

**MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT**  
**North America**  
**Greenland**

**Snapshots Section**

**Country Name:** Conventional—Greenland; Local—*Kalaallit Nunaat*

**Country Founded in:** Vikings—10<sup>th</sup> Century

Part of Denmark—1953

Self Government—1979

**Population:** 56,361

**Government Type: (national, regional and local)**

Parliamentary Democracy within a Constitutional Monarchy

**Picture of flag:**



**Geography/location in the world:**

North East North America. A large Island in the Arctic and North Atlantic Oceans.

**Number of people groups:** 4

**Religion Snapshot:**

**Major Religion and % of population:**

Christian—96.4%

Non Religious—2.2%

Traditional Religious—0.8%

Baha'is—0.6%

**Government interaction with religion: (is the government cooperative [i.e. official church-state], supportive, tolerant, non-tolerant, antagonistic, etc.)**

Greenland has had religious freedom under the Danish Constitution. The Lutheran Church still has strong ties with the State.



# Mission Atlas Project

## Country Profile

### Greenland

#### Basic Facts

**Name:** Conventional—Greenland; Local—*Kalaallit Nunaat*

#### Demographics:

Population—56,361

Growth rate—(-0.03%)

Birth Rate—15.93 births/1000 population

Death Rate—7.84 deaths/1000 population

Migration Rate—(-8.37) migrants/1000 population

#### Age Structure:

- 0-14 years—24.5%
- 16-64 years—68.9%
- 65+ years—6.6%

Median Age—32.3 years

Life Expectancy—69.94 years (66.36 males/73.6 females)

Fertility Rate—2.4 Children born/woman

People living with HIV/AIDS—100

Population Structure—A large majority of the Greenland population is Greenland Eskimo (85-90%). There is a minority population of Danes, and an even smaller minority of Americans.

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) 2006 reports.

#### Language :

Official Languages—Greenlandic, Danish

Greenlandic—

There are around 50,000 speakers of the Greenlandic language (also known as the Kalaallisut Language). It is a Eskimo-Aleut Language closely related to the Inuktitut language of Canada. It is highly polysynthetic (meaning there are many morphemes) and ergative. There are several dialects including West Greenlandic (3,000 speakers), East Greenlandic (44,000 speakers), “Polar Eskimo”—North Greenlandic (800 speakers), and Thule Inuit. Each dialect is close to being a distinct language.

Kalaallisut is written using the Roman alphabet.

The majority of Greenlanders speak this as their first language.

## Danish

Danish is a North Germanic/Scandinavian language that is spoken by a small Danish migrant minority.

English is occasionally used as a trade language.

Per Langgaard's *Language Technology in Greenland* reports that, "Greenland is not bilingual or Danish speaking. Greenland is officially and in reality Greenlandic speaking, and this to such a degree that the lack of knowledge of foreign languages Danish and English, specially amongst young people and children poses a major problem to the education system"

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

"Language Technology in Greenland," by Per Langgaard—

[http://www.cst.dk/dandokcenter/resultat/uk/Sprogteknologi\\_greenland\\_en.html](http://www.cst.dk/dandokcenter/resultat/uk/Sprogteknologi_greenland_en.html)

## Society/Culture

The motto of life in Greenland is to live at one with nature. The population of Greenland is miniscule, especially in relation to the enormous size of the island. Most of the population is Inuit/ Eskimo—people of the same affinity bloc as those in Canada, Alaska, and Siberia. Eskimo translates into "eater of raw meat." Life revolves around hunting and fishing, and the population submits to the natural and harsh seasons. Traditional hunting is the chief occupation in northern and eastern areas.

In recent years traditional hunting has been under substantial stress, and pressure from various conservation and environmental groups has forced hunting limits. Numerous hunters find that it is difficult to survive on the limited quotas that have been set.

Often one member of the family will have to find steady employment to allow the family to buy the imported essentials for life. Most often, this person is a female in the family, and the men continue the traditional methods of hunting and fishing full time.

Farming is not successful or widely pursued due to the short warm seasons. In fact, due to the harsh and limited conditions of the isolated island, most everything must be imported.

Greenlanders import about twice as much as they export.

Dogs are the only domesticated animals.

Common game include reindeer, moose, arctic hare, bears (including polar bears), and foxes. Whales and seals are common along the sea and are hunted for various resources.

Due to the freezing of the seas, access to the island is limited for large parts of the year. Navigation by sea is really only possible during the short summer season.

