

GLOBAL CATHOLIC STATISTICS: 1905 and Today

As the world prepares for a changing of the primary papal guard, let's expect pessimists to come out of the woodwork to tell of the 21st century decline and fall of Rome. However, any comparison of different centuries of Christianity shows a dappling effect with each time period containing its own shadows and light. That holds true for the Catholic Church in the last century.

1905-1910. The early twentieth century had its beams of light and shadows with growing Chinese, Indian, and Indo-Chinese Churches staffed by thousands of European missionaries, along with many thriving Eastern Rite communities in the Middle East. At the same time the French government's hostility to the Church was affecting the religious life in that elder daughter of the Church. There was also ongoing repression in the Russian Empire -- though far more tolerant than the 1917 to 1990 Soviet period. The African Church of a century ago (outside of Christian Abyssinia) was primarily composed of North African French Catholics and South African English and Dutch Protestants.

Since the First World War, Algeria and Tunisia have become remnant churches through emigration while Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced an explosive Christian growth. Actually, an equal but far less numerical explosive growth has occurred on the part of the Catholic Church in the far-flung regions of Oceania. In addition, the Church in the Pacific Rim, especially in Korea and the Philippines has increased in numbers; the sleeping giant of China is starting to awaken. Latin America has seen both the explosive rise in Catholic population (mainly through population growth) as well as the blossoming of Evangelical activity. The cumulating of both continents with the slower North American growth gives expanding percentages of Catholics to the Western Hemisphere taken as a whole. In 1910, Europe was the mainstay of the Church, but the continent's Christian communities are now stagnating through negative birth rates, Moslem immigration, and secularization.

Early twentieth century Catholic statistics were derived from numerous articles in The Catholic Encyclopedia, The Encyclopedia Press, copyrights 1907 AND 1913. These contain religious statistics collected mainly from 1900 to 1910. Totals for countries within the Encyclopedia itself varied depending on the sources and estimates used by different authors. The primary source was the article "Statistics" Vol. XIV p. 275-282. Comparisons of statistics within the volumes can be a rather inexact science. Early 20th century counts from the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires were quite precise, whereas African Angola's total Catholic estimates varied from 250,000 to

1,000,000. Many of the Latin American countries were rough estimates as well.

21st Century. Twenty-first century summary statistics are those which are most recent and found on the Catholic website <www.propfaith.org>. The Catholic totals and percentages of total population are taken from the most recent *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae* as generally quoted in the 2005 Catholic Almanac by Our Sunday Visitor Press. Even 21st century statistical reporting spans wide ranges of estimates, e.g., the underground church in China could be in double, triple or even more than the last officially reported numbers of 1949. One must realize that cumulating these summaries from widely differing sources erodes the significance of some exact counting. But the effect of comparisons does show general population growth or decline patterns.

Africa is a continent where Christianity found its place in the 20th century. Though the continent has been plagued by poverty, struggling independent nations, civil and tribal wars and the AIDS pandemic, still the Church has managed to not only survive, but to flourish climbing from a little over one percent (2 million) to one-sixth of the population (137 million). This occurred while the European colonials of North Africa (one quarter of the 1910 Catholic African population) fled en masse in the 1960s when most of the protective Colonial powers retreated from the continent.

Asia experienced a ten-fold jump in total Catholic population but this occurred while the rest of the continent had high total population increases as well. The percentage of Catholics increased from 1.5 to 2.9% during the century with advances showing in all except the Middle East, where emigration caused the percentages to hold about the same and even decline in parts of the former Ottoman Empire. Watch the continent of Asia in the 21st century.

America includes both North and South America, with major population rises in Latin America. Protestant advances exceed Catholic increases in Latin America, but the less Catholic United States and Canada did not experience such massive native increases; likewise immigration to North America includes Moslem and other non-Christian groups. Thus the overall percentage growth of Catholics is a surprising 10% for "America" (North and South American taken together), but that rise will certainly not continue in this century. However, Protestant total percentages in the United States has been in decline in recent years (10% in the last decade), with Catholic percentages holding steady because of Latin American and other immigration of Catholics.

Europe is now in serious decline in religious population both because of low birth rates and defections to a non-practicing status especially in Germany, Austria and the Lowlands. Actually the Communist period had its heaviest toll during the century on the church of Bohemia which went from 96% to less than 40% Catholics. Other Eastern European countries remain at about the same statistical level as a century before; Poland is now a single nation and not divided three ways. Reported figures for Spain and other western European country may be somewhat overestimated. Scandinavia and the United Kingdom have positive percentage changes over the century for Catholic populations.

