

## COMMENTARY

## CHANGES, 1961-1971

Table A below contains the basic Census information on Religion for 1971 and 1961 (the most recent Census year prior to 1971 for which information on religion was collected). Whereas total population increased over this period from 2,818,341 to 2,978,248, (a rise of 5.7 percent), the number of persons returned as Catholics increased by 122,193 from 2,673,473 to 2,795,666 (a rise of 4.6 percent) while the number of persons who were returned as belonging to other specific religions declined by 9,818 from 138,136 in 1961 to 128,318 in 1971 (a fall of 7.1 percent). The number of persons with "No religion" rose from 1,107 to 7,616 over this period. In interpreting these figures it must be borne in mind that the very large increase in the number of persons in respect of whom no information on religion was given in 1971 (46,648 as against only 5,625 in 1961) may have influenced the trends for individual religions to a significant extent. Indeed this qualification should be kept in mind in interpreting all Tables which involve comparisons between 1961 and 1971.

**TABLE A:- PERSONS CLASSIFIED BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION IN 1961 AND 1971 AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE OR DECREASE.**

Religious Denomination	1961		1971		% change 1961-1971
	Total	Percentage*	Total	Percentage*	
Catholic	2,673,473	95.1	2,795,666	95.4	+ 4.6
Church of Ireland	104,016	3.7	97,739	3.3	- 6.0
Presbyterian	18,953	0.7	16,052	0.6	- 15.3
Methodist	6,676	0.2	5,646	0.2	- 15.4
Jewish	3,255	0.1	2,633	0.1	- 19.1
Other stated religions	5,236	0.2	6,248	0.2	+ 19.3
No religion	1,107	0.0	7,616	0.3	+ 588.0
No information supplied	5,625	-	46,648	-	+ 729.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,818,341</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>2,978,248</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>+ 5.7</b>

\* Calculated excluding the "No information supplied" group.

The figures for 1961 and 1971, given in Table A, show also the percentage distribution in those years of persons who supplied information on religion. There was very little change between 1961 and 1971 in the proportion of persons in each religion when calculated excluding those for whom no information on religion was supplied. In both years, Catholics formed 95 percent of the total with the proportion in the Church of Ireland falling from 3.7 percent in 1961 to 3.3 percent in 1971. No other religion formed more than 1 percent of the total.

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Table B shows the distribution of the population by religious denomination in the different Planning Regions. The composition of the Planning Regions is shown in Appendix B.

**TABLE B:- PERSONS IN EACH RELIGION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IN EACH PLANNING REGION.**

Planning Region	Total	Religious Denomination						"No Religion"	No information supplied
		Catholic	Church of Ireland	Presbyterian	Methodist	Jewish	Other Stated Religions		
East	100.-	91.6	4.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	2.3
South West	100.-	95.7	2.5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.2
South East	100.-	96.0	2.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.1
North East	100.-	91.4	4.6	2.4	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.1	1.1
Mid-West	100.-	97.0	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.1
Donegal	100.-	86.1	6.3	5.6	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.1	1.1
Midlands	100.-	95.5	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.0
West	100.-	97.6	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.3
North West	100.-	94.0	4.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>

The highest proportions of Catholics, with 96.0 percent or more, were in the West, Mid-West and South-East regions. The lowest proportion, 86.1 percent, was in Donegal with the North-East and East, at 91.4 and 91.6 percent, respectively, being next lowest. These regions also contained the highest proportions of members of the Church of Ireland, the proportion being 6.3 percent in Donegal, 4.6 percent in the North-East and 4.3 percent in the East, the same percentage as in the North-West. There were two regions where Presbyterians formed more than 1 percent of the total, these being Donegal (5.6 percent) and the North-East (2.4 percent). No other religion, in any other region, formed more than 1 percent of the total. Information was not returned for 1.6 percent of the total population. This proportion was highest in the East region at 2.3 percent.

## AGE GROUPS

The changes between 1961 and 1971 in the numbers in various age groups are described in Table C. Specified religions other than Catholic are grouped together in this table.