Greenland lacks a basic road system connecting settlements and villages. Communication between villages is maintained by transportation on foot, by dog sled, on an *umiak* (a boat made from sealskin), or for more urgent needs, by helicopter.

Outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, kayaking, and fishing are all extremely popular in Greenland. In a place where civilization is the exception, breathtaking scenery lures you quickly into the seemingly endless nature.

The weather predominately dictates the clothing worn by Greenlanders. For those working indoors during the winter, wool pants are common, which heavy, long sleeve shirts. Parkas with hoods are worn while outside, along with gloves and heavy shoes with a good gripping sole. The Parkas are a must even for quick trips outside.

During the summer months, thick shirts and sweaters are still worn, and while outside, jackets are required.

For one who will be outside for extended periods, there is often a thick coverall layer worn on top of the sweater and wool pants. Specials boots called mukluks—which are extra big so up to 6 pairs of wool socks can be worn.

For those out hunting or on the trail, knee length pants made from polar bear skin are often worn. These pants are water proof and buoyant. Parkas are typically made of seal and fox skins.

All clothing that is not made from animals skins must be imported, typically from Denmark.

There is a high rate of accidents and injuries in Greenland, and suicide is common. The suicide rate in Greenland is actually five times the rate of most of the other European countries. It went from less than 50 per 100,000 in the 1970s, to 100+ per 100,000 in the 1990s. Suicide is most common among those aged 15-25.

Smoking is a common habit among the Greenland Inuit population—84% of the men and 78% of the women smoke. Greenland actually ranks the highest of teen smoker, with 56% of 15 year old boys and 45% of 15 year old girls admitting to smoking daily.

The main diet consists of sea mammals, seabird, and a variety of seafood. Other game such as polar bear, caribou, and reindeer are sometimes eaten. Whale steaks are popular. Greenlanders get an adequate Vitamin C consumption from consuming raw meat, rather than consuming fruits regularly.

#### Holidays in Greenland

- June 21—Greenland National Day. The day is celebrated because it is the longest day of the year. It is celebrated with cultural activities, entertainment, and communal outdoor eating. June 21 is also a celebration of the introduction of the Greenland flag in 1985.
- January 1—New Years Day
- January 6—*Mitaartut*. Children dress up in disguise, typically as rag witches, and go around knocking on doors. They are to dance and make noises.
- Maundy Thursday

- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Ascension Day
- “Great Prayer Day”—Danish holiday that falls on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday after Easter.
- Whit Monday
- December 24-26
  - During Christmas Greenlanders spend time visiting with family while eating cakes and drinking coffee. Christmas trees are traditional, and are decorated with candles and bright ornaments. All of the trees are imported. Typical gifts include a sled, pair of tusks, or a sealskin mitt. Children go from one hut to the next singing songs. After all the songs are sung and all the coffee drunk, everyone is given *mattak*—whale skin with a strip of blubber, to eat. It is difficult to chew and usually just swallowed.
  - Christmas is the only day in which the men serve the women.
- December 31—New Year’s Eve

[www.greenland-guide.gl](http://www.greenland-guide.gl)

<http://www.santas.net/greenlandchristmas.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/4466/clothes.html>

<http://www.pnbm.org/info-greenland.html>

[http://www.ucsf.edu/daybreak/2000/02/04\\_shorts.html](http://www.ucsf.edu/daybreak/2000/02/04_shorts.html)

[http://pubhealth.ku.dk/mih\\_en/thesesAbstr/03/groth/](http://pubhealth.ku.dk/mih_en/thesesAbstr/03/groth/)

<http://www.dmu.dk/International/News/Vitamins+and+minerals+in+traditional+Greenland+diet.htm>

## **Government**

Greenland has a parliamentary democracy that functions within Denmark’s constitutional monarchy. Greenland is a self-governing overseas administrative division of the Kingdom of Denmark. Denmark controls Greenland’s foreign affairs, but Greenland does have active participation in the international agreements.

Greenland’s capital city is Nuuk (Godthab).

Greenland is divided into 3 districts—Avannaar (Nordgrønland), Tunu (Ostgrønland), and Kitaa (Vestgrønland).

They are subdivided into 18 municipalities. The municipalities are each made up of various villages, where up to 600 people may dwell. There are 100 villages throughout Greenland. Each village has an elected Village Council.

Greenland functions under the Danish law.

There is universal suffrage at the age of 18.

The government is divided into three branches: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial.

