	12%
Winnipeg	2,235	23,030	10%	690	5,760	12%	1,510	17,275	9%
City Total	201,740	1,524,740		56,880	426,850		144,750	1,097,835	
City Total v. Total	94.32%	93.66%		93.53%	93.55%		94.73%	93.70%	

Table 16. Protestant Chinese by City (Highest to Lowest), Non-Immigrant vs. Immigrant

	Protestant	Chinese	%	Protestant	Non-Immigrant (*)	%	Protestant	Immigrant (!)	%
Total	225,915	1,715,775	13%	65,750	486,735	14%	159,885	1,228,975	13%
Ontario	107,035	820,245	13%	30,225	228,980	13%	76,775	591,235	13%
British Columbia	79,310	550,590	14%	22,145	151,880	15%	57,125	398,685	14%
Alberta	23,905	164,235	15%	8,975	59,370	15%	14,885	104,860	14%
Quebec	8,390	115,240	7%	1,990	29,715	7%	6,405	85,515	7%
Manitoba	2,490	25,390	10%	825	6,490	13%	1,640	18,905	9%
Province Total	221,130	1,675,700		64,160	476,435		156,830	1,199,200	
Province Total v. Total	97.88%	97.66%		97.58%	97.88%		98.09%	97.58%	

Of the 347,200 Chinese Christian immigrants, 42.2 %, or 100,045, are from China whereas 34.6%, or 81,845, are from Hong Kong (see Figure 16 and Table 17). In turn, they represent 12.2% and 37.17% of the population of the Mainland and Hong Kong Chinese respectively.<sup>48</sup>

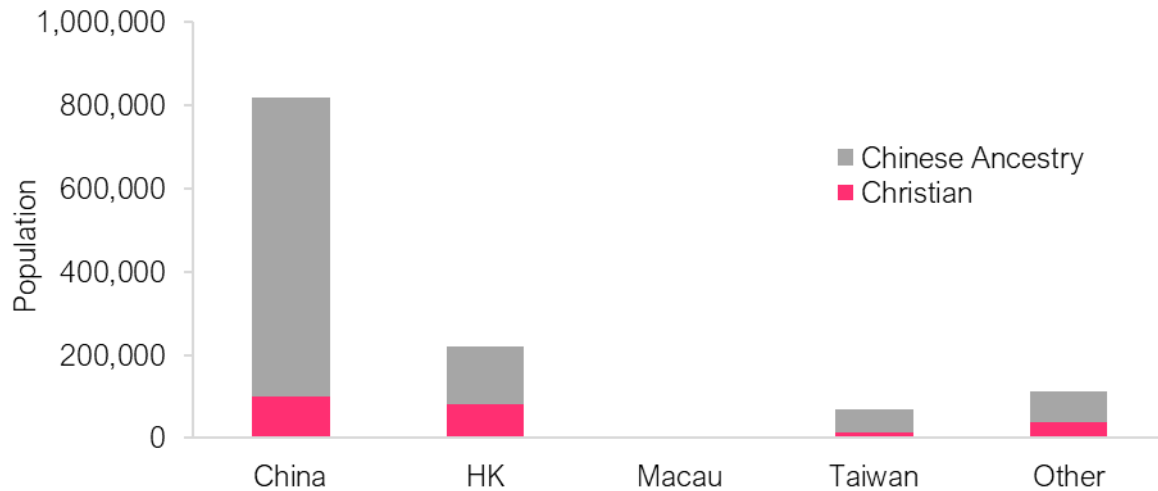


Figure 16. Chinese Christian Immigrants: Place of Birth

Table 17. Chinese Christian Immigrants: Place of Birth

Category	Total	Immigrant					Subtotal
		China	Hong Kong	Macau	Taiwan	Others	
Chinese Ancestry	1,715,775	819,849	220,450	5,370	69,740	113,575	1,228,975
Christian	347,200	100,045	81,945	1,985	14,925	38,120	237,020
Ratio of Christians	20.24%	12.20%	37.17%	36.96%	21.40%	33.51%	19.28%

<sup>48</sup> ibid.

When compared with 2011, there is a much increase in number for the Mainland Chinese, from 536,000 to 819,849, whereas Hong Kong Chinese grew from 199,900 to 220,450. And the Christians in the Mainland and Hong Kong Chinese group are 100,045 and 81,945, growing from 80,290 and 74,820 respectively (see Figure 17 and Table 18).

