

## **Religious Commitment Report 01-08, July, 2001**

### **Why are francophone Catholics disinclined to religious involvement?**

by Frank Stephen Jones<sup>1</sup>

#### **Abstract**

Relatively low levels of religious involvement concern not only religious leaders and religious people, but also many community leaders and heads of voluntary organizations. By the standards of four measures of religious involvement or commitment, measured from the results of Statistics Canada's *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating*, francophone Catholics seem relatively uninvolved compared with anglophone Catholics and affiliates with other faiths. Yet it is only the francophone Catholics in Quebec who have low rates of commitment. A comparison of francophone Catholics in Quebec with those in the rest of Canada, and with anglophone Catholics, reveals that some groups are especially uncommitted: the unusually low commitment of parents and professionals in French Catholic Quebec compared with anglophone Catholics seems most problematic. A closer look at "influential" professions reveals that anglophone Catholic teachers are twice as likely to say they are religious as francophone Catholic teachers in Quebec, medical professionals are almost twice as likely, and managers are two and one half times as likely. An analysis of the frequency of churchgoing by Catholic women and men reveals that for both sexes attendance is more frequent among anglophone and non-Quebec francophone Catholics than among francophone Catholics in Quebec, after considering the effect of a number of other variables on attendance. The study concludes with some suggestions for future research.

*NOTE: in the text below, the term "French" is generally understood to mean "francophone" or "French-speaking"*

#### **1. The nature of the problem**

Relatively low levels of religious involvement concern many different groups in Canada. First, many church leaders and committed members are interested in membership development in their parish and eternal life for their members. Secondly, because religious commitment is a key determinant of a wide range of community involvements, the concern over low commitment is felt by many policy and program specialists as well. Still others are aware of the positive impact of religious commitment on lifestyle, physical and emotional health, and family life, and want to see higher commitment for the sake of individual and family health. The aim of this study is to gain some understanding of why rates of involvement are relatively low among French Catholics, by identifying the characteristics of the sub-populations with unusually high and low levels of involvement.

French Catholics appear to be much less committed to religion than other Catholics, or those affiliated with other faith communities.<sup>2</sup> For example, the percentage of French Catholics attending church weekly (18%) is much below that for English Catholics (31%) and conservative Christians (53%), though similar to that of liberal Protestants and non-Christians (Chart 1).<sup>3</sup> The difference between French Catholic and other faith communities is even more noticeable when

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<sup>1</sup> Director of Research, Christian Commitment Research Institute (CCRI), and Adjunct Professor of Economics, Université d'Ottawa. Thanks for helpful reviews are due to Margorie Page and Martha Sanipe, Statistics Canada; and Claudette Harrison, Director of Education, CCRI. Remaining errors and weaknesses are the responsibility of the author.

<sup>2</sup> The best data on religious commitment in Canada come from Statistics Canada's *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, of 1997, the source of data reported in this study. The data refer to the non-institutionalized population 15 years of age and over living in the provinces, and not on Indian reserves. The French-English distinction in this paper is based on the language used on the survey form.

<sup>3</sup> Liberal Protestants comprise United Church, Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran affiliates, some of whom are theologically conservative or evangelical. Similarly, conservative Christian comprise Baptist, Pentecostal and smaller Christian affiliates, some of whom are liberal theologically.

we look at other measures of religiosity. Only 8% of French Catholics say they are “very religious”, for example, compared with 11% of liberal Protestants, 15% of English Catholics, 41% of conservative Christians, and 21% of those affiliated with a non-Christian faith. Only 2% of those with no religious affiliation say they are “very religious”. Similarly, the likelihood of being a volunteer in a religious organization, or a member of a religious group such as Bible study or choir is relatively low among French Catholics. Only 4% belong to religious groups, compared with 14% of English Catholics, 19% of liberal Protestants, 44% of conservative Christians, and 25% of non-Christian faiths. Pentecostals are 13 times more inclined to belong to a religious group than French Catholics. The percentage of adults with any one of these four measures of commitment, called the “committed”, is lowest for French Catholics (22%), compared with 42% for English Catholics, 32% for liberal Protestants, 66% for conservative Christians, and 51% for non-Christians.