- Executive

- Chief of State—Queen Margrethe II (of Denmark). Represented in Greenland by High Commissioner Soren Moller. The monarchy is hereditary, and the High Commissioner is appointed by the monarch.
- Head of Government—Prime Minister Hans Enoksen. The Prime Minister is elected by parliament.
- Cabinet—known as Home Rule Government, and is elected by the parliament.
- Legislative
  - Unicameral Parliament (Landstinget)—31 seats, members are elected by popular vote by proportional representation, and serve four year terms.
- Judicial
  - High Court (Landsret)

There is no diplomatic representation from or in the United States.

All statistics taken from [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) 2006 reports.

## **Economy**

Greenland's economy is largely dependent on Denmark, Iceland, and other European nations. Greenland relies heavily on the export of fish, but it is not enough. Greenland receives more than half of its revenues and funding from the Danish government. Nearly all of the essentials for life must be imported.

The public sector plays the dominant role, with the public enterprises and municipalities.

Tourism does provide some income, and has potential for being a long term economy booster, yet it is quite limited due to a short tourism season and extremely high travel costs.

Currency—Danish Krone (DKK)

1 USD/5.9969 DKK

(There are only 2 banks in Greenland)

GDP (purchasing power parity)—\$1.1 Billion

GDP (real growth rate)—1.8%

GDP (per capita)—\$20,000

Labor Force—24,500

Unemployment rate—10%

Inflation rate—1.6%

Budget—

- Revenues—\$646 million
- Expenditures—\$629 million

Agricultural Products—forage crops, garden/greenhouse vegetables, sheep, reindeer, and fish.

Industries—

- Fish processing (Shrimp and Halibut)
- Gold
- Niobium
- Tantalite
- Uranium
- Iron and Diamond Mining
- Handicrafts
- Hides and Skins
- Shipyards

Exports \$480 million

Export Commodities—Fish and Fish products 94%

Export Partners—

- Denmark 62.4%
- Japan 12.2%
- China 5.2%

Imports \$601 million

Import Commodities—

- Machinery and transport equipment
- Manufactured goods
- Food
- Petroleum products

Import Partners—

- Denmark 75.2%
- Sweden 12%
- Canada 2.7%

Economic Aid recipient--\$380 million subsidy from Denmark

External Debt—\$25 million

Telephones (Landlines in use)—25,300

Telephones (Mobile)—19,900

Radio Broadcast Stations—AM 5, FM 12

Airports—14

Greenland has no military of its own; the defense of Greenland is Denmark's responsibility.

All statistics taken from [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) 2006 reports.

### **Literacy –**

100% of the Population of Greenland over the age of 15 can read and write.

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)



## Land/Geography

Greenland lies between the Arctic and Northern Atlantic Oceans. It is the largest island in the world, and lies northwest of Iceland, and northeast of Canada. Greenland is more than three times the size of Texas, and a little over 81% is covered in ice.

The climate ranges from arctic to sub-arctic. The winters are long and cold, and the summers are cool. It typically snows 7-8 months a year. Because the climate is generally a dry climate, temperatures feel very different than they do in humid areas. So, 50-60 degrees Fahrenheit feels very warm, while -50 degrees Fahrenheit is also common and somewhat pleasant for the ice cap.

The land ranges from flat to gently sloping on the interior, as the ice cap covers all but the narrow coastline. The coastline is mountainous and rocky. The sparse population is limited to the coastline.

Average temperature on the southern coast—18 degrees Fahrenheit (February); 45 F (July)

Average temperature on ice cap— -53 degrees Fahrenheit (February); -12 F (July)

There is no road system, so transportation is limited to foot, boat, or plane. Despite the fertile soil, because Greenland lies north of the tree line, it is difficult to impossible to cultivate crops. The growing season is extremely limited.

Natural Hazard—A continuous layer of ice covers more than 80% of the island, and the rest is permafrost.

Greenland's ice cap constitutes more than 11% of the world's fresh water reserve. If it were to melt, the level of Earth's oceans would rise seven meters.

Due to the extreme polar location, Greenland experiences the midnight sun as well as polar darkness. For instance, in the northern regions, the days from May 16 to July 28 are continually daylight, while from November 22 to February 10, the sun never rises. The Northern Lights can be seen through the autumn and winter months.



[http://www.scandinavian.wisc.edu/scandlinks/greenland\\_files/Map.png](http://www.scandinavian.wisc.edu/scandlinks/greenland_files/Map.png)

<http://www.geographia.com/denmark/greenland.html>

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
<http://www.thewe.cc/weplanet/poles/kalaall.html>

## History

Civilization has existed periodically in Greenland since in pre-historic times. Living conditions on the large Arctic island are extreme, leading to the disappearance and extinction of various cultures throughout the ages. The first immigrants on the land were Eskimos migrating over from North America. Numerous migrations in fact took place.