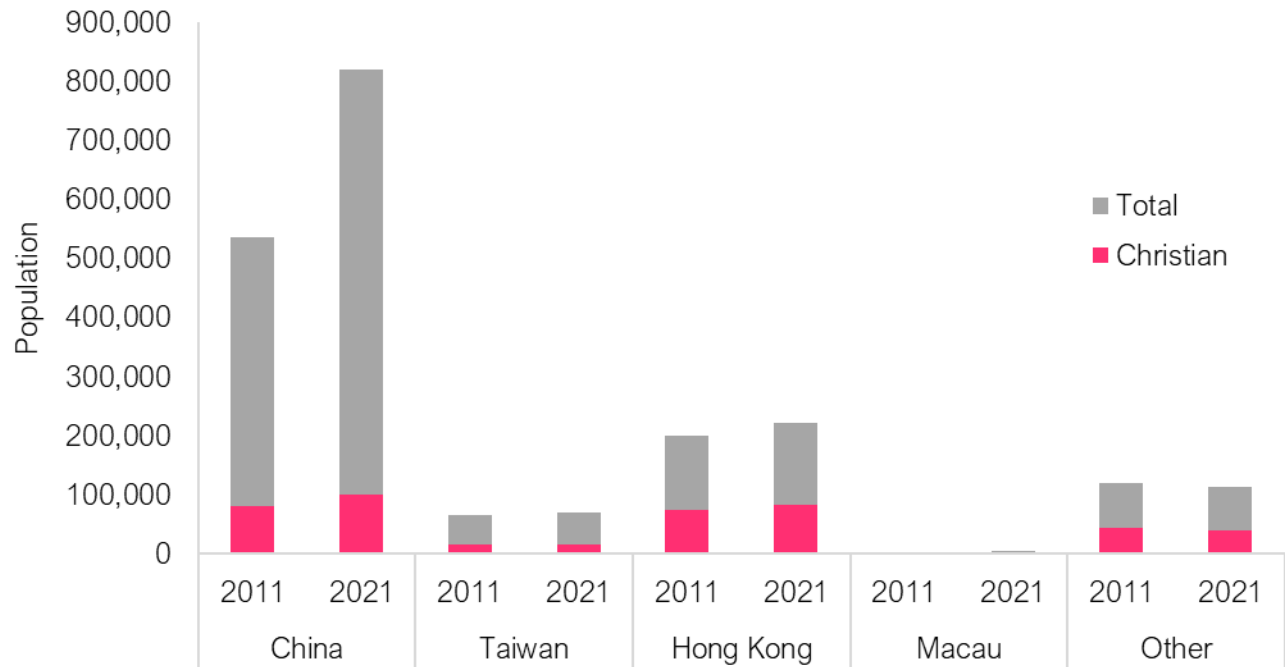


Figure 17. Chinese Immigrants Place of Birth: 2021 vs. 2011

Table 18. Chinese Immigrants Place of Birth: 2021 vs. 2011

	2011 Immigrant			2021 Immigrant		
Place of Birth	Total	Christian	%	Total	Christian	%
China	536,000	80,290	15.0%	819,848	100,045	12.2%
Taiwan	64,650	14,505	22.4%	69,740	14,925	21.4%
Hong Kong	199,900	74,820	37.4%	220,450	81,849	37.2%
Macau	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,370	1,985	37.0%
Others	120,245	43,865	36.0%	113,575	38,120	33.6%
Total	920,795	213,480	23.2%	1,228,975	237,020	19.3%

## Finding 7

91% of 1<sup>st</sup> Gen Hong Kong Chinese Protestant immigrants emigrated to Canada prior to 2000, while 57.3% of Mainland Chinese Protestant immigrants emigrated during the two decades of 2001 to 2021. However, 25.8 % of the latter cohort moved to Canada in the decade of 1991-2000.

When we take a deeper dive into the data, an interesting trend reveals, of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Protestant immigrants (not the same as the Immigrants<sup>49</sup>), 91.5% of the Hong Kong Protestant immigrants emigrated to Canada prior to 2000. And 57.3% of the Mainland Chinese Protestant immigrants moved to Canada during the two decades of 2001 to 2021, with 25.8% of them emigrated to Canada during the decade of 1991-2000 (see Figure 18, Figure 19, and Table 19).<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

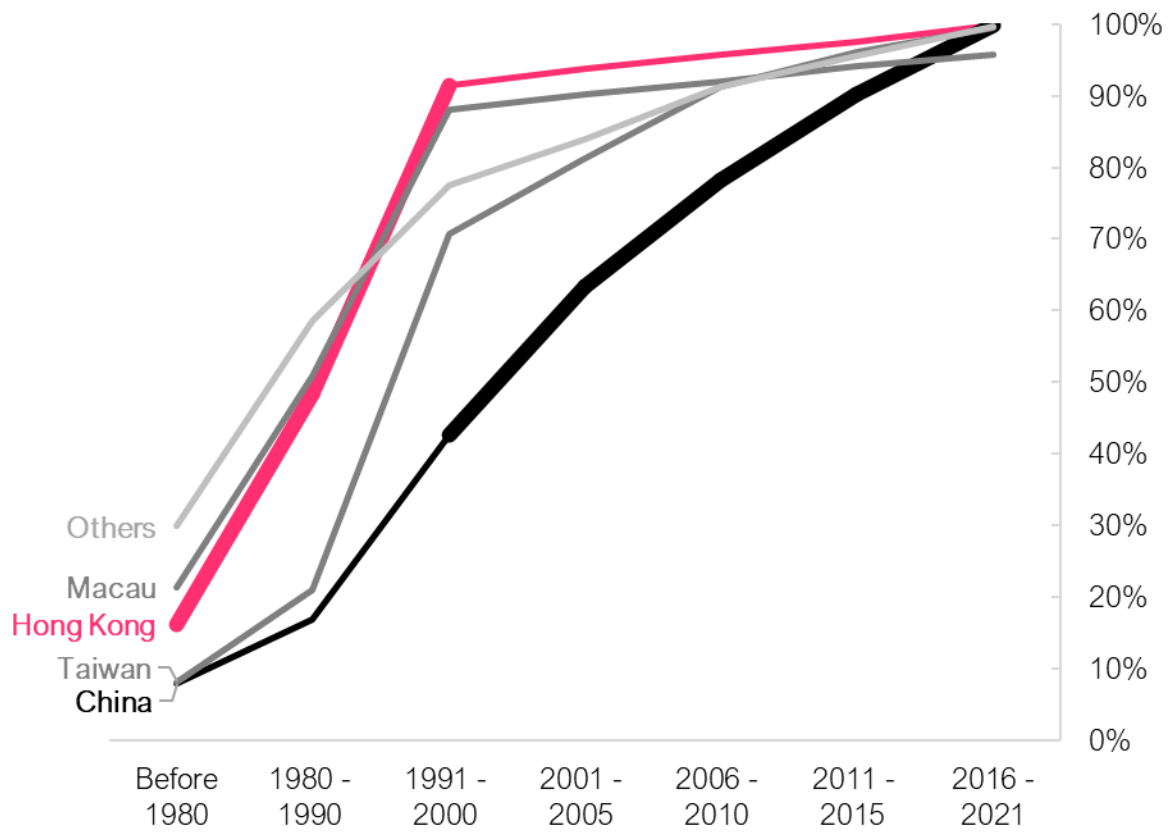


Figure 18. Chinese Christian 1st Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival – Trends