## **2. French Catholics who are inclined to religion: regional aspects.**

It is possible that religious commitment is relatively weak among French Catholics because they tend to live in regions of the country with few other religious denominations. Therefore, they would experience little competitive pressure, and priests would not be encouraged by the example of other denominations to serve their adherents. This argument is suggested by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, in 1776.<sup>4</sup> Laurence Iannaccone summarizes much evidence in support of this “lazy monopoly theory”, from inter and intra country analyses, and within United States around 1900 and 1850-60.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence for this argument, however, appears to be weak in Quebec. When the percentage of Catholics attending religious services monthly in various cities is plotted against the percentage of the population who are Catholic, the expected inverse relationship is not obvious (Chart 2). In fact there is a positive correlation between the share of the population that is French Catholic and the three religious commitment indicators, monthly attendance rate<sup>6</sup>, percentage of the French Catholic population that is religious, and the percentage religiously committed as defined above. Another contrary piece of evidence is that the English Catholics in Quebec have about the same inclination to attend church at least monthly as their French counterparts (26% versus 27%), even though they tend to live in areas with higher competition in terms of competing denominations.<sup>7</sup> Further, French Catholics in Ontario and New Brunswick are equally likely to attend church at least monthly as their English Catholic counterparts in these

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<sup>4</sup> Argued in Gary M. Anderson, “Mr. Smith and the Preachers: The Economics of Religion in the Wealth of Nations”, *Journal of Political Economy*, v. 96, no. 5, October 1988, pp. 1066-1088: “Smith was, in effect, accusing the monopoly church of reducing the quality of religion supplied to consumers, whose welfare was reduced as a result. ... he clearly attributes this quality reduction to the self-interested behavior of the clergy, who extracted monopoly rent from their flock both directly and indirectly by promulgating irrational doctrines that served their own interests.” p. 1080.

<sup>5</sup> Laurence Iannaccone, “Introduction to the Economics of Religion”, *Journal of Economic Literature*, v. XXXVI, September 1998, pp. 1465-1496; refer especially to pp. 1486-1487.

<sup>6</sup> The sample is too small to yield reliable estimates of the weekly attendance rate.

<sup>7</sup> Controlling for the effect of age, sex and rural-urban does not change this result; French Catholics are predicted to have higher likelihood of church attendance than English Catholics in Quebec, though the effect is not statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Fewer liberal Protestants than French Catholics attend church at least monthly, 24%, though the rate for conservative Christians is 65%. The percentage of the French Catholic population in Quebec that is religious is unusually low, however, 48%, compared with 71% of English Catholics, 60% of liberal Protestants, and 80% of conservative Christians (Chart 2).

provinces, despite living in sub-provincial areas with less religious competition owing to sub-provincial concentration of the French and Catholic population.<sup>8</sup>

Both English and French Catholic attendance rates are much higher in New Brunswick and Ontario than in Quebec, suggesting that a provincial effect accounts for the differences in rates, and not the language effect. It is possible that the Catholics in Quebec consider themselves to be less religious than the populations in other provinces, and for this reason they attend church less often. This view receives some support: 48% of French Catholics in Quebec are religious, compared with 67% in New Brunswick, and 68% in Ontario. Because of the suspected importance of the provincial effect for French Catholics, the Catholic population is divided into three groups in the following analysis, French Catholics in Quebec, French Catholics in the rest of Canada, and English Catholics, only 2% of whom reside in Quebec.

### **3. French Catholics in Quebec who are least likely to be religious**

French Catholics in Quebec are much less inclined to attend church weekly or to be religiously committed than either French Catholics in the rest of Canada, or English Catholics. The differences are large for almost every sub-population examined (Table 1). Overall, the weekly attendance and committed rates are almost twice as high for French Catholics living outside Quebec, and for English Catholics, compared with the French Catholics of Quebec, where 17% attend church weekly and 21% are religiously committed. For some sub-populations, however, the differences between French Catholics in Quebec and other Catholics is much greater.

A comparison of French Catholics in Quebec with those in the rest of Canada reveals that the greatest differences in weekly attendance rates are for women, those aged 65 and over, those with low household income, and those who are very satisfied with their life. The most striking difference is to be seen in the population aged 65 or over: 92% of French Catholics outside of Quebec attend weekly, compared with 53% of French Catholics in Quebec. The greatest differences in religious commitment rates occur in the population aged 65 or over, residents in urban areas with fewer than 15,000 population, those in professional occupations, those in the \$40,000-\$59,000 household income bracket, those with a university degree, and those satisfied with their life. Only the first and last mentioned sub-populations have wide differences with respect to both measures of religious commitment.