The first was the *Saqqaq culture* which existed in southern Greenland from 2500-800 BC, the Independence I culture existed next from 2400-1300 BC in northern Greenland, then the Independence II culture existed in the far northern regions of Greenland from 800-1 BC, and finally the Early Dorset Culture existed in southern Greenland from 700 BC-AD 200.

Europeans, specifically Icelandic Vikings first discovered the island in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. The Vikings first arrived about AD 980, and the land was at that time unpopulated. The Vikings first settled along the southwestern coast, and endured for about 450 years. The name "Greenland," is associated with Erik the Red, who was the leader of this Viking expedition and the first Viking colony. It is not certain where the actual meaning of the name originated. For instance, whether the land, particularly along the coast, could have in fact been green due to a warmer climate during that era, or if the name was given to attract and lure more settlers. The Inuits, or the Eskimos, alternatively call the land "Kalaallit Nunaat," meaning "Our Land."

Erik the Red had first gone to Greenland after being exiled from Iceland for murder. After his period of exile was complete, he returned to Iceland in an effort to gather people to begin colonization in his new found land. Erik set out from Iceland with 25 ships in 985, but only 14 of those ships actually arrived to Greenland. They originally settled in two areas known as the Eastern Settlement and the Western Settlement. The colonies grew to 3-5,000, with the majority living in the Eastern Settlement. There are records for at least 400 farms, and many were involved in the trade of walrus ivory and tusks with Europe. The survival of the colony was dependent on Iceland and Europe. They contributed additional food, tools, and religious and social contacts for the Arctic island.

In 1126 a Christian diocese was founded under the guidance of Norway, as well at least five churches. In 1261, the population became subjected to the Norwegian king, but continued to function by their own law. In 1380 the Norwegian Kingdom entered a union with the Kingdom of Denmark. During this time, the Norse colonies seemed to be in decline. The Western Settlement was deserted by 1350 and the bishop was gone by 1378. No written further records were found, except one concerning a marriage in 1408. The Eastern Settlement was assumed to be extinct by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

These settlements have been speculated to have collapsed due to a variety of factors including environmental damage, changes in climate, possible hostile neighbors, loss of outside contact, and simply a failure to adapt. Greenland is much colder than the other Scandinavian lands, and offers a very inhospitable terrain. The climate is thought to have begun cooling in the 14 century, ending the "Medieval Warm Period," and entering into the "little Ice Age." By the

15<sup>th</sup> century, the cold climate was fierce and intense. And while Greenland was unpopulated as the Vikings first settled the coast, the Inuit migrated from North America, and migrated south towards the Vikings, making contact with them around 1150. Norse writings indicate they referred to the Inuit as *skraelings*, or wretches. There are reports of hostile Inuit attacks. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Inuit had expanded and settled along the southwestern coast, nearing the Western Settlement. It was in 1325 when the Norse had completely abandoned the Western Settlement.

Meanwhile, during the warm period, trips to and from Iceland were made within a couple of weeks. Greenland lacked the resources to build their own ships, and relied on the Europeans to travel in and out. As the climate cooled, the treks were much more difficult. A Roman papal record from 1345 shows that those in Greenland were excused from paying their tithes because due to poverty.

One notable discovery was that in the garbage remains of the extinct Viking settlements, fish remains were absent, indicating a lack of fish in the Greenlanders' diet. This is in great contrast to the Inuit population, the people of Iceland, and even modern day Greenlanders. It is likely that something turned the settlers off from consuming the ever present and ample fish supply.

Likely about the time the Norse settlements developed, a new migration of Eskimo arrived in Northern Greenland beginning what is known as the Late Dorset Culture. They disappeared around 1300. Meanwhile, in about 1200 a separate group of Eskimos arrived from the west, known as the Thule. They settled further south and spread throughout the west and east coasts. The Thule are the ancestors of the modern Inuit, and were an adaptable and resourceful population. They mostly hunted, hunting everything from on the land to the sea. While both the Dorset and the Norse populations disappeared, the Thule survived. There is a Thule population still living in their original form in the Thule district of modern Greenland.

In 1536, Norway and Denmark officially merged, and according to Europeans, Greenland became a Danish dependency. A polar bear was added to the Danish coat of arms in 1660. English, Dutch, and German ships all made their way to Greenland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to hunt whales, but there was no permanent settlement known to exist at this time.