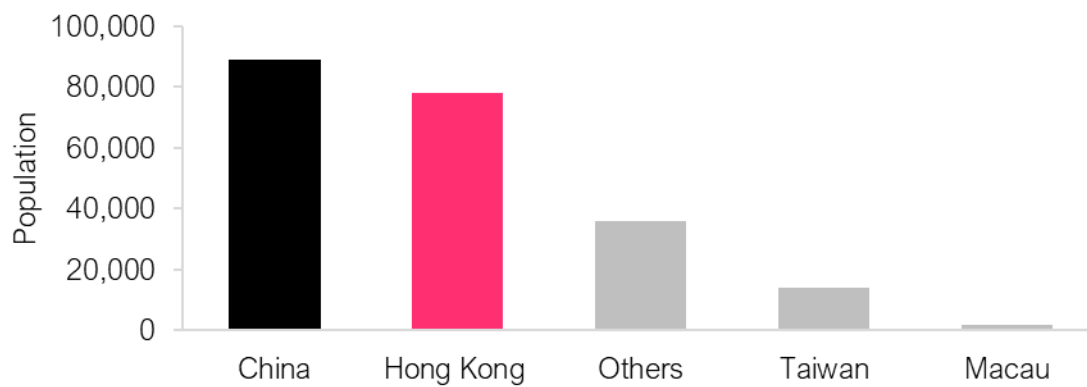


Figure 19. Chinese Christian 1st Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival – Totals

Table 19. Chinese Christian 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Place of Origin and Times of Arrival

	1 <sup>st</sup> Gen <sup>51</sup>	Before 1980	1980 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2005	2006 - 2010	2011 - 2015	2016 - 2021
Total 1 <sup>st</sup> Gen	1,088,535	90,765	154,480	299,700	154,685	131,285	126,245	131,380
Christian	218,725	31,930	45,600	71,110	24,020	18,810	14,490	12,310
Distribution - Christian	100.00%	14.60%	20.80%	32.50%	11.00%	8.60%	6.60%	5.60%
China	89,150	7,040	7,940	23,000	18,570	13,165	10,695	8,610
Distribution – China	100.00%	7.90%	8.90%	25.80%	20.80%	14.80%	12.00%	9.70%
Taiwan	13,825	1,130	1,765	6,880	1,435	1,400	670	475
Distribution -Taiwan	100.00%	8.20%	12.80%	49.80%	10.40%	10.10%	4.80%	3.40%
Hong Kong	78,075	12,655	25,055	33,760	1,705	1,590	1,505	1,765
Distribution – Hong Kong	100.00%	16.20%	32.10%	43.20%	2.20%	2.00%	1.90%	2.30%
Macau	1,935	415	570	720	40	35	40	30
Distribution - Macau	100.00%	21.40%	29.50%	37.20%	2.10%	1.80%	2.10%	1.60%
Others	35,740	10,690	10,270	6,750	2,270	2,620	1,580	1,430
Distribution - Others	100.00%	29.90%	28.70%	18.90%	6.40%	7.30%	4.40%	4.00%

<sup>51</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Gen is different from the Total Immigrants which include 1st generation, non-immigrants and non-residence  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810034301>)

## Finding 8

Local-born as a cohort has increased in number, only because of the addition of the 0 -15 cohort, but aged with many having kept their faith and growing within age bracket.

When we turn our attention to the data related to the local born, the following important facets can be observed. Of the 56,355 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Chinese Protestants, 40,225, or 71.4%, are younger than 35, corresponding from 13% to 14% of their respective cohorts (i.e., 25-34; 15-24) in the population. And 7,330, or 76%, of 9,630 of 3rd generation Chinese Protestants are younger than 35, registering between 11% to 16% of their respective cohorts (i.e., 25-34; 15-24) in the population (see Figure 20 and Table 20).<sup>52</sup>

