

THREE STEPS ENGAGING THE DIASPORA IN CANADA IN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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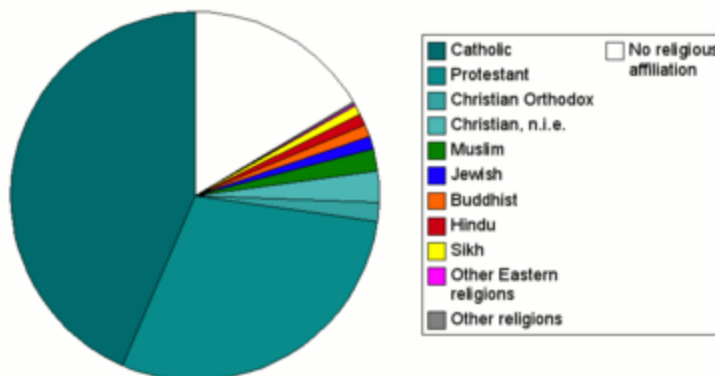
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Canada is an immigrant country that has welcomed new comers from around the world for over two hundred years. Having been ranked number one by the United Nations Human Development Index as the best country six times in the last decade, the trend of increased immigration will continue.

According to the projection of Statistics Canada, by [2031](#), approximately 28% of the population will be foreign-born. The number of people belonging to [visible minority](#) groups will double and make up the majority of the population in Toronto and Vancouver.¹ In addition to the diversity by birth (place of origin), there is also the diversity by religion as shown in the figure below:²

Religion in Canada



¹ "Parties prepare to battle for Immigrant votes". CTV.ca. 2010-03-14.
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20100314/Minority_Report_100314/20100314?hub=Canada. (Retrieved 2010-03-15)

²Top self-identified religious affiliations in Canada in 2001.
Statistics Canada (2001). "Religions in Canada".
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/rel/contents.cfm>. (retrieved 2007-02-16)

With so many new comers of various religious backgrounds, therefore, Canada is a mission field where Canadian Christians can reach many who originally resided within the 10/40 windows but now no longer “unreachable.”

“Diaspora” is a term used by social scientists in reference to people on the move from their homeland. “Diaspora missiology” is “a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin”³ and “diaspora missions” is “the missionary outreach **minister to** and **through** and **beyond** the diaspora” in three steps.

When people are in transition, they are receptive to change both culturally and spiritually. God has moved many new comers to Canada spatially to our neighborhood and spiritually to God Himself. Whereas new comers among diaspora groups are receptive to the gospel, Protestant churches and Christians are to practice the “Great Commandment” and **minister to the diaspora** via “missions at our doorstep” through charitable act and Christ’s-like love.

By making disciples from the converts of diaspora groups, they can be **motivated** to evangelize the kinsmen from their homeland now residing in Canada. They have the advantages in doing so, i.e. without language, social and cultural barriers. This is **ministering through** the diaspora. If they are **mobilized** to fulfill the “Great Commission” by engaging in cross-cultural mission reaching local Canadians and other diaspora groups, then it is **ministering beyond** the diaspora in Canada.

Canadian society is internationally known for the hallmarks of tolerance and social harmony, offering people the freedom to maintain and celebrate their ethnic and cultural heritage, while participating fully in Canada’s economy. Is it not a golden opportunity when they are new comers being receptive to the gospel? Canadian Christians are to offer them the spiritual freedom from sin and eternal judgment. So the three-step approach is a good strategy to engage the diaspora in Canada in Christian mission: **minister to** and **through** and **beyond** the diaspora.

There have been Canadian initiatives in mission strategy involving the diaspora in Canada. For example, in January 2009, a gathering of two dozen people took place at the TIM Centre at Tyndale University on “diaspora missiology” coordinated by Robert Cousin and presented by Enoch Wan and Joy Tira from the LDLT team (Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team)⁴. At the Jaffray Centre for Global Initiatives, Ambrose University College and Seminary in Calgary, Canada, in February 2010 offered a college/seminary crossover course, - *Diaspora Missiology in Canadian Context: A Third Millennium Trends and Issues in Mission*. There is also the “MoveIn” program in Canada, see <http://movein.to/>. Another example is that of Kelowna Alliance Church in BC, Canada, is purposely reaching out to the thousands of Foreign Workers arriving from

³ See “The Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology” <http://www.lausanne.org/documents/seoul-declaration-on-diaspora-missiology.html> (retrieve March 25, 2010)

⁴ For details of LDLT, see <http://www.gatheredscattered.com/>

Mexico to work in the vineyards of the Okanagan.

International migration is one of the global issues to be discussed at the upcoming Lausanne Congress III in Cape Town, South Africa, October 16-25, 2010. Readers of *Faith Today* are encouraged to engage in the “Global Conversation” of the Lausanne Movement by visiting the site: <http://conversation.lausanne.org/home/diaspora>

Further reading

For discussion on “diaspora missiology” and “diaspora mission,” see:

- Enoch Wan, “Diaspora Missiology” *Occasional Bulletin*, Evangelical Missiological Society, Spring, 2007 @ http://www.emsweb.org/images/stories/docs/bulletins/OB_20_2.pdf
- For a case study on the First Filipino Church in Edmonton engaging in diaspora mission, see “Filipino International Network: A Strategic Model for Filipino Diaspora Glocal® Missions” by Sadiri Joy B. Tira Published in *Global Missiology*, Featured Article, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.net
- Enoch Wan, *Missions Within Reach: Intercultural Ministries in Canada*. Hong Kong: Alliance Press. (1995)