Oceania is a surprise with an eight percent increase in Catholic population percentage. The most impressive change was in Papua New Guinea going from almost none to over a million people. Many island states moved from very low numbers to stable and established Catholic populations as well including East Timor.

Africa

1900-1910		2000-2005	
Algeria (& Tunisia)	663,000	Algeria	4,000 (0.01%)
Tunisia			20,000 (0.2%)
Angola	[250,000]		7,767,000 (57.4%)
Benin	FWA. [15,500]		1,587,000 (24%)
Botswana (Basutoland)	[8,900]		80,000 (4.5%)
British No. & W. Af,	21,829		
South Africa	90,587		
Other Br.	267,000		
Burkina Faso U. Volta	FWA.		1,484,000 (11.7%)
Burundi	Gr.		4,445,000 (67%)
Cameroon	Gr.		4,048,000 (26%)
Canary Is.	Sp. [358,000]		
Central African Rep.	FEA		752,000 (20%)
Cape Verde	Port. [142,000]		410,000 (93%)
Chad	FEA		853,000 (10.2%)
Comoros	Fr.		2,000 (0.3%)
Congo, Rep. of	FEA [40,000]		1,782,000 (49%)
Congo Dem. Belgium	34,475 (0.2%)		28,260,000 (55%)
Cote d'Ivoire	FWA		2,717,000 (16.5%)
Djibouti	Fr.		7,000 (1%)
Egypt	100,257		289,000 (0.4%)
Equatorial Guinea	Port.		422,000 (87%)
(Rio Muni & Fernando Po)			
Eritrea	It.		145,000 (3.6%)
Abyssinia	3,000	Ethiopia	494,000 (0.7%)
French Poss.	FWA 53,898		

FEA, Madagascar	365,000		
Gabon	FEA[12,000]	711,000	(54%)
The Gambia	Br. W.Af.	34,000	(2%)
German Poss.	55,000		
Ghana	Br. W. Af.	2,528,000	(12%)
Guinea	FWA	170,000	(2%)
Guinea-Bissau	Port.[30,000]	151,000	(10.4%)
Italian Poss.	17,000		
Kenya	Br. E. Af	7,736,000	(24%)
Lesotho	Br. So. Af.	966,000	(51%%)
Libya (Tripoli)	6,000 (0.6%)	74,000	(1.5%)
Liberia	2,800 (0.1%)	162,000	(5%)
Madagascar	[137.000] Fr.	4,583,000	(27%)
Malawi	Br. E. Af.	2,873,000	(24%)
Mali	FWA	278,000	(2%)
Mauritania	FWA	5,000	(0.2%)
Mauritius	Fr	278,000	(23%)
Morocco	10,000	23,000	(0.08%)
Mozambique	[3,500] Port.	4,294,000	(23%)
Nambia (German SW Af)	Gr.	367,000	(19%)
Niger	FWA	16,000	(0.1%)
Nigeria	[25,000]	17,527,000	(14.4%)
Portuguese Poss.	568,000		
Reunion (St. Denis)	Fr. [150,000]	595,000	(85.5%)
Rwanda	Gr.	3,642,000	(48%)
Sao Tome & Principe	Port.	118,000	(88%)
Senegal	[2,740] FWA	535,000	(5%)
-- Sengambia	[19,000]		
Seychelles	Fr.	69,000	(85%)
Somalia	It.	100	
South Africa	Br. So. Af.	3,110,000	(7%)
Sierra Leone	Br. W. Af.	158,000	(3%)
Spanish Poss.	434,000		
Sudan	Br. E. Af.	4,181,000	(13%)
Swaziland	Br.E. Af.	55,000	(5.1%)
Tnzania Ger. E.Af.	Gr.	9.995,000	(29%)
Togo	Gr.	1,320,000	(28%)
Uganda Upper Nile	[20,000] Br. E. Af.	10,796,000	(44%)
Zambia Rhodesia	[3,000] Br. E. Af.	3,082,000	(28%)
Zimbabwe	Br. E.Af.	1,145,000	(9%)

** Total Cath in Africa (Vol.X, p. 376

South Africa	92,840
Central	231,358
NW	74,032
NE	145,359

Islands	310,342
Sub-total	853,931
remainder	180,000

Belgium: Congo (Zaire)

German: Burundi, Cameroun, Rwanda, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo

Italian: Eritrea, Libya, It. Somaliland

Portuguese: Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Eq. Guinea (overest.) Sao Tome

Spanish: Canary Is. Af. 1910; Include under Spain in 2002

[] means counted elsewhere on this listing.