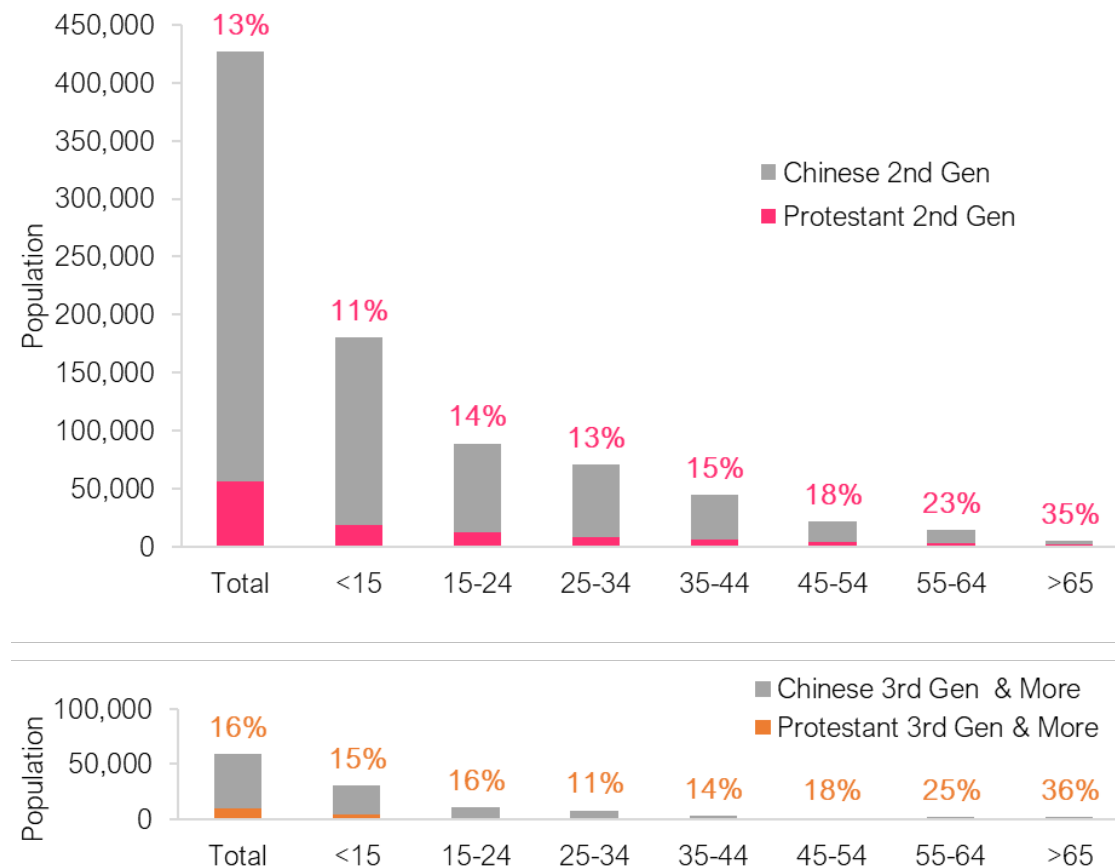


Figure 20. Census 2021 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)

<sup>52</sup> ibid.



*Table 20. Census 2021 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)*

Age	Chinese 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	Protestant 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	%	Chinese 3 <sup>rd</sup> Gen & More	Protestant 3 <sup>rd</sup> Gen & More	%
Total	427,060	56,355	13%	59,660	9,630	16%
<15	180,625	19,165	11%	30,520	4,660	15%
15-24	89,290	12,155	14%	11,070	1,775	16%
25-34	70,650	8,905	13%	8,300	895	11%
35-44	44,495	6,880	15%	3,575	495	14%
45-54	21,550	3,810	18%	1,795	320	18%
55-64	15,165	3,460	23%	2,320	580	25%
>65	5,285	1,845	35%	2,090	755	36%

And when compared to 2011 Census, the local born Protestant generation has grown quite a bit, with second generation from 46,445 to 56,355, while third generation from 8,395 to 9,630, or 21% and 15% respectively (see Figure 21 and Table 21).<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

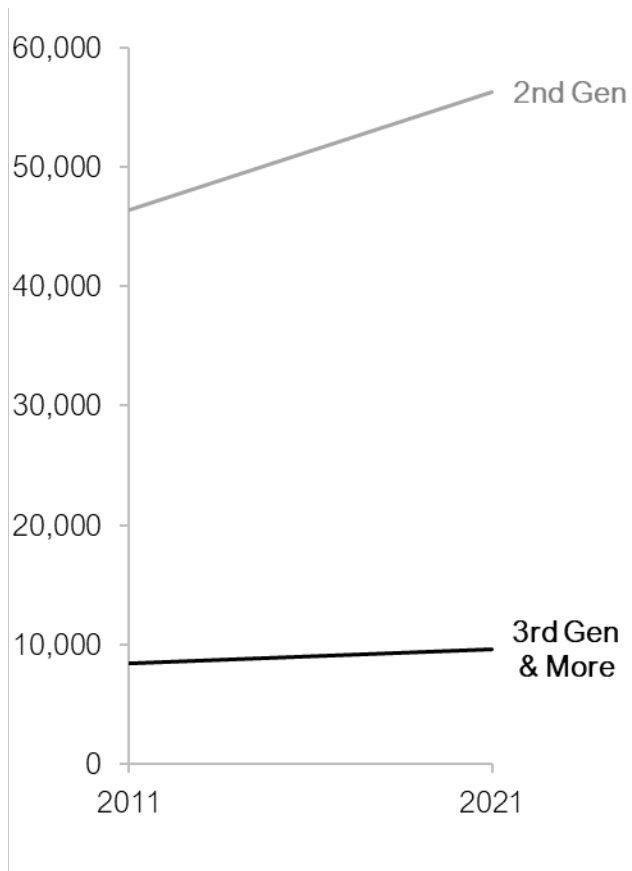


Figure 21. Second and Third Generation (2021 vs. 2011)

Table 21. Second and Third Generation (2021 vs. 2011)

	2011 Protestant	2021 Protestant	Increase	%
2nd Gen	46,445	56,355	9,910	21%
3rd Gen & More	8,395	9,630	1,235	15%
Total	54,840	65,985	11,145	20%

But if we look underneath the hood, it presents a different picture. The total of the 2011 second generation amounts to 46,445, and if nothing happens to the entire cohort, adding to it with 19,165 <15 second generation would lead to 65,610. Yet the total of the second generation reported in 2021 Census is 56,355, with a 9,255 deficit, which could due to death, drop-out, or already 5 in 2011 (e.g., there was 3,855 >65 in 2011 Census) (see Table 22).<sup>54</sup>