A comparison of French Catholics in Quebec with English Catholics in Canada reveals that the greatest differences in weekly attendance rates are for those in the 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 age ranges, those who are professionals, and parents with older children. For example, only 4% of French Catholic parents with children 6 to 12 attend church weekly, compared with 33% of English Catholics. The greatest differences in religious commitment rates occur in the population in age ranges 35 to 44, 45 to 54 and 55 to 64, for professionals, and for parents with all three age ranges of children. Only 10% of French Catholic parents with children 6 to 12 are religiously committed, for example, compared with 40% of English Catholics with children in the same age range. It is the disparity in rates of parents which would be viewed as most disturbing to religious leaders, because lack of a background in religion during childhood and youth would be expected to be translated into low rates of attendance and religious commitment later in life.

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<sup>8</sup> The rates are as follows: French Catholic – 57% in New Brunswick and 50% in Ontario, compared with English Catholic rates of 55% and 52%, respectively.

In some groups religious commitment differs little between the French Catholics in Quebec and other Catholics. For example, the weekly attendance rate for the French in the rest of Canada is not much higher than that of the French in Quebec for residents in rural areas, those with less than high school, and those aged 45 to 54. The rate is not much higher for English Catholics compared with French Catholics in Quebec among those who have less than high school, and slightly lower for those aged 65 and over – 51% compared with 53%. Fewer examples of similar rates, however, may be observed by the measure of the religious commitment rate. In the case of other characteristics the difference between French Catholics in Quebec and other Catholics is similar to the average difference: the populations watching television over 14 hours a week, worrying over money, having good health, and men, for example.

#### **4. Influential professionals**

Some professional groups have a major influence on the values and beliefs of a population. Teachers are the most obvious example, though those in the medical profession, social and physical sciences, management and administration, and artists and journalists are also influential. Higher education may have an anti-religious bias, and such bias may be stronger in French-speaking cultures than in North American English cultures, which would be more influenced by the relatively strong religious culture of the United States, and less influenced by a history of relatively strict ultramontane Catholicism.<sup>9</sup>

In four influential occupation groups, the percentage of professionals who consider themselves to be very or somewhat religious is much higher among English Catholics than among French Catholics living in Quebec (Chart 3). English Catholic teachers, for example, are twice as likely to say they are religious as French Catholic teachers in Quebec (78% versus 39%). A higher percentage of medical professionals are inclined to say they are religious, though the English Catholics are still almost twice as likely as their French counterparts in Quebec to say they are religious (86% versus 44%). The difference between English and French Catholics is not quite so marked among scientists, but it is still significant (72% versus 40%). The widest difference found is that among managers and administrators: the English Catholics are almost two and a half times more likely to be religious than their counterparts in Quebec who are French (78% versus 32%).

The sample is too small to examine differences for journalists and artists, or to compare other rates of religious commitment, such as weekly attendance or religious group involvement, let alone the religious involvement of French Catholics outside of Quebec. It is possible, however, that reliable indicators of high commitment would reveal even greater disparity between English and French Catholics. Adding together teachers and religious professionals, for example, allows computation of a reliable estimate of the religious commitment rate, the percentage who are either weekly attendees at church, involved in a religious group, a volunteer in a religious organization, or “very religious”. English Catholic teachers, including religious professionals, are three and one third more likely to be religiously committed than their French Catholic counterparts. It would

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<sup>9</sup> The anti-religious bias of social science education is argued in Rodney Stark, Laurence R. Iannaccone, and Roger Finke, “Religion, Science and Rationality”, *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings*, v. 86, no. 2, May, 1996, pp. 433-437. This paper identifies Auguste Comte’s *The Positive Philosophy*, 1896, as the first fully developed theory which regarded religion as a result of primitive thought processes and “hallucinations ... at the mercy of the passions”, with the prediction that religion would be displaced first by philosophy, and ultimately by science, particularly sociology, “the queen of the sciences”. In contrast to much social and behavioral science, the authors argue that religion is a rational choice made with greater likelihood by mentally healthy and educated people.

seem, therefore, that the difference in religiosity of influential French and English professionals has an influence on values and beliefs. Teachers particularly, may have a widespread influence, especially on the religious commitment of French Catholic youth in Quebec.