Bold means percentage growth from 1910 to 2005

African Total Population:	200,000,000	830,516,000 (2002)
Catholic Totals:	2,690,000 (1.3%)	137,428,000 (16.6%)

Asia

* China	1,210,054		4,000,000 (0.7%)	1949
	--	underground estimates	10,000,000+	current
Hong Kong	[14,195]		367,000 (5.2%)	
Taiwan	(in China)		310,000 (1.3%)	
Macau			18,000 (4%)	
India	2,242,922	Rep. of India	17,111,000 (1.6%)	
Burma	[53,000]	Myanmar	602,000 (1.2%)	
Pakistan	(in India)		1,288,000 (0.9%)	
Bangladesh	(In India)		277,000 (0.2%)	
Ceylon	[300,000]	= Sri Lanka	1,362,000 (7%)	
Malaysia			798,000 (3%)	
Singapore			159,000 (3.8%)	
Indo-China	931,357	Vietnam	5,550,000 (6.8%)	
		Laos	40,000 (0.7%)	
		Cambodia	35,000 (0.27%)	
East Indies	56,214	= Indonesia	6,376,000 (3%)	
Batavia	[51,313]			
Dut. New Guinea	[1,500]			
Port. Indies		= East Timor	767,000 (93%)	
Brunei			2,100 (0.6%)	
Japan	65,741		516,000 (0.4%)	

Korea	68,016	South Korea	4,325,000	(8.8%)
		North Korea	100,000	(1969 est.)
Mongolia			1,000	(0.04%)
Siam	33,267	= Thailand	292,000	(0.4%)
* Philippines	7,205,052 (86%)		65,063,000	(83%)
Turkey (Asiatic)	629,797	Turkey (incl. Eur)	32,000	(0.05%)
-- Asia Minor	[12,261]			
-- Mesopotamia	[36,320]	Iraq	307,000	(1%)
-- Palestine, Phoenicia & Syria	/ [308,704]	Syria	349,000	(2%)
		/ Lebanon	1,200,000	* 1,867,000 (52%)
		/ Israel	115,000	(1.7%)
		/ Jordan	68,000	(1%)
-- Armenia & Turdistan	cf. Russia			
	[65,000] cf. Russia			
-- Arabia (only Aden)	1,500	Saudi Arabia	805,000	???
		United Arab Emirates	336,000	(8%) ???
		Bahrain	30,000	(4.3%)???
		Kuwait	157,000	(8%) ???
		Oman	65,000	(2.6%) ???
		Yemen	4,000	
		Qatar	60,000	(11.8%) ???
		??? Most reflect migrant workers but numbers are overestimated.		
Afghanistan	-- Christians prohibited --			
Persia	9,050	Iran	25,000	(0.3%)
Nepal			7,000	(0.2%)
Bhutan			400	

Asian Total Population:	828,243,000		3,800,110,000
Catholic Totals:	12,661,498	(1.5%)	110,234,000 (2.9%)

North and South America

* Argentina	3,921,136 (98%)	-- 6,100,000--	34,224,000	(90%)
* Boliva	1,800,000 (95.5%)	--2,150,000--	7,400,000	(85%)
British W. Indies	304,000			
Anguilla			200	(3%)
Antigua & Barbuda			8,000	(12.5%)
Bahamas			41,000	(15%)
Barbados	[1,000]		11,000	(3.8%)
Bermuda			9,000	(16%)