*Table 22. 2011 and 2021 Second Generation Comparison*

2011 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen Protestant	2021 <15 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen Protestant	Growth if nothing happens	2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen Protestant	Difference
46,445	19,165	65,610	56,355	-9,255

And the following represents the breakdown between the second and the third generation across different age groups (see Figure 22 and Table 23).<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

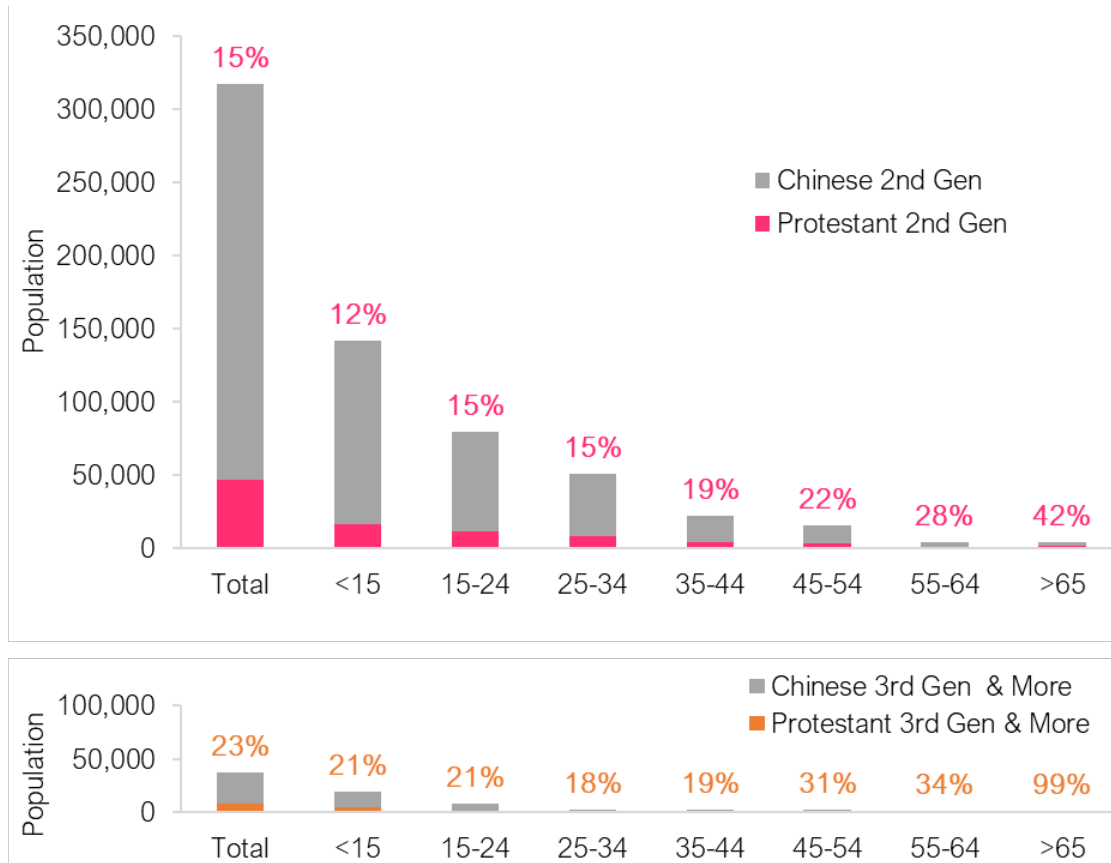


Figure 22. Census 2011 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)

*Table 23. Census 2011 – Chinese Protestants: Non-Immigrants (2nd & 3rd Generation)*

Age	Chinese 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	Protestant 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	%	Chinese 3 <sup>rd</sup> Gen & More	Protestant 3 <sup>rd</sup> Gen & More	%
Total	316,915	46,445	15%	37,200	8,395	23%
<15	141,615	16,540	12%	19,710	4,210	21%
15-24	79,285	11,635	15%	7,900	1,685	21%
25-34	50,550	7,835	15%	2,865	510	18%
35-44	22,055	4,280	19%	1,930	375	19%
45-54	15,715	3,460	22%	2,340	720	31%
55-64	3,850	1,085	28%	1,685	580	34%
>65	3,855	1,615	42%	765	755	99%

# Census 2021: Chinese Canadian Population and its Religiosity

## Part 2 – Key Implications



## Implication 1

Immigrant church life cycle is not to end anytime soon as long as the Chinese Christian Diaspora community is faithful in carrying out the mandate of the Great Commission.

As can be seen from the Table 10, Chinese Christians have been on the increase for the last century, rising from 8,354 in 1931 to 319,635 in 2001. Then a small dip was recorded in 2011, to 318,935, and it was rebounded to 347,200 in 2021. And with the forecast made for the Chinese Population by 2041 to be 3,082M (see Table 5), there is no end to the targets for evangelization in Canada, especially to the Chinese. As a result, it is unlikely that the Chinese immigrant church will be seeing its final stage anytime soon in the next 20 years.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, this is proven to be the case by the following additional data from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada.<sup>57</sup> For 2022 to 2024 (January - November), the following numbers of study permit holders, temporary permit holders, and permanent residence visa holders, together with visitors were reported to have been in Canada.

---

<sup>56</sup> For immigrant church life cycle, please see David Ley. "The Immigrant Church as an Urban Service Hub" *Urban Studies*. 45, no. 10 (2008). 2057-2074.

