

# A Time of Prayer: Consider

## February 2024 Edition

### CONSIDER: RELIGIOSITY IN CANADA AND ITS EVOLUTION FROM 1985 to 2019<sup>1</sup>

In recent decades, the religious landscape in Canada has undergone significant changes, including a decline in religious affiliation and the practice of religious activities, both collectively and individually. Data from several cycles of the General Social Survey were used in this study to paint a portrait of the diverse relationships Canadians have with religion. As we listen for divine sparks in our midst, it is important to consider this changing landscape. An overview of key trends is as follows:

- In 2019, 68% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported having a religious affiliation. In addition, just over half of Canadians (54%) said they considered their religious or spiritual beliefs to be somewhat or very important to how they live their lives. Participation in group or individual religious activities was less common: 23% of Canadians said they participated in a group religious activity at least once a month, and 30% said they engaged in a religious or spiritual activity on their own at least once a week.
- Overall, reporting a religious affiliation is not necessarily related to placing a high importance on religion in everyday life. In fact, during 2017 to 2019, nearly one in five Canadians (18%) reported having a religious affiliation while indicating that they rarely or never participated in group religious activities, never engaged in religious or spiritual activities on their own, and considered their religious or spiritual beliefs to be of little or no importance to how they live their lives.
- In recent decades, there has been a decline in religious affiliation, participation in group or individual religious or spiritual activities, and the importance of religious and spiritual beliefs in how people live their lives. Changes in indicators of religiosity over time appear to be the result of differences between younger and older cohorts.
- Compared with individuals born in Canada, those born outside Canada were more likely to report having a religious affiliation, to consider their religious and spiritual beliefs important to how they live their lives, and to engage in religious activities in groups or on their own. These differences were more pronounced among younger birth cohorts.
- There were some differences in religiosity across the country. For example, in British Columbia, religious non-affiliation was more common and generational differences in religious practice were smaller. In Quebec, religious affiliation was higher, but was more often combined with lower importance given to religious or spiritual beliefs. Religious practice was also generally lower in Quebec. Lastly, in the Atlantic provinces, the generational differences were larger than elsewhere in the country.
- You can explore the trends more deeply in the full report, which includes several charts and graphs, on the Statistics Canada website: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-6-x/2021001/article/00010-eng.htm>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelissen, Louis. "Religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019." Statistics Canada, Insights on Canadian Society, 28 October 2021. Online. Available: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00010-eng.htm>.