## **5. Characteristics of French and other Catholics**

It is possible that French Catholics in Quebec are more prone than other Catholics to have characteristics that are associated with low levels of religiosity. Are they more likely to live in large metro areas or to be younger, for example?

There is a small number of striking differences in characteristics among these three groups of Catholics, portrayed in Table 2. For example, the French Catholics in Quebec are mainly urban dwellers – 54% live in metro areas of over half a million – while the French Catholics outside of Quebec are divided between those living in large and small urban areas, and rural areas, where 46% live. English Catholics, though, are like the French Catholics in Quebec in that they predominate in the metro areas. The French Catholics in Quebec are more likely than the other Catholics to watch over 14 hours of television a week (40% versus 27% for English Catholics and 31% for French Catholics outside of Quebec), though it is noted above that attendance rates do not vary much by hours of television watched. Relatively fewer French Catholics live in households with sixty thousand or more income a year (21% versus 37% of English Catholics), and while they are less inclined to worry over money, they are also less likely to say that they are satisfied with their life (34% versus 47%). Being satisfied with life is associated with a higher religious commitment by English Catholics, and French Catholics outside Quebec, but not by French Catholics inside Quebec.

In many other respects the French Catholics in Quebec are very much like the English Catholics and French Catholics in other provinces. Their age and sex distributions are similar. Similar percentages, 17% to 20%, occupy professional occupations, and have high school graduation or more education. Most regard themselves as being in very good health. Similar percentages report children under 6 years of age, and in the 13 to 17 year age range. Only 5% of French Catholics and 4% of English Catholics are lone parents. On the whole there would seem to be little evidence to support the view that French Catholics in Quebec tend to have characteristics associated with low rates of religious commitment.

## **6. Differences between Catholic women and men in the frequency of church attendance**

In the above analysis, little has been said about the differences in religious commitment of women and men. The sample is too small to subdivide in detail for women and men, though some analysis of the differences between the sexes can be accomplished by means of regression analysis. In the following, estimates are described that reveal some important similarities and differences between the frequency of churchgoing by Catholic women and men. The estimates were obtained by attempting to explain the yearly number of visits to church by women and men, using some of the characteristics examined above. There are two key interests: first, to see if the French in Quebec differ from the French in the rest of Canada and from the English Catholics, after controlling for other characteristics associated with the frequency of attendance. The second interest is to see if professional Catholics have significantly lower frequencies of church attendance than non-professionals, given the other associations.

The relationship between various characteristics of women and men and their frequency of church attendance is portrayed in Table 3. These results indicate that attendance increases with age for both women and men, and age has the strongest association with attendance, after controlling for the influence of the other variables.<sup>10</sup> The second and third strongest associations for both women and men are the English Catholic, and the French outside of Quebec, both in contrast to the French Catholic in Quebec. Both the non-Quebec Catholics, and the English Catholics have significantly higher frequencies of attendance than the French Catholics in Quebec, after controlling for the presence of the other variables. Lone parent mothers, have significantly lower attendance than other Catholic women. Mothers with children aged 13 to 17 attend less frequently than women with no children. Men with a university degree attend church more frequently than men with high school or less education. Women reporting very good health attend more frequently than other women. Women who have professional occupations attend less frequently than women who are not professionals. Women watching 14 or more hours of television a week attend church less frequently than other women. Both women and men living in rural areas attend church more frequently than women living in urban areas.

All of the relationships among variables noted above are statistically significant after considering the influence on attendance of the other variables in the model. The lower rate of attendance of French Catholics is confirmed by these findings, along with the lower rate by women in professional occupations.