<sup>57</sup> For Visitor Record, please see: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/9b34e712-513f-44e9-babf-9df4f7256550/resource/3c3e4213-81e2-4515-971d-eae1f8985617>. For Temporary Records, please see: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/9b34e712-513f-44e9-babf-9df4f7256550/resource/5c8f8ab6-4e1b-4346-a2e2-e55b5e1abbad>. For PR Visas, please see: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/9b34e712-513f-44e9-babf-9df4f7256550/resource/07139405-03f0-40f8-8dbc-bc6025fce2ab>. For Study Permits (as of Dec 31), please see: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/90115b00-f9b8-49e8-afa3-b4cff8facaee/resource/3897ef92-a491-4bab-b9c0-eb94c8b173ad>.

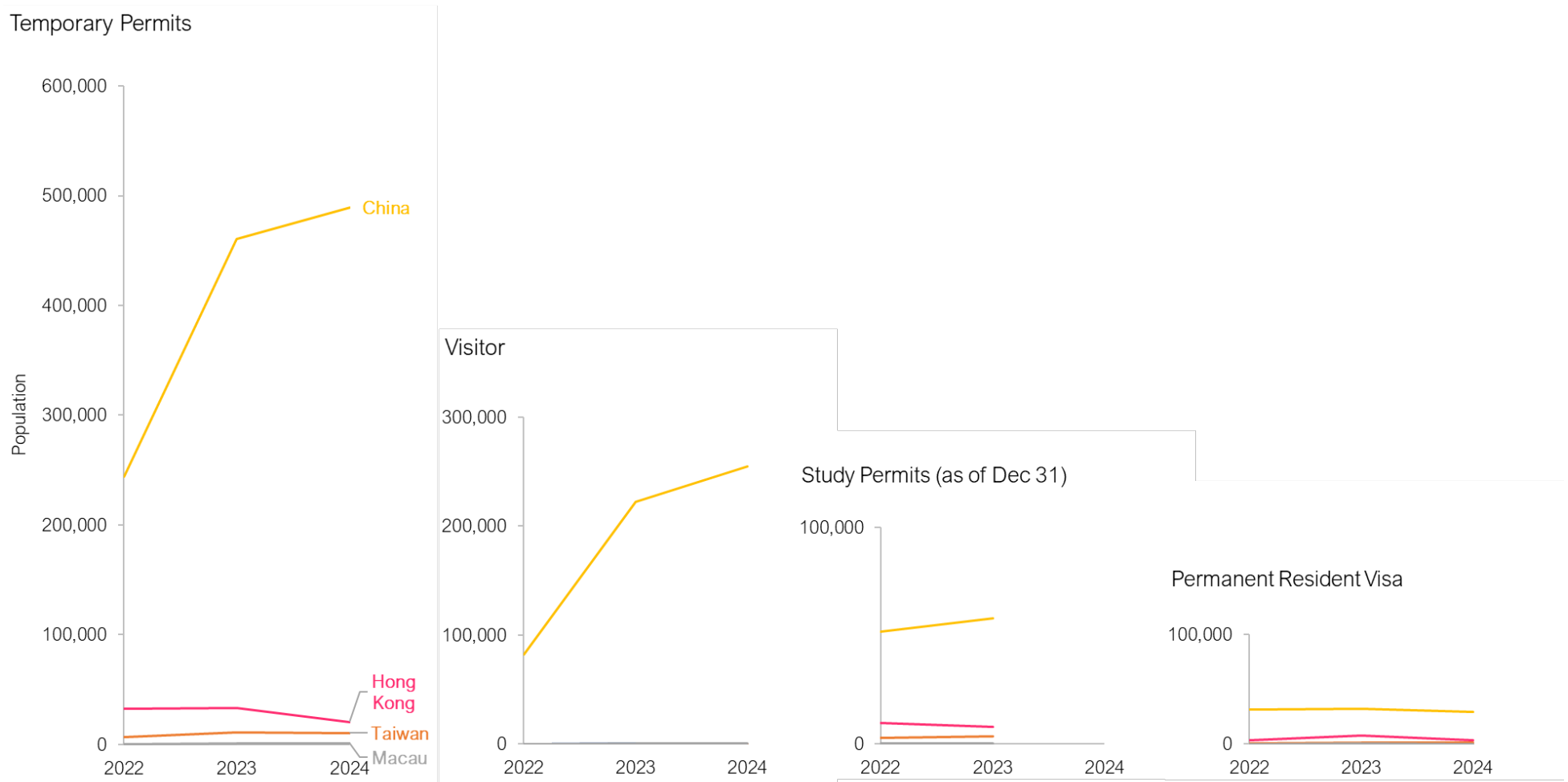


Figure 23. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor by Place of Origin, 2022-2024



*Table 24. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2022*

2022	China	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Macau
Temporary Permits <sup>58</sup>	243,827	6,891	32,665	428
Study Permits (as of Dec 31)	51,625	2,595	9,525	135
Permanent Resident Visa	31,605	967	3,570	22
Visitor	82,414	92	12	100

*Table 25. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2023*

2023	China	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Macau
Temporary Permits <sup>59</sup>	460,515	10,876	33,093	1,209
Study Permits (as of Dec 31)	58,070	3,280	7,860	135
Permanent Resident Visa	31,674	1,158	7,656	31
Visitor	222,477	178	21	693

*Table 26. Temporary Permits, Student Visa, Permanent Residence Visa and Visitor 2024*

2024	China	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Macau
Temporary Permits <sup>60</sup>	489,605	10,602	20,637	1,286
Study Permits (as of Dec 31)	56,405	2,980	5,365	90
Permanent Resident Visa	28,766	1,209	3,027	22
Visitor	254,587	114	18	880

---

<sup>58</sup> Temporary Resident applications here include: Temporary Resident Visas, Visitor Records, Study Permits, Study Permits Extensions, Work Permits and Work Permits Extensions

