

Presentation at Synod 2009 (November 11, 2009) by Bishop-elect Stephen Leung

Sketch of an Asian Canadian Mission in ANiC

I. Some basic understanding

Asian Canadian

- The rationale of my using the word, **sketch**, is because *Asian Canadian* is in fact a rather complex term that is difficult to explain or generalize. In so doing, it easily exhibits flaws of missing something or leaving someone out. My intent in giving a sketch is merely to get a glimpse of the overall picture, not trying to be comprehensive.
- The word, **Asia**, here, is used mainly in a geographical sense. Nevertheless, it can also be used with reference to ethnic origins, cultures, languages, religions, politics, and socio-economic context. In fact, Asia is the largest continent, a land too vast for us to encompass its diversity in such a short presentation.
- On the other hand, **Canadian** is another much debated word over what it really means, such as: who represent Canada, what Canadian culture means, how it is perceived by the people, in all ethnicity, residing in the great land of Canada.
- To further clarify my frame of reference, I use “*Asian Canadian*” simply for two purposes. Firstly, to refer to a geographical ethnic origin, and secondly, to be as widely inclusive as possible when doing mission outreach so that no Asian will be excluded. (Thus, not Chinese mission, nor Korean mission, etc.) However, in reality, whether ANiC is able or wish to reach all Asian Canadians is a practical option bound by limited resources. Yet, the use of *Asian Canadian* is tried not to be in exclusive language.

Who are Asian Canadians?

- According to Statistics Canada, the major visible minorities of Asian descent are Chinese, South Asian (India, Fiji and Pakistan), Filipino, Southeast Asian (Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam), Arab, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Altogether they almost represent all of Canada’s visible minorities, except for two non-Asian groups, namely, Black and Latin American. In this respect, the profile of Canadian visible minorities is entirely different from the American scenario, where black and Hispanic peoples are predominant. Further, of all visible minorities, Chinese and South Asian groups stand for at least half of the Asian Canadian in the 2006 census result, and most of them are first generation immigrants.

In a visible minority projection to 2017 by Statistics Canada (from 2001-2017), it shows that the influx of immigrants is still on the uphill, thus warrants this comment: “immigration is a substantial contributor to population growth in Canada.” (2005, p.8)

Churches for Asian Canadians

- When I first came to Canada in 1990, there were two conflicting ideas among churches regarding the ministry towards Chinese immigrants. There were those who strongly believed that when the immigration flow slowed down, and the first generation immigrants passed into glory, the second generation (Canadian Born Chinese, CBC, or Canadian Raised Chinese, CRC) would eventually join the mainstream English-speaking churches, like what the German and Scandinavian Lutheran churches experienced. Therefore, the ethnic church is intrinsically temporary and transitional. However, another group strongly believed that immigrants needed their own ethnic churches, representing their mother language, cultural ties, effective outreach to their own folks, and their identified spiritual home. Across different views as to the intrinsic value of the ethnic church, the same issue at heart is a sense of ethnic belonging that provides an identity and safety net as they consider themselves sojourners in a foreign land and unfamiliar culture.
- Take, for example, Chinese churches in Canada have been growing tremendously since 1950, due to political instability in China. (I don't have church statistics for other Asian minority churches like South Asian and Korean.) Ever since, immigration flow never ended nor subsided. Chinese churches grew rapidly in number, widely dispersed across Canada. As CCCOWE (Chinese Christian Centre of World Evangelism) statistics show, Chinese Christian Sunday attendance in 1996 was 47,160, 2002 was 67,400, about 44% increase. (BC being 25,000 and Ontario, 35,000.) The number of churches in 1996 was 269 and 2002, 360, about 33% increase. (BC has 118 and Ontario, 172) This serves as an indicator to the growing speed of the Chinese churches in Canada.