In 1721, in the fear that any settlement that might exist in Greenland was either Catholic due to ignorance of the Reformation, or even worse was pagan, Norwegian Lutheran missionary Hans Egede sailed to Greenland. His expedition was marked as a part of the Danish colonization of the Americas. A colony was established in Godthab (Good Hope.) While no Europeans were found on the land, the Inuit along the coasts and trade stations were converted to Christianity.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought increased interest in Greenland among Europeans, particularly for scientists interested in the polar regions, such as William Scoresby and Knud Rasmussen. Meanwhile, the missionary colony was successful and growing, centered around a trade-oriented Danish civilization. In 1861 a Greenlandic language journal was founded.

At the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of Greenland, particularly the north, was still practically unpopulated with only a few hunting parties scattered throughout. A new migration of Inuit from Canada came and settled in the north. The last group of Inuit to migrate over came in 1864. While they were filling the north, the east was struggling and depopulating due to a weak economy.

Democratic elections were held in 1862-1863, for the district assemblies of Greenland. Because Greenland was under the control of Denmark, Greenland was not allowed to have a leader controlling the land as a whole. In 1911 two *Landstings* (Parliaments) were introduced in Greenland, one for the north and one for the south. The two were united into one in 1951. Nevertheless, most of the decisions were actually made in Copenhagen, where Greenland lacked representation.

In 1953 Greenland was elevated from its colonial status, and became an integral part of the Danish kingdom. They finally acquired representation in Danish government. Denmark began efforts to improve health care and education for Greenlanders, inevitably causing the population to merge more into structured towns. The small scale “urbanization” created problems of its own, largely unemployment for the former fishers.

In 1973 both Denmark and Greenland joined the European Union, but this intensified friction between the Kingdom and its unsatisfied dependent. Greenland had voted 70% against joining the EU, but nonetheless were brought into the union. The Greenlanders were afraid their trade would suffer due to the strict guidelines of the EU. The Greenlanders were discontent with their miniscule representation in Denmark and began asking to be allowed to govern themselves. In 1978 Denmark gave in, and a home rule law was put into effect in January of 1979. In 1982 Greenland left the European Union, being the only populace to ever do so.

The self governed Greenland, viewed itself as an Inuit nation and switched the Danish names for Greenlandic Inuit ones. They also established a flag in 1985.

Greenland began handling some of its own international relations, and signed special peace treaties with the EU, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and various Inuit populations in Canada and Russia. Greenland was a founder in the environmental Arctic Council cooperation in 1996. There is a US airbase stationed at Thule.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)  
[www.greenland-guide.gl](http://www.greenland-guide.gl)  
[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

### **Christian History**

The first Christians arrived in Greenland around 990. They came on a mission from Norway with Leif Erikson, son of the Viking leader Eric the Red. Leif Erikson had converted to Christianity while visiting his home country, by King Olaf Trygvesson. The King sent the missionaries with Leif as he sailed back to Greenland, in efforts to spread Christianity.

Within a short time, the Norse colonists in Greenland were all at least nominally converted to the Christian religion and organized the first church, Thjodhildurs Church. Eventually there were sixteen parishes, several churches, and a few monasteries. There are various reminders today of this early Christian period, such as the ruins of a Romanesque church in Kakortok and various tombstones with inscriptions.

Greenland was formed into the Diocese of Gadar, under the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen. Before the colony vanished in the 14<sup>th</sup> century there were around sixteen different bishops of various nationalities nominated to the See of Gadar. However, no bishop visited Greenland after the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Around this time, as no supplies were coming in from Europe, it is assumed the Norse colony either died off or intermarried and assimilated with the Inuit pagans. Either way, Christianity in Greenland was disappeared.

Several centuries later, Lutheran missionaries were sent into Greenland, arriving in 1721. This expedition came about as Hans Egede, a Lutheran pastor felt led to go and preach the gospel to what he thought were his neglected countrymen. He organized a trading company under the King's guidance in Copenhagen, and was sent out as a missionary. What he found as he arrived in Greenland was that the colonists were no more, and that the population was only Eskimo. It then became his mission to convert the barbarians, and he undertook the task of learning their language. He worked for fifteen years, struggling, but managing to convert a few. A small pox epidemic broke out on the island, taking his wife's life, and Hans returned to Denmark in 1736. His son Paul, who was raised in Greenland, mastered the language and continued his father's work. He translated the New Testament and a catechism into the Greenlandic language, and eventually saw revival on the island.