**TABLE C:- PERSONS CLASSIFIED BY RELIGION IN EACH AGE GROUP AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1961-1971.**

Religious Denomination		Total	Age Group						
			Under 15	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over
Total	1961	2,818,341	877,259	391,839	298,164	337,086	331,747	267,183	315,063
	1971	2,978,248	931,152	482,978	324,344	301,836	319,206	288,913	329,819
	% change	+ 5.7	+ 6.1	+ 23.3	+ 8.8	- 10.5	- 3.8	+ 8.1	+ 4.7
Catholic	1961	2,673,473	846,939	373,711	283,540	319,701	310,911	248,171	290,500
	1971	2,795,666	887,439	456,131	302,677	282,604	298,232	266,861	301,722
	% change	+ 4.6	+ 4.8	+ 22.1	+ 6.7	- 11.6	- 4.1	+ 7.5	+ 3.9
Other stated religions	1961	138,136	28,681	17,055	13,731	16,561	20,033	18,320	23,755
	1971	128,318	27,150	17,536	14,499	13,459	15,701	17,483	22,490
	% change	- 7.1	- 5.3	+ 2.8	+ 5.6	- 18.7	- 21.6	- 4.6	- 5.3
No religion	1961	1,107	162	178	221	172	158	117	99
	1971	7,616	1,454	1,604	1,964	972	684	503	435
	% change	+ 588.0	+ 797.5	+ 801.1	+ 788.7	+ 465.1	+ 332.9	+ 329.9	+ 339.4
No information supplied	1961	5,625	1,477	895	672	652	645	575	709
	1971	46,648	15,109	7,707	5,204	4,801	4,589	4,066	5,172
	% change	+ 729.3	+ 923.0	+ 761.1	+ 674.4	+ 636.3	+ 611.5	+ 607.1	+ 629.5

The changes in the overall totals in each age group are reflected in the corresponding changes in numbers of Catholics, as would be expected in view of the fact that Catholics formed 93.9 percent of the total population. In the case of the combined other specified religions shown in this table, there were reductions in the numbers in each age group except the 15-24 and 25-34 year groups which showed increases of 2.8 percent and 5.6 percent, respectively. These, however, were in age groups where the total population rose by 23.3 percent and 8.8 percent respectively. Very substantial decreases, ranging from about 5 to 20 percent, were recorded for these religions in the age groups over 35 years.

These changes, however, reflect to a large extent the population structure of persons with these religions. For example, persons with other specified religions aged 35-44 years in 1971 numbered 13,459 as compared with 16,561 in 1961. However, the same group of persons in 1961, who were then aged 25-34 years, numbered 13,731. Thus the reduction of 18.7 percent in the 35-44 age group between 1961 and 1971 can be seen to be a result of the population structure as it existed in 1961.

The increase in the number of persons stating that they had no religion was substantial in all age groups with the largest increase in percentage terms being in the under 35 year age group where the numbers rose from 561 in 1961 to 5,022 ten years later, a nine fold increase approximately. The number of persons aged 35 years and over in this group increased from 546 to 2,594 over the same period. As indicated previously the number of persons supplying no information increased very substantially, this pattern applying in all age groups.

**TABLE D:- PERSONS IN EACH AGE GROUP AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF EACH RELIGION, 1961 AND 1971.**

Religious Denomination		Total	Age Group						
			Under 15	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over
Total	1961	100.-	31.1	13.9	10.6	12.0	11.8	9.5	11.2
	1971	100.-	31.3	16.2	10.9	10.1	10.7	9.7	11.1
Catholic	1961	100.-	31.7	14.0	10.6	12.0	11.6	9.3	10.9
	1971	100.-	31.7	16.3	10.8	10.1	10.7	9.5	10.8
Other stated religions	1961	100.-	20.8	12.3	9.9	12.0	14.5	13.3	17.2
	1971	100.-	21.2	13.7	11.3	10.5	12.2	13.6	17.5
No religion	1961	100.-	14.6	16.1	20.0	15.5	14.3	10.6	8.9
	1971	100.-	19.1	21.1	25.8	12.8	9.0	6.6	5.7
No information supplied	1961	100.-	26.3	15.9	11.9	11.6	11.5	10.2	12.6
	1971	100.-	32.4	16.5	11.2	10.3	9.8	8.7	11.1

In the case of Catholics, persons aged under 25 years of age formed 48.0 percent of the total in 1971. This compares with 34.9 percent of those with other stated religions, 40.2 percent of those returned as "No religion" and 48.9 percent of those who did not supply any information on religion. When the age group 25-54 years is considered, 31.6 percent of Catholics were in this group as compared with 34.0 percent of those with other stated religions. Persons stating that they had "No religion" were most heavily concentrated in the 15-34 year age group, which contained 46.9 percent of this group, whereas only 27.1 percent of the total population fall into this age category.

Persons aged 55 years and over formed 20.3 percent of the Catholic population and 31.1 percent of the population with other stated religions but only 12.3 percent of those with "No religion" were in this age group. The age distribution of persons who did not give any information on religion is very close to that of the overall population.

When the age distributions in 1961 and 1971 are compared, the only significant changes in the case of Catholics occurred in the 15-24 and 35-54 year age group with the former age group containing 16.3 percent of the total in 1971 as compared with 14.0 percent in 1961 and the proportion in the latter group being 20.8 percent in 1971 as against 23.6 percent ten years previously.