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Br. Honduras	[23,500] (59%) = Belize	133,000 (52%)
Br. Guiana	[22,000] (7.2%) = Guyana	88,000 (10.2%)
Dominica	[10,000] est.	60,000 (79%)
Grenada	[6,000] est.	56,000 (54%)
Jamaica	[14,000] (1.8%)	114,000 (4.3%)
Cayman Is.		4,000 (17%)
Montserrat		1,000 (8%)
St. Christopher & Nevis		5,000 (10%)
St. Lucia	[15,000] est.	100,000 (63%)
St. Vincent & Grenadines		7,000 (7%)
Trinidad & Tobago	[50,000] est.	383,000 (30%)
Turks & Calcos Is.		1,000 (9%)
Virgin Is. (Br.)		1,000 (9%)
Brazil	20,250,000,000 (96%)	149,329,000 (85%)
Canada	3,017,000 (40.5%)	12,988,000 (43%)
Central America	4,353,000	
Costa Rica	[334,000] (99%)	3,518,000 (86%)
El Salvador	[750,000] est.	5,038,000 (78%)
Guatemala	[1,422,933] (99%)	9,741,000 (81%)
Honduras	[700,000] (97%)	5,524,000 (81%)
Nicaragua	[600,000]	4,758,000 (89%)
Panama	[420,000]	2,582,000 (89%)
Chile	3,800,000 (97%)	11,630,000 (74.5%)
Columbia	4,300,000	38,701,000 (89%)
Cuba	1,824,897 (90%)	6,306,000 (56%)
Dominican Rep.	600,000 all	7,700,000 (90%)
Dutch & Danish Poss.	77,000 (46%)	
Aruba		56,000 (8%)
Neth. Antilles		152,000 (76%)
(Curacao, St. Eustatius, Saba & St. Maarten)		
Suriname	[13,300] (17.5%)	106,000 (23%)
Virgin Is. (Danish)		(US) 32,000 (29%)
Ecuador	1,270,000 (90%)	11,782,000 (92%)
French Poss.	400,000 (95%)	
Guadeloupe	[182,112]	391,000 (95%)
(also Fr. parts of St. Martin & St. Bartholomew)		
Fr. Guiana	[20,000] (62%)	120,000 (80%)
Martinique	[170,000]	351,000 (88%)
Haiti	1,488,000 (83%)	6,675,000 (81%)
Mexico	13,533,000 (99%)	92,220,000 (92%)
Paraguay	580,000 (92%)	5,085,000 (88%)
*Peru	(1906) 3,133,000 (88%) --4,500,000 --	23,639,000 (88%)
Puerto Rico	1,000,000 (90%) (1912)	3,099,000 (78%)
United States	14,618,761 (16.4%)	67,260,000 (23%)
Uruguay	1,080,000 (97%)	2,530,000 (75%)
Venezuela	2,640,000 (96%) (1911)	21,971,000 (87%)

 * 1910 estimates appear too high in Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru (% based on non-Catholic listing of higher statistic compilations).

Total American Population:	169,053,000	857,783,000
Catholic Totals:	87,614,000 (52%)	534,339,000 (62%)

 Europe

Andorra	5,231	64,000 (94%)
Austro-Hungarian Empire	38,195,000 (1909)	
* Austrian Provinces	Lt. [20,661,000] (91%) (1900)	
Arm. [2,000]	Gk. [3,134,000] (48%)	
-- Austria		5,957,000 (73.4%)
-- Croatia	[2,186,910] (71%)	3,881,000 (87%)
-- Slovenia		1,654,000 (82.6%)
-- Bohemia	Czech Rep. [6,210,385] (96%)	3,967,000 (39%)
* Hungarian Provinces	Lt. [10,299,000]	
Gk. [1,907,936]		
-- Hungary		6,219,000 (63%)
-- Slovakia		3,960,000 (74%)
-- Transylvania		cf. Rumania
-- Polish part	[4,000,000] cf. Poland	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	413,354 (22.2%)	467,000 (11%)
Belgium	7,350,000 (99%)	8,462,000 (76%)
Bulgaria	29,684 (0.8%) (1905)	75,000 (1%)
Denmark	7,800 (0.2%) (1906)	34,000 (0.6%)
incl. Greenland and Faroe Is.		
Great Britain	5,786,000 (1909)	
England	[1,709,000]	3,584,000 (8.3%)
Wales	[54,000] (2.7%)	148,155 (5%)
Scotland	[475,000] (10% est.)	742,218 (13%)
Ireland	[3,310,028] (75%)	4,832,000 (76%)
Republic and Ulster		
Gibraltar	[17,000] (68%)	23,000 (85%)
Malta	[221,000] (99%)	368,000 (95%)
France	38,467,000 (97%)	46,110,000 (78%)
Germany	22,094,000 (36.0%)	27,401,000 (33.2%)
(incl. part of Poland		

& Alsace-Lorraine)