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

As can be seen from the data, the PR Visa issuance has been steady towards Mainland Chinese, around 31,605, 31,674 and 28,766 for 2022, 2023, and 2024, whereas the PR Visa issuance for Hong Kong Chinese has peaked in 2023, around 7,656, and then dropped back to 3,027 in 2024. When it comes to Temporary Permits, which include Temporary Resident Visas, Visitor Records, Study Permits, Study Permits Extension, Work Permits and Work Permits Extension, Mainland Chinese has rebounded from the COVID-19, registering 460,515 and 489,605 for 2023 and 2024 from 243,827 in 2022. The reason for this rebound is primarily due to the loosening of the travel restriction, which saw Visitor Records for the Mainland Chinese to be 222,417 and 254,587 for 2023 and 2024, whereas it was only 82,414 for 2022. All of these data point to the ongoing influx of Chinese immigrants, especially those from mainland China, into Canada, which makes the lifecycle of the Chinese immigrant churches not coming to an end anytime soon.

## Implication 2

With 1,230M, or 71.71%, of the Chinese population having no religious affiliation, and with both Mandarin and Cantonese speaking Chinese inflow (e.g., Immigrants and students from China; work permit and PR seekers from HK) continuing to grow, they present tremendous opportunities for harvesting the field and energizing the growth of the Chinese Church as a whole, with the greater upside being with the Mandarin speaking Chinese.

Turning our attention to the make up of the “religious nones” as well as both Mandarin and Cantonese speaking Chinese inflow, it represents a tremendous opportunity for the Chinese churches to evangelize and grow the church. This is particularly true for the Mandarin speaking Chinese as 819,840 came from Mainland China, whereas 220,450 came from HK. Though the Hong Kong cohort has increased over the last three years (from 2022 to 2024), the Mainland Chinese continue to dominate the scene as can be seen from the data from Table 24, Table 25, and Table 26.

## Implication 3

The support and nurturing of local-born believers could suffer from lower attention if no intentional efforts and focus for continued development of the younger generation. It implies the need for a sustainable pursuit of a “both ... and”, not an “either ... or” approach, favouring investment in one congregation over the others.

While the attention is focused on the Chinese immigrants, be they from mainland or from Hong Kong, let us not lose our eye on the local-born as their number has grown, albeit so slowly. Continuous development on the local-born and the younger generation must be a priority for the Chinese Churches in order to provide a sustainable nurturing of their generation. It is not an “either ... or” approach in which ministry investment favours one congregation, most likely the Chinese, over the other. It must be a “both ... and” investment focus by paying forward, capturing the opportunity of the Chinese, especially those from Hong Kong, but at the same time, maintaining a steady and yet firm and unwavering approach to the ministry growth for the younger generation.

## Implication 4

As most Chinese Canadian and Chinese Canadian Christians reside in 7 major cities; concerted efforts may be required to provide care and support for those in small cities through denominations or other associations. It would serve us well to remember Jesus's response to his disciples' urging that "everyone is looking for you!" The Lord replies: "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." (Mark 1: 36-38)

As indicated before, ~94% of the Chinese population were spread across Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa and Winnipeg, the corresponding Chinese immigrant Protestant churches are also found in those 7 cities as 94.3 % of Protestant Chinese Christians resided in those 7 cities. It begs the question of how the denominations and other para-church organization can support the small cities and towns that happens to be small but thriving through manpower and other resources. Such initiatives can include small town evangelism, timely support of Sunday School materials (e.g., pre-package programs) as well as short term mission trips.

## Implication 5

Finally, the overall model of “doing church” may require a gut-check due to at least 4 reasons.

First, as younger generation tends to look for a holistic gospel that would cater for the whole person, demanding the church to be more relevant to what challenges they are facing, more attentions must be focused on raising leaders in their midst to spearhead the transformation necessary to address these challenges.

Second, as more immigrants are arriving in Canada, churches are obliged to examine their strategy and practices of hospitality in how they deploy their energy and resources in such a way that does not appear to favour one congregation over the others. (The other side of coin may very well be that the immigrants’ arrival may make those churches who are small and with limited resources and scared personnel even more powerless in reaching out to the immigrants, as they have scarcity of resources to begin with.) This practice is very much aligned with the aspiration of the younger generation as they tend to look for a whole gospel that would cater for the whole person, demanding the church to be more relevant to challenges they are facing.

Third, as the Cantonese congregation continues to likely<sup>61</sup> to age (as 91.5% of Hong Kong Chinese Christians came before 2000, with ~70% of that roster over 45; ~56% over 55) in a faster pace, the need for raising pastors and lay leaders in their midst become more pressing. Though this could be alleviated by the arrival of the new Hong Kong Christian leaders, their need to adjust to the existing church culture, governance, and leadership approach could be a challenge. Thus, calling and raising up the younger generation to be engaged in the full-time ministry is a priority, especially in the larger context of seeing 10.2% decline of the Master of Divinity degree (one that is usually required for ordination in many mainline denominations) enrollment across all member schools of the Association of Theological Schools since 2018<sup>62</sup> and “about 9 out of 10 (pastors in the Chinese churches in Canada) found it is becoming harder to find mature young Christians who want to

---

<sup>61</sup> There is no correlation between arrival period and age. For example, though 57.3% of Chinese Christians from Mainland China came after 2000. It does not mean they are younger. However, since 91.5% of Hong Kong Chinese Christians came before 2000, they are no doubt growing older since they arrival.