Fig. 1 Chinese Christians in Canada Sunday Attendance

1996	47,160
2002	67,400

An increase of 44% from 1996 to 2002
Chinese Christian Centre of World Evangelism Statistics

Fig. 2 Chinese Churches in Canada

1996	269
2002	360

An increase of 33% from 1996 to 2002
Chinese Christian Centre of World Evangelism Statistics

Data source: <http://www.cccowe.ca/survey/CanadaChineseChurch.ppt>

- As for the Anglican Church of Canada, before 2008, there were 10 Chinese churches. After 2008, 3 churches left and one agglomerated into a Caucasian church due to low

attendants. Of the 3 that left, 2 joined ANiC and one to ACiC. Besides Chinese churches, there were two Japanese churches in ACC. But one agglomerated into a Caucasian church as well and one joined ANiC (which has now stopped gathering).

- It can be seen that the growth of Chinese Canadian Anglican church is very slow, as compared to churches in other denominations like Baptist, Alliance and Mennonite. I have been in Canada for 20 years and experienced very little support from the past Diocese with respect to resources. In an ethnic church, we need to do bilingual or even trilingual services (English, Cantonese, and Mandarin). There are extra workload, like preparing two bulletins (or bulletin in two languages), and two not-the-same sermons on Sunday for two culturally diverse congregations. Very often, ethnic churches have extra workload but fewer pastoral staff due to unstable finance situation. This will slow down the growth.
- Good Shepherd experienced fast growth from 1991 to 1998, planting two churches in Vancouver. But ever since being involved in the sexuality conflict with the Diocese, the growth of Good Shepherd has become stagnant. Not until early this year, when we were able to purchase the new church property, we started to experience release from bondage, and once again returned to the growing track.
- I hope that we can revive our mission as soon as possible. I hope that ANiC can have a true heart for Asia Mission, with strategic plans of building up lay leaders, attracting more into ordained ministry, and giving financial and prayer support.

II. Some Scriptural teachings on cross-cultural mission

1) God demands our sacrificial love in evangelism

Evangelism is not just an act of proclaiming the gospel, it is also about the God who calls us to live out the gospel in faith, love and hope as his witnesses to the world. God calls us to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice for his use in salvation history. In God's heart, salvation has to be accomplished through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. It is in offering of himself that Jesus manifests God's love through his obedience unto death. Only sacrificial love can touch people and turn them to God for repentance. As the criminal on Jesus' left said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power." (Lk 23:42a) Therefore, when Jesus called his disciples to the Great Commission in Matthew's gospel (Mt.28:18-20), "Go and make disciples..." Jesus also called them to lay down their lives for Christ as he died for them. (Jn.21:18-22, c.f. Rom.12:1-2) Without Jesus' love, evangelism becomes dry and powerless.

The power of evangelism is thus not based on a good program, or a powerful preacher. But it is from a Christian community in God's love, faith and hope.

After Jesus' death, we see that the apostles and disciples were intimidated and lost. They locked the doors for fear. But what made Peter bold and what caused the early community to become a fearless community? It started with their true repentance by admitting their past arrogance, often setting the agenda and running the show for God. They also admitted their

failure to understand God's love in Jesus' sacrificial death. It is their repentance that led them to the upper room to pray together for the first time. (Acts 1:13-14) They gave up their own political thought of building God's kingdom, and learned to wait for the Spirit of God to rule over them. Soon, we see the indwelling of the Holy Spirit upon them: Peter then boldly proclaimed the gospel with no fear, and consequently three thousands men, and many others, believed Christ. We then find a community of faith, love and hope being formed. We see an explosive, revolutionary revival movement rolled out. As a result, more and more people, touched by Christian charity and boldness, came to Christ, with no fear of persecution and opposition.

Today, if we want to experience the same powerful gospel in our parish, we need to place priority in building up our community marked by unity in faith, love and hope. The Christian community itself is the visible gospel to the world. Jesus reminds us that "by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn.13:35) The mark of a Christian community is to serve in Jesus' love. If we do not live out the gospel, we have no gospel to preach.

2) The Holy Spirit comes to lead God's mission

When Joshua was by Jericho, ... a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand; Joshua went and said to him, "*Are you for us, or for our adversaries?*" And he said, "*No; but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.*" (Jos. 5:13-14a)

God made it clear that his coming was to lead his army. Remember, God reminded us that it was his army and his battle. God therefore came to lead. If Joshua, without correctly positioning himself in the right role (v.14bf), took over from God into his own hands, Israelites would lose the battle in Jericho. We have to remember that the question is not whether God is on my side or the other side. The right question is: are we on God's side and under his reign?