Greece	44,265	(1.5%)	126,000	(1%)
Iceland	50		5,000	(1.4%)
Italy	33,750,000	(97.12%)	55,763,000	(97%)
Liechtenstein	9,650		26,000	(80%)
Luxembourg	242,572	(98.5%)	382,000	(87%)
Monaco	19,000		29,000	(90%)
Netherlands	2,045,000	(35.1%)	4,974,000	(31)
Norway	2,000		55,000	(1%)
Portugal	(1905) 5,438,000	almost all	9,404,000	(93%)
Rumania	167,000	(2.5%) incl. Trans.	1,905,000	(8.9%)
San Marino	11,439		27,000	(93%)
Serbia	(1895) 11,000	(0.4%)		
Montenegro	(1897) 12,900	(5%)	Yugoslavia 533,000	(5%)
--			Macedonia 15,000	(0.9%)
Spain	19,280,000		38,437,000	(94%)
(minus Canary Is.)			(with Canary Is.)	
Sweden	1907) 2,600		146,000	(1.6%)
Switzerland	(1910) 1,463,000	(41.5%)	3,183,000	(44%)

Europe & Asia

Russian Empire	13,450,000	(10.7%)		
Russia	[450,000 est.]		809,000	(0.05%)
Belarus	[400,000 est.]		1,034,000	(10%)
Ukraine	[2,000,000 est.]		4,759,000	(10%)
Kazakhstan	[112,000]		182,000	(1.2%)
Kyrgyzstan	/		30,000	
Tajikistan	/		2,000	
Turkmenistan	/		1,000	
Uzbekistan	/		4,000	
Estonia			6,000	(0.43%)
Lithuania	[1,200,000] (4/5 Vilna dioc.)		2,782,000	(79%)
Latvia	[150,000] est.		434,000	(18.5%)
Moldova Bessarabia	few		20,000	(0.46%)
Transcaucasus	[80,000]			
Armenia	[60,000]		150,000	(5%)
Georgia			100,000	(1.9%)
Azerbaijan	few		-	
Finland	[1,000]		8,000	(0.1%)
** Poland in Russia	[9,000,000] (74.8%)	Poland	36,977,000	(96%)

Turkey	280,000			

Albania	[120,000] (9%)	524,000 (16.6%)
Thrace		
Cyprus	[2,200] (1%)	17,000 (2.2%)
Crete & Aegean Is.		

* Austria-Hungary total of 1900 is broken into Latin, Greek and Armenian Rites 36,004,000

** Poles in Austria [4,000,000]
 Poles in Germany [2,000,000]
 In CE XII,p.196 (Russia 12 million Poles & Austria 4 million)
 Albania was made independent in 1912.

Total European Population:	430,350,000	702,083,000
Catholic Totals:	188,577,000 (44%)	279,915,000 (40%)

	Oceania	
Australia	951,429 (22.6%)	5,474,000 (28%)
New Zealand (1910)	127,227 (14.5%)	466,000 (12%)
Niue		200 (7%)
British Possessions	35,000	
Cook Is.	\	3,000 (15%)
Fiji	\	86,000 (10%)
Gilbert Is.		Kiribati 46,000 (54.2%)
New Guinea (Br. and Ger)	\	
Solomon Is.	\	89,000 (20%)
Tongo	\	16,000 (14.5%)
Tuvalu (Ellice Is.)		100 -
French Possessions	53,000	
Fr. Polynesia (Tahiti)		(1998) 89,000 (40%)
New Caledonia		(1998) 106,000 (60%)
Wallis & Futuna Is.		15,000 (100%)
Vanuatu (New Hebrides)	[3,000] (5%)	29,000 16%)

American Possessions --	47,000	
Am. Samoa		14,500 (20%)
Guam (US)	[10,000] most	131,000 (80%)
& Marianas		56,000 (90%)
Hawaiian Is.	[37,000]	-- See U.S. --
German Possessions	27,399	
Marshall Is.	[320]	5,000 (12.5%)
Caroline Islands	[11,600]	
Micronesia		69,000 (53%)
Palau (part of Caroline)		9,000 (42%)
Nauru		3,000 (40%)
Papua New Guinea	2,500	1,653,000 (33%)
& nearby islands		
Western Samoa	-----	42,000 (23%)
Tokelau	-----	1,000 (50%)

Oceania Total Population: 6,634,000 31,402,000

Catholic Totals: 1,244,000 (19%) 8,399,000 (27%)

 GRAND TOTALS:

	1910	2002
Total Population:	1,720,000,000	6,221,894,000

Catholic Totals:	292,787,000 (17.0%)	1,070,315,000 (17.2%)
		www.propfaith.org

	Est. 1910	200
Total	1,720,000,000	6,278,519,000
Catholics	292,787,000	1,097,328,000 (17.5%)
Orthodox	127,542,000	217,371,000
Protestants	186,056,000	351,362,000
Anglicans	[25,000,000]	81,799,000
Oriental	8,974,000	40,000,000 est.

Source: International Bulletin of Missionary Research

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