<sup>62</sup> Meinzer, Chris. *M Div Enrollment Declines while MA and DMin Enrollments Grow Among ATS Schools*. The Association of Theological Schools (Meinzer 2023) (W. W. Enoch Wong 2022)2023. <https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/mdiv-enrollment-declines.pdf>.

become pastors,”<sup>63</sup> It has become an unprecedented and a pressing need to raise up the younger generation for full time ministry.

Lastly, there is an ongoing balance that the church needs to strike in the trilingual and biliterate (TaB, 三語兩文<sup>(\*)64</sup>) context that is the Chinese immigrant churches in Canada, such that the overall vision, mission, and values of the church must be pursued in such a way that would facilitate the church to strive for and to maintain unity (Eph 4:3) without any compromise or under the pretense of uniformity. Such a pursuit may very well require the patience of a Job, the courage of a Joshua, and the wisdom of a Solomon. But it can be, and must be, done to ensure that believers would grow, ministries would flourish, and newcomers would be welcomed, and their lives transformed to be the followers of Christ

---

<sup>63</sup> Wong, Enoch., Wong, Wes., Chan, Vivian. & Tsui, Tommy. *Voices of Pastors: A Study of the Well-being and Leadership Ministries of Pastors at the Chinese Churches in Canada*. Toronto: Centre for Leadership Studies 2022. p. 234.

<sup>64</sup> Li, D. C. S. Trilingual and Biliterate Language Education Policy in Hong Kong: Past, Present and Future. *Asian Journal of Second Foreign Language Education* 7, 41 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00168-z>.

## Conclusion

As we have seen from the above analysis, the number of Christians has continued to rise over the years, though lagging behind the increase of immigrants. However, based on this analysis and the forecast of Chinese population in 2031, there is a lot of growth potential for the Chinese immigrant churches in Canada. And the fact that the 71.71% of the population, or \$1.23 M, represents the “religious nones” behooves the Chinese immigrant churches in Canada to double up its effort in evangelism in this field ripe for harvest. Let us take heed of the request from the Lord: “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matthew 9:38)



## Bibliography

- Beyer, Peter. "Appendix: The Demographics of Christianity in Canada." In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, by Paul Bramadat & David Seljak, 437-440. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Guenther, Bruce L. "Ethnicity and Evangelical Protestants in Canada." In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, by P. Bramadat and D. Seljak, 364-414. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Kalbach, Warren E., James-Abra, Erin, Edmonston, Barry, Canadian Census Published Online. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Retrieved on February 20, 2024.
- Ley, David. "The Immigrant Church as an Urban Service Hub." *Urban Studies*, 2008: 2057-2074.
- Li, D. C. S. "Trilingual and Biliterate Language Education Policy in Hong Kong: Past, Present and Future." *Asian Journal of Second Foreign Language Education*, 2022.
- Li, Peter S. "Chinese Immigrants on the Canadian Prairie, 1910-47." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1982: 527-540.
- Li, Peter & Li, Eva Xiaoling. "Religious affiliation and propensity to Christianity of Chinese in Canada." In *After migration and religious affiliation: Religion, Chinese identities and transformational networks*, by Tan Chee-Beng (Ed.), 169-184. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2024.
- Meinzer, Chris. *MDiv Enrollment Declines while MA and DMin Enrollments Grow Among ATS Schools*. The Association of Theological Schools, 2023.
- Roy, P. E. *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989.
- Statistics Canada. *1991 Census Highlights Catalogue 96-304E*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Retrieved May 31, 2024.
- Statistics Canada. *2001 Census: Analysis series Religion in Canada Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001015*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Retrieved May 31, 2024.
- Statistics Canada. *Contract EO2062 - Visible Minority/Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration/Generation Status and Age groups (97), Country of Birth (5), Selected Religions (15), and Sex (3), for Persons in private households of Canada, Provinces,*

*Territories, Selected Census Metropolitan Areas, 2011 Census - 25% Sample Data* . Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2013.

Statistics Canada. *Contract EO3590 - Visible Minority/Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration/Generation Status (156), Age group (9), Place of Birth (6), Religion (148), and Gender (3) for Persons in Private households in occupied private dwellings of Canada, Provinces, Territories and Selected Census Metropolitan Areas, 2021 Census - 25% Sample Data*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2023.

Statistics Canada. Population (in thousands) by visible minority group, Canada, 2011 (estimated) and 2036 (projected according to six scenarios). . Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Retrieved on May 31, 2024.

Statistics Canada. *Population projections on immigration and diversity: Interactive Dashboard*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Retrieved May 31, 2024.

Statistics Canada. *Religion by immigrant status and period of immigration and place of birth: Canada, provinces and territories*. . Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2024.

Statistics Canada. *Table 98-10-0351-01 Visible minority by gender and age: Canada, provinces and territories*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2024.

Statistics Canada. *The Canadian census. A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2022-10-26.

Statistics Canada. *Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016*. . Ottawa: Canada Statistics, 2016.

Wang, J. *"His Dominion" and the "Yellow Peril." Protestant Mission to Chinese Immigrants in Canada 1959-1967* . Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006.

Wong, Enoch. *How Am I Going to Grow Up?* Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs, 2021.

Wong, Enoch, Tam, Jonathan, Hung, Kwing, Tsui, Tommy, \and Wong, Wes *"Table 1:1 Chinese Population in Canada, Local-born, and Chinese Christians in Canada." Listening to Their Voices: An Exploration of Faith Journeys of Canadian-born Chinese Christians (Rev)*. . Toronto: CCCOWE Canada , 2019.

Wong, Enoch, Wong, Wes, Chan, Vivian & Tsui, Tommy. *Voices of Pastors: A Study of the Well-being and Leadership Ministries of Pastors at the Chinese Churches in Canada*. Toronto: Centre for Leadership Studies, 2022.