Likewise, in cross-cultural mission or Asian mission, we have to be very honest and keep examining ourselves, who is in fact leading the mission. If the sole leader is the Holy Spirit, be prepared for great surprises how the Spirit leads, which is very often beyond our thought and plan. All we need to do is to surrender to God's leadership and discern how to be his partner in mission.

We see the same scriptural teaching in cross-cultural mission in Acts. In Acts 10, which is the watershed from Jewish mission to Gentile mission, the Holy Spirit here again explicitly took the lead. The author of Acts gave his testimony by pointing to a number of facts evidencing the Spirit's leadership. First, the Spirit of God initiated the faith in the Roman centurion, Cornelius, and his family. The Spirit gave the vision of cross-cultural mission to Peter. Then the Spirit convicted and led the two parties to meet. The Spirit showed Peter the divine work and invited him to share the gospel to the Gentiles. When Peter hadn't finished what he was saying, the Spirit descended on the people gathered there, including non-

circumcised gentiles. They were filled by the Spirit to speak in tongues, which clearly showed that it was a ministry entirely from the Spirit. All these led Peter to believe that the conversion of the gentile believers, Cornelius and his family, was entirely God's work. Peter was invited to be God's witness and partner in the gospel. Because of this out-of-the-ordinary experience, Peter became Paul's support later in the first Ecumenical meeting where they debated the way to do the cross-cultural gentile mission.

I say, be prepared for many surprises when we surrender to the Spirit's leading. Peter, his companions as well, was shocked to see that the Holy Spirit did not work according to Jewish theology in the conversion of gentiles into Jewish faith. How can the Holy Spirit descend on non-circumcised gentiles? This led to a later debate over whether circumcision was part of the gospel in salvation. Apart from theology, the indwelling of the Spirit in the gentile believers before baptism, in my understanding, is entirely a divine act indicating the divine sovereignty in cross-cultural mission. Prior to the Jews' readiness in mission planning, God acted in his own time, fulfilling the salvation work for gentile mission. Such indwelling of the Spirit upon Cornelius gave Peter a new understanding of God's grace on gentile mission, that they were no different from the Jews, in their confession that Jesus Christ is the "Lord of all". (Acts 10:36)

When we decide to surrender to the Holy Spirit for Asian mission or any cross-cultural mission, we will be immediately challenged to open up our minds, hearts, and our theological paradigm to the new understanding of outreach and pastoral care, which is different from what we are familiar with in our own cultural context. The mission demands us to surrender, so that we can enter into a new mission given in God's grace.

3) We are one in Jesus Christ in cross-cultural mission

When Paul, the apostle of gentile mission, took up the mandate to do cross-cultural mission, he had to wrestle with how to preach a gospel clothed in Jewish culture to a Greco-Roman world. This involved not only language, Hebrews or Aramaic vs Greek, but also culture, how to be a Christian in the cultural context they were brought up with, both individually and communally. How to preach a God who is the Savior and Lord of all nations, rather than asking people to receive a Jewish religion and a born Jewish Savior. When converted to Christianity, how should they be a gentile Christian without necessarily becoming a Jew. Here, Paul had to defend what is the essence of Christ's gospel, and distinguish it from the cultural Jewish religious life inherited from Judaism. Paul had to distinguish the gospel in the New Testament from the Old Testament.

In Acts 15, Paul inevitably had to face hard challenges for the cause of cross-cultural mission. After hearing the report of Gentile mission, some Jewish Christian leaders, Judaizers, claimed that in addition to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gentile Christians also needed to be circumcised and obeyed the law of Moses.(v.5b) In fact, this view came from a larger contemporary view of the proselyte model, meaning that the gentile converts had to become Jews.

But Paul stood firm that other than the gospel of Christ, no additional requirement is in need for salvation. Paul understood the gospel from a NT eschatological context that gentile converts were accepted on an equal basis with Jews. They did not have to become Jews, or acquire a Jewish lifestyle. (Longenecker p.37) Paul then cancelled circumcision as a prerequisite for salvation. This act in the apostles' time was revolutionary and seen as anti-Judaism.