## **7. Suggestions for future research, and data limitations**

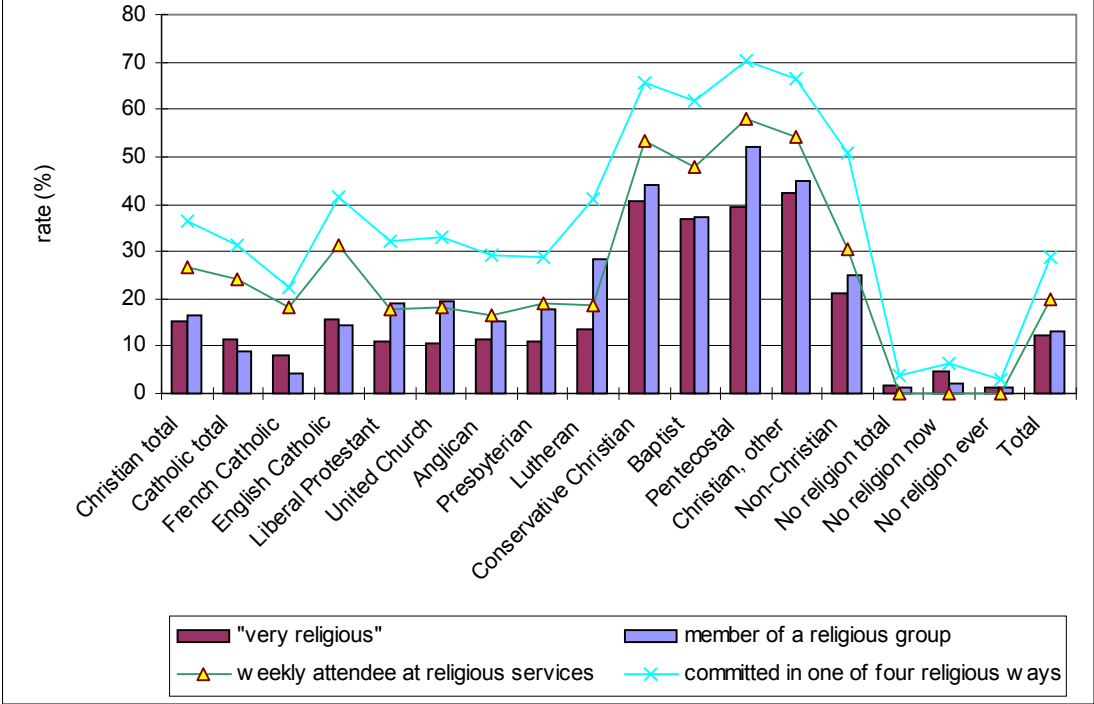
Two pieces of follow-up research would logically follow from this analysis. First, the rates of religious involvement of children and parents could be analysed in greater depth than is possible with the data used in this study, by using data from Statistics Canada's *Longitudinal Survey of Children*. The survey of children has information on counseling services supplied to parents by religious professionals and social service professionals, and information on whether or not the mother and father attend religious services with the child. Secondly, a limitation of the present study has been the inability to study the behavior of women and men, and professionals, in greater depth, because of the small sample. By pooling the micro records of the 1997 and 2000 *Surveys of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, the sample would be almost doubled. A study based on such pooling would also permit a test to see if there is any narrowing or widening of the gap in French-English religious commitment over the three years.

We may point to at least two more general limitations of research into the intensity of religious commitment in Canada. One is the lack of information on priests and the congregation attended – the supply side of the question. It is possible that priests in Quebec, for example, have a higher work burden, and are less tuned to meeting the needs of youth owing to being older on average than priests in English Canada. Another limitation of this study stems from the lack of information on Sunday School and liturgy programs for children. These programs might be more common in English Catholic Canada than in French Catholic Canada, thereby freeing busy professional women for worship while offering child education and training of a type that would complement that offered by the school system.