Meanwhile, German Moravian missionaries arrived in 1733. With the combined efforts, most of the population was nominally converted to Christianity. After the Germans had been in Greenland for fourteen years, they also were able to establish a congregation and baptize followers. Throughout the next century, four mission houses were built and 1,715 members were baptized. By 1857 there were 1,965 members. Shortly after, friction set in and the church began to diminish. By 1900, all of the parishes and missions had been relinquished to the leaders of the Danish National Church, and the citizens of Greenland all became associated with the Church of Denmark.

While Greenland is largely Christianized, it follows the pattern of the West, and has become secularized through the process of modernity. They have recently experienced the emergence of a postmodern culture. While most villages have a church building, these congregations are lacking in biblical teaching, have few people, and little Christian practice. *Operation World* declares that "Greenland has been Christianized, but not converted."

The State church has had little to no impact in actually influencing the lives and morality of the Greenlanders. Sexual immorality, drugs, and domestic violence are reported to be prevalent. Greenland has been called a land of spiritual darkness. Only in 1950 was a true Evangelical witness established. Only four evangelical pastors work among the peoples of Greenland.

"Greenland," Keith Eitel, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*.

“Greenland,” Pius Whitman. *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VI.*  
<http://chi.gospelcom.net/DAILYF/2001/05/daily-05-03-2001.shtml>  
<http://www.canadaawakening.com/pages/pastreports/greenlandrep.html> ;*Operation World*

## People Groups

286

American (2,000)

The Americans are a North American, Anglo People who primarily speak English. Americans are predominately Protestant Christian Adherents (78.01%).

283

Danes (4,600)

Then Danes are a Eurasian, Scandinavian People who speak Danish. They are descendants of the Vikings. The Danes are 89% Protestant Christians, particularly Lutheran.

00000

Deaf

The Deaf in Greenland are primarily Christians. No other known information is identified about this people group.

284

Greenlander (49,589)

The Greenlanders are a North American People of the Inuit people cluster. Alternate names include Eskimo, Kalaallisut Eskimo, and North Greenland Eskimo. The Greenlanders speak Greenlandic Inuktitut. The Bible has been completed in the Greenlander language. The Greenlanders are 67% Protestant Christians.

## Religions

### Non Christian

- *Inuit*—25,000
  - Traditional Inuit is similar to animism, finding a spiritual force in everything in nature.
  - Operation World notes 61.92 % of the people protestant. This contrasts with the figures of 25,000 following traditional religion
- *Baha'i*
  - The aim of the Baha'i faith is *unity*.
  - There is a Baha'i Center in Nuuk (Godthab).
  - Around 280 persons call Baha'i their religion

### Christian Cults and Sects

- *Jehovah's Witness*—0.29%
  - There are 121 adherents and 7 units. Operation World lists 158 members and 300 adherents.
  - The memorial attendance was 270 in 2005.

[http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide\\_report.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report.htm).  
<http://www.bahai.org/>

### **Catholic/Orthodox Churches**

- Catholic—0.18% of the population
  - There are approximately 100 adherents and 1 Catholic Church.

### **Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostal**

While perhaps Christian in name, very few Evangelical Christians exist in Greenland. Greenland is a spiritually dark place and physically difficult nation. While these people are isolated from the rest of the world, and often enveloped by physical darkness as well, depression is prevalent. They desperately need to hear of the love and hope that Jesus Christ brought for all humanity.

- *Protestant*—98% of the Greenlandic population claim to be Protestant Christian (1992). Many of these, however, are nominal and greatly influenced by the secularism of the culture
- *Evangelical Lutheran*—80% (Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church). The Lutheran Churches on Greenland claim over 25,000 members but the converted membership is small.
- *Seventh Day Adventist*—3 Members
- A group of Canadian Christians, particularly *Canadian Inuit*, have been led to work among the Greenlanders and have in recent years seen an openness to Jesus Christ. Beginning in the 1980s, they have taken the Jesus Film, selling 3,000 plus copies, and have sent various Youth With A Mission teams to work in various communities. From October 2001 to December 2002 about 2,000 Greenlanders received Christ as Savior.

[www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com), [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com),  
<http://www.canadaawakening.com/pages/pastreports/greenlandrep.html> ; *Operation World*

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should consider Greenland a significant mission field and make definite plans for peoples to go to Greenland and proclaim the full gospel. These missionaries will most likely need to plant their lives, learn the language, and teach the Scriptures.
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should make continuing use of the Jesus Film and the newly translated