Stephen in Acts was stoned to death mainly because he was the first Christian to confront the Jewish theology, which held that the temple was the center of worshipping God. Rather, in Stephen's argument, the new temple was Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul faced similar challenges here from the Jewish belief that circumcision was definitely part of salvation. Consequently, it called for the first open heated debate in Acts 15, what we call the first Jerusalem council.

In the end, the Jerusalem council decided to support Paul's understanding of the gospel, and refused to side with the Judaizers. However, pastorally, to make sure having a close fellowship with Jewish Christians, the gentile converts were asked to forbidden the idol food, the food with blood, and sexual immorality.

In this understanding, Paul proclaimed a gospel that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles in how to be a Christian and to be the body of Christ.

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal.3:26-28) NIV

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Paul contended that in Jesus Christ, no matter what ethnicity, we are equal and one in Christ. You don't have to become a Jew (or Caucasian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, or Arabs) in order to be saved and become a perfect Christian. Nobody needs to change his given identity and cultural life in order to be saved as a Christian.

We all belong to a particular ethnic group and the culture we are raised in. Therefore, we get used to our preferences in life style with respect to the culture that shaped us. In this understanding, all of us, to a certain extent and various degrees, have our prejudice and favor to those close to us culturally, and distance from those who are culturally alien to us. Even worse, we try to assimilate or convert others to become like us.

Richard Longenecker rightly points out,

“But the gospel calls on us as Christians to set aside all such dwelling upon our preferences as would lead to pride and exclusivism, and to recognize our oneness with all Christians in the new relationship brought about by God through Jesus Christ.”

III. The Challenge of up-coming growth in Asian Canadian Population

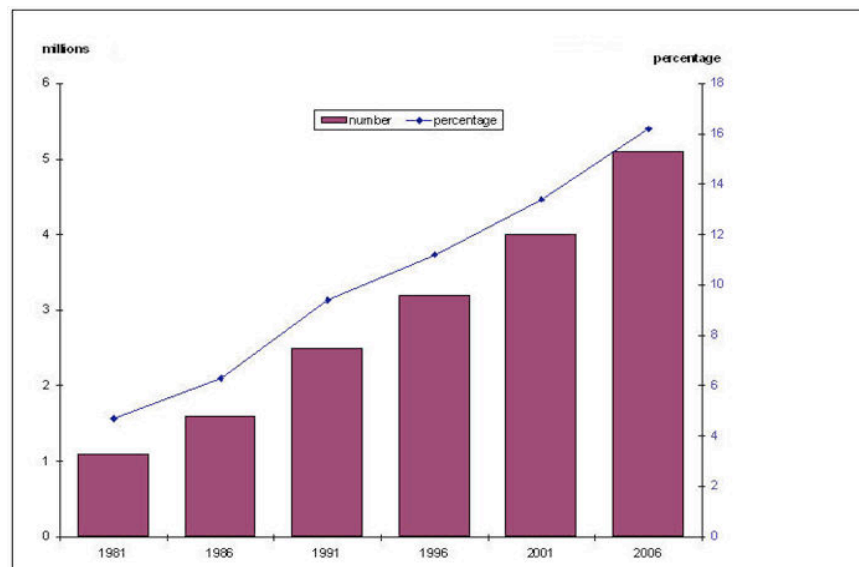
A. Visible Minority Population in Canada

5,068,100 (5 million) identified as visible minority (VM), 16.2% of Canadian population in 2006

Compared to:

1. 2,500,000 (2.5 million) VM, 9.4% of Canadian population in 1991
2. 3,200,000 (3.2 million) VM, 11.2% of Canadian population in 1996
3. 3,983,800 (3.9 million) VM, 13.4 % of Canadian population in 2001

Fig. 3 Number & Share of Visible Minority Persons in Canada 1981-2006 (Statistics Canada)