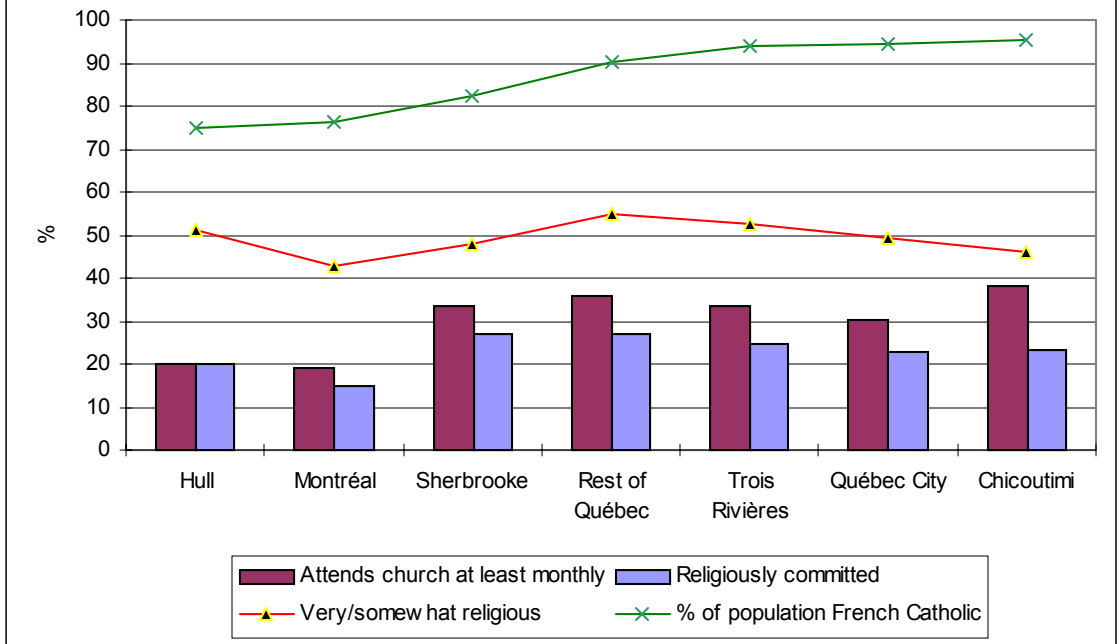
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<sup>10</sup> The 0.01 level of significance is considered to be statistically significant. This is an unusually strict criterion and is used in view of the fact that the sample is stratified and not random, therefore the estimated standard errors of the coefficients are underestimated by an unknown amount. Actual estimated levels of significance are published in Table 3 for the benefit of those who would like to apply other levels of significance.

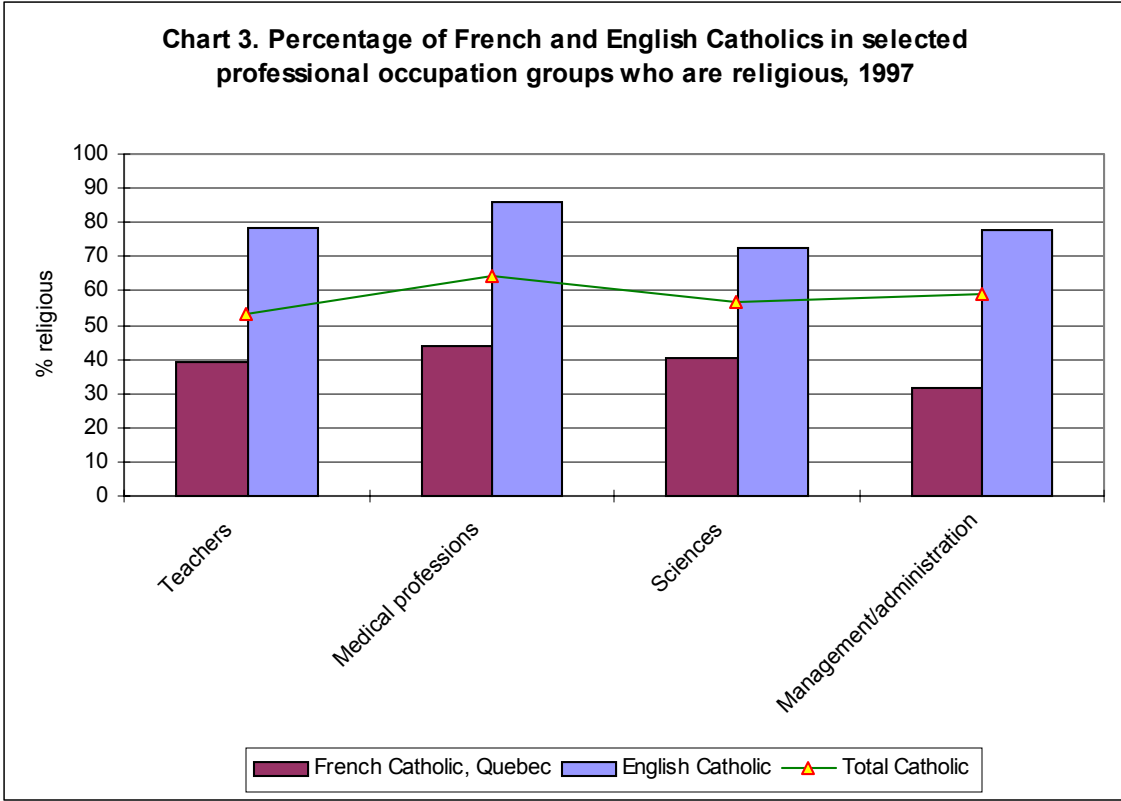
**Chart 1. Religious commitment indicators for faith communities, Canada, 1997**



**Chart 2. Religious commitment of French Catholics, and the percentage of the population that is French Catholic, Québec, 1997**



Source: Statistics Canada, *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, 1997*



Source: Statistics Canada, *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, 1997*

**Table 1. Comparison of French and English Catholic attendance at church services, and religiously committed, by various characteristics of Catholics, 1997\***

	Weekly attendance rate, %			Religiously committed, %				
	French: Qué.	French: RoC	English	Total	French: Qué.	French: RoC	English	Total
Canada	17	35	31	24	21	42	42	31
New Brunswick	...	34	38	36	...	40	44	41
Ontario	...	33	31	32	...	41	42	42
Urban, 500,000+	13	...	29	21	16	...	40	27
100,000-499,999	18	...	33	28	23	...	44	37
30,000-99,999	23	...	32	27	28	...	40	33
15,000-29,999	...	...	36	33	...	...	46	40
Less than 15,000	20	...	32	26	25	54	41	33
Rural area	22	30	36	28	28	41	45	36
Professional occupation	8	...	29	19	11	46	38	25
Non-professional occupation	19	36	32	26	23	41	42	33
TV: less than or = 14 hrs/week	15	33	31	24	19	40	42	32
greater than 14 hrs/week	20	39	31	25	23	45	40	30
Household income < \$20,000	21	45	36	27	25	49	45	34
\$20,000-39,999	22	47	40	30	26	50	51	37
\$40,000-59,999	10	28	23	17	14	44	36	26
\$60,000-99,999	13	...	28	22	16	...	38	30
\$100,000+	...	...	31	23	...	...	37	27
Worries over money	12	26	29	21	18	31	39	29
Less than high school	25	36	32	29	30	45	46	37
Graduated from high school	8	...	23	17	11	36	34	24
Some post secondary	14	...	23	19	16	...	36	27
University degree	15	...	32	24	19	44	40	30
Health very good	12	26	30	21	15	37	38	27
Very satisfied with life	18	41	37	29	21	49	47	36
Age group 15-24	...	...	20	12	...	...	27	17
25-34	7	...	17	12	10	...	28	19
35-44	7	26	29	18	12	31	41	26
45-54	14	20	32	22	18	44	45	31
55-64	30	45	53	41	35	47	62	48
65 years and over	53	92	51	54	56	92	61	60
Men	15	28	29	22	18	38	38	28
Women	19	41	33	26	23	45	45	34
Child(ren) under 6	7	...	26	16	12	...	39	25
Child(ren) 6 to 12	7	...	33	21	10	40	44	28
Child(ren) 13 to 17	10	...	36	22	15	...	47	30
Lone parents	...	...	21	15	...	...	35	25

... = sample less than 30.

Source: Statistics Canada, *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, 1997*