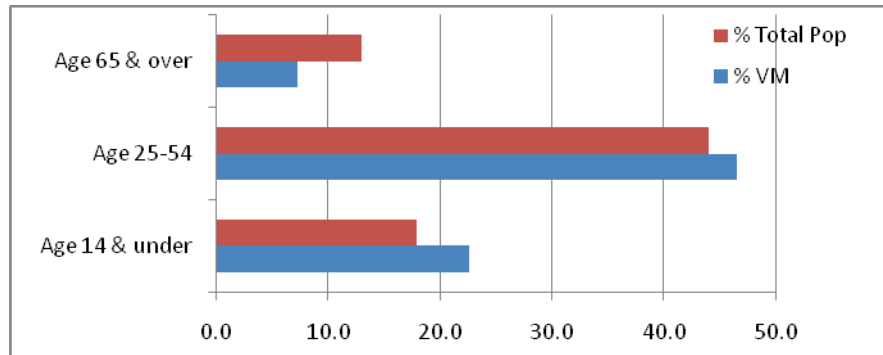
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recentsement/2006/as-sa/97-562/figures/c1-eng.cfm>

Growth reason: due largely to the increasing number of recent immigrants.

Age distribution in 2006:

- i. Age 14 & under: 17.9 % of total population; 22.6 % of VM;
- ii. Age 25-54: 44.0% of total population; 46.5 % of VM;
- iii. Age 65 & over: 13.0% of total population; 7.3% of VM;
- iv. Median age: 39 in Canadian population; 33 in VM;

Fig. 4 Percentage of Population by Age Groups 2006
(Statistics Canada)

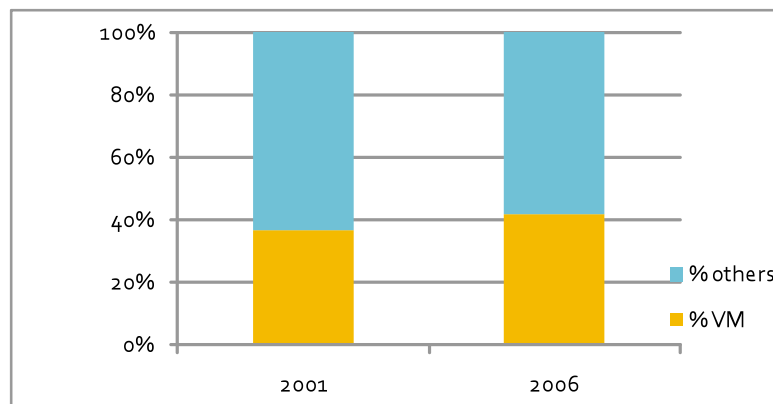


Data source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006

B. Visible Minority Population By Region 2006: Metro Vancouver (2nd largest VM population in Canada)

1. VM **875,300** (0.87 million), 41.7% of metro Vancouver population (2.1 million); 20.6% increase from 2001, VM 725,700, 36.9% of metro Vancouver population;
2. 62.7 % of VM 1991-2006 are foreign born.
3. Among VM, Chinese is the largest group, 381,500, 18.2% of Vancouver population, highest percentage in Canada
4. 43.6% of population in the City of Richmond, highest percentage in Canadian municipalities
5. 75% among the Chinese are first generation immigrants

Fig. 5 Percentage of Visible Minority Population in Metropolitan Area of Vancouver 2006 (Statistics Canada)



An increase of 20.6% from 2001 to 2006

Data source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006

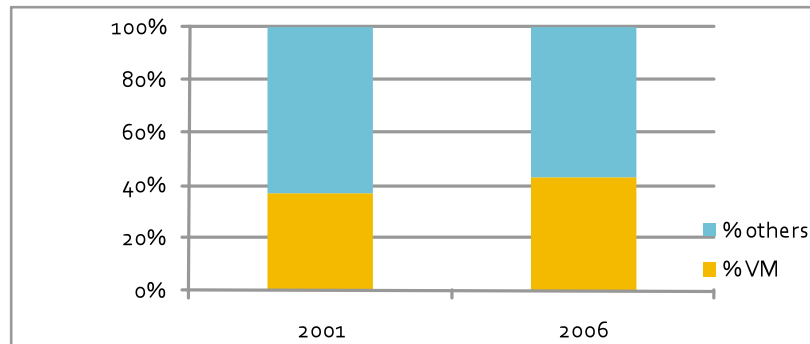
C. Visible Minority Population By Region 2006: Metro Toronto (the largest VM population in Canada)

1. VM 2,174,100 (2.1 mil), 42.9% of Metro Toronto population (5.1 million)
36.8% increase from 2001;

VM mainly in city of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan (accounting for 83% of Metro Toronto VM population).

2. VM age 15 & over accounts for 41% of Metro Toronto workforce population.

Fig. 6 Percentage of Visible Minority Population in Metropolitan Area of Toronto 2006 (Statistics Canada)



An increase of 27.0% from 2001 to 2006

Data source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006

3. 2 largest groups:
 South Asians - 684,100, 31.5% of Metro Toronto VM population; 13.5 % of Metro Toronto population; 72.3% of South Asians foreign born;
 Chinese - 486,300, 22.4% of Metro Toronto VM population; 9.6% of Metro Toronto population; 74.7% of Chinese foreign born;

South Asians are from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; younger persons are local born; median age is 10;

Chinese are from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam; local born median age is 27.

4. Black (3rd largest VM) - 352,000, 16.2% of Metro Toronto VM population; 6.9% of Metro Toronto population;
 Filipinos (4th) - 172,000, 7.9% of Metro Toronto VM population; 3.4% of Metro Toronto population.
5. Others include: West Asians (75,500); SE Asians (70,200); Koreans (55,300) & Japanese (19,000)

Fig. 7 Largest Visible Minority Groups in Metropolitan Area of Toronto 2006 (Statistics Canada)

	% in Tor. VM	% in Tor. pop
South Asian	31.5	13.5
Chinese	22.4	9.6
Black	16.2	6.9
Filipino	7.9	3.4

Data source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006

6. Markham: 65.4% of population is VM; 52.4% of VM Chinese; 26.4% of VM South Asians
Brampton : 57% of pop is VM; 55.6% of VM South Asians.

D. Population projections of VM to 2017, based on 2001 statistics

VM growth

1. Increase to 6,313,000-8,530,000 in 2017 (an increase of 4 million), 56%-111% increase.
2. One fifth of population (19-23%) is VM

Composition

3. Two largest VM groups: South Asians and Chinese, 3.2- 4.4 million
4. South Asians may catch up to the number of Chinese.
5. The Black is the third largest VM, 948,000-1,177,000