**Table 2. Characteristics of French and English Catholics in Canada, 1997**

	Percentage of:				Total
	French: Québec	French: rest of Canada	English		
Canada	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
New Brunswick	0.0	53.6	2.8	3.1	
Québec	100.0	0.0	3.9	51.3	
Ontario	0.0	42.0	59.4	29.4	
Urban, 500,000+	53.8	25.4	49.0	50.6	
100,000-499,999	10.1	5.7	21.4	15.3	
30,000-99,999	9.0	...	6.6	7.7	
15,000-29,999	1.3	7.5	2.7	2.2	
Less than 15,000	9.0	10.7	7.3	8.3	
Rural area	16.8	45.6	13.0	16.0	
Professional occupation	19.5	17.1	20.4	19.8	
Non-professional occupation	80.5	82.9	79.6	80.2	
TV: less than or = 14 hrs/week	59.6	68.6	72.6	66.0	
greater than 14 hrs/week	40.4	31.4	27.4	34.0	
Household income < \$20,000	28.2	21.4	19.0	23.6	
\$20,000-39,999	28.0	28.9	20.7	24.6	
\$40,000-59,999	22.6	25.9	24.1	23.4	
\$60,000-99,999	15.5	19.5	26.5	20.8	
\$100,000+	5.8	...	9.6	7.5	
Worries over money	43.3	40.5	51.0	46.9	
Less than high school	36.2	43.2	29.2	33.1	
Graduated from high school	14.2	12.6	20.2	16.9	
Some post secondary	8.2	11.7	9.3	8.8	
University degree	30.1	23.3	29.0	29.4	
Health very good	58.5	52.6	61.1	59.5	
Very satisfied with life	34.3	36.5	46.9	40.3	
Age group 15-24	16.7	16.5	16.8	16.7	
25-34	17.7	16.8	20.1	18.8	
35-44	21.8	16.5	23.0	22.2	
45-54	18.0	19.9	15.5	16.9	
55-64	11.6	11.2	11.0	11.3	
65 years and over	14.4	19.1	13.6	14.1	
Men	47.5	50.8	46.2	47.0	
Women	52.5	49.2	53.8	53.0	
Child(ren) under 6	14.4	9.6	15.5	14.7	
Child(ren) 6 to 12	53.8	25.4	49.0	50.6	
Child(ren) 13 to 17	12.3	10.0	11.2	11.7	
Lone parents	4.6	...	3.5	4.0	
Attends church weekly	16.9	34.7	31.1	24.2	
monthly	10.5	20.5	19.7	15.2	
yearly	44.0	30.9	32.3	38.1	
never	28.6	...	16.8	22.5	
Very religious	7.6	12.1	15.5	11.5	
Somewhat religious	40.8	55.6	61.0	50.8	
Religiously committed	21.0	41.7	41.6	31.4	

... = sample less than 30.

Source: Statistics Canada, *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, 1997*

**Table 3. Regressions predicting the frequency of church attendance per year, by Catholic women and men, Canada, 1997\***

	Women (n=4052, r squared adjusted=0.184)			Men (n=2946, r squared adjusted=0.169)		
	B	"t" statistic	significance	B	"t" statistic	significance
(Constant)	-59.795	-17.38	0.00	-53.145	-14.30	0.00
Log of age	20.357	23.95	0.00	17.252	18.64	0.00
Lone parent	-3.325	-2.68	0.01	-6.515	-2.23	0.03
Children under 6	-1.312	-1.33	0.18	-0.534	-0.49	0.63
Children 6-12	0.043	0.05	0.96	-0.613	-0.58	0.56
Children 13-17	-2.568	-2.44	0.01	0.218	0.16	0.87
University degree	2.056	1.70	0.09	4.933	3.92	0.00
Some post secondary	0.837	1.13	0.26	0.475	0.58	0.56
Very good health	2.085	2.96	0.00	0.069	0.09	0.93
Professional occupation	-3.446	-3.75	0.00	-2.355	-2.20	0.03
TV greater than 14 hrs/week	-0.116	-3.08	0.00	-0.001	-0.01	0.99
Rural area	3.935	5.02	0.00	2.318	2.70	0.01
French Catholic, non-Quebec	10.263	6.87	0.00	12.454	7.47	0.00
English Catholic, Canada	9.174	13.30	0.00	9.337	12.31	0.00

\*Attendance per year is assumed to = 52 if the Catholic reports weekly attendance at religious services, 12 if monthly, 3.5 if 3 or 4 times a year, 1.5 if once or twice a year, and 0 if otherwise.

The reference groups are as follows: high school graduation or less education for the education variables.

French Catholic in Quebec for the Catholic variables (English, and French, non-Quebec).

Respondent has no children, for the children variables.

Other reference groups are the opposite of the characteristic listed, for example, non-lone parent for the lone parent variable.

These equations are not intended to model behaviour because one decision variable is used as a predictor, the quantity of television watched per week, and a simultaneous set of equations would need to be specified in order to estimate unbiased coefficients. Also, some potentially important variables are missing, such as the average attendance per priest, the age of the priest, and counselling or other services received by the respondent.

The intent rather is only to identify statistically significant associations, after controlling for other hypothetically important variables associated with frequency of attendance.