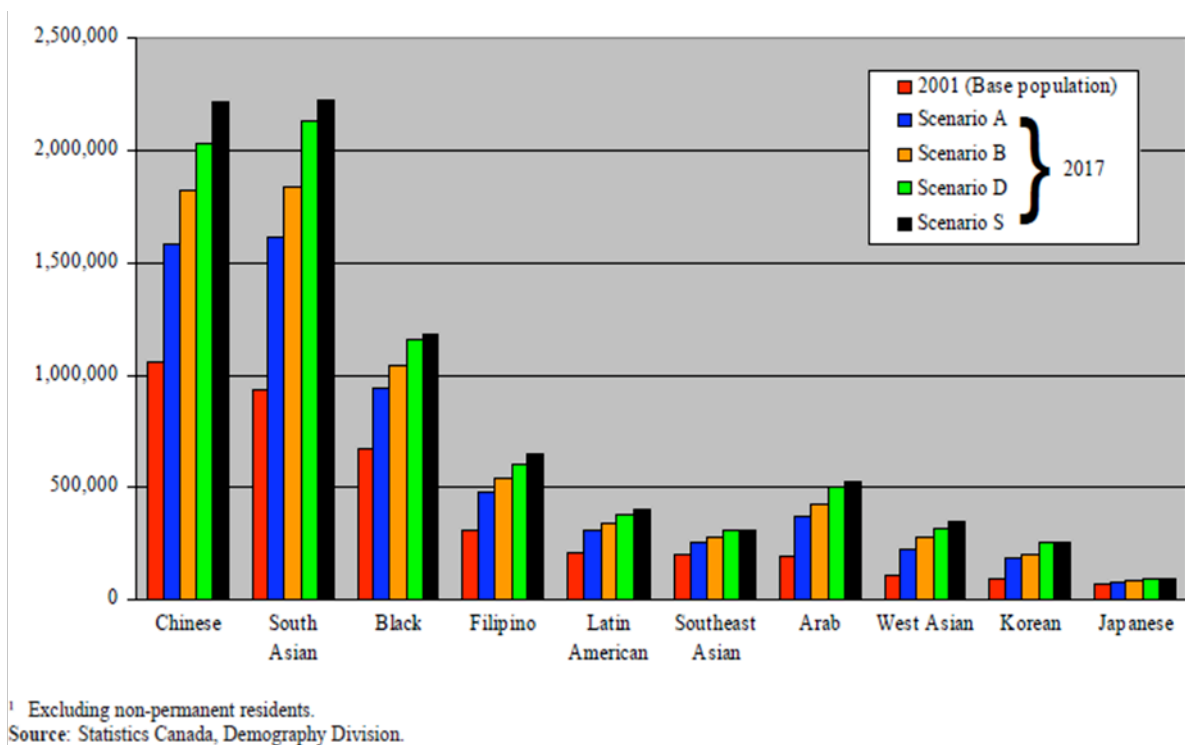
Provincial distribution

6. Ontario 4,090,000 (57% of VM population)
BC 1,421,000 (20% of VM population)

BC has the largest VM percentage in BC population, 1 out of 3 persons is VM

7. 1 million South Asians in MetroToronto
8. 47% of VM in Metro Vancouver is Chinese
9. In Montreal, mainly Blacks and Arabs

Fig. 8 Population Projection of Visible Minorities in Canada
2001 - 2017 (Statistics Canada)



<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-541-x/91-541-x2005001-eng.pdf>

Implications

1. The population projection to 2017 is based on the population data of 2001, since 2017 is the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.
2. Based on the projection, the visible minority population will continue to grow at a faster pace than the rest of the population between now and 2017, as it did in the 1990s. It will be about 20% of Canadian population. The main cause for such growth is because of the continued growth of the immigration population. Take for example, 70% of Chinese Canadian is foreign born. The first generation immigrants are still the dominant group.
3. In comparison to the rest of the Canadian population, the visible minority population has a younger median age and provides a stronger work force for Canada.
4. Among the visible minorities, the two largest groups are Chinese and South Asians, representing half of the visible minority. The faster growth of the South Asian group between now and 2017 may put it on equal terms with the Chinese, the visible minority group with the largest population at the beginning of the period.
5. In regard to the geographic distribution of cultural diversity, the visible minority groups, particularly Asian Canadians, tend to concentrate in a number of urban cities.

Two major metro cities are Metro Toronto (South Asians and Chinese) and Metro Vancouver (Chinese accounts for half of the visible minority population). Other cities having Asian Canadians are Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal and Ottawa.

6. The scenario of Asian Canadian is very much different from the scenario of Asian American in the US. The US has a longer Asian immigrant history with stronger local born leadership now in place, whereas the local born Asian Canadians are comparatively still young. As statistics show, the first generation Asian immigrants will continue to grow.
7. It appears that there will be two areas of need: the continued need of ministry to the growth of immigrants, and the exploration of the appropriate model for ministry to the local born Asian Canadians. In Canada, the cross-cultural ministry is mainly in the form of ethnic churches, providing bilingual or trilingual services, or multicultural churches with the Canadian culture as the mainstream. An open and wider research of what is best for the Asian Mission in Canada is desperately in need.
8. In fact, it appears that the two Metro cities have stronger attractions as they are densely populated by Chinese and South Asian Canadians. Statistics show that visible minority groups are far more likely to move to urban metro cities whereas the rest of the population is moving out to somewhere else. This implies that the urban population composition will be unique. Not just more Asian restaurants and malls will be expected, there will also be a great need for Asian ministries in these metro cities. There is a tremendous need to train and educate pastors and leaders who know how to minister to the Asian Canadians in Canada.
9. I am going to set up an Asian Mission in Canada for such a purpose. This will include an Asian Canadian Church Research Centre. Please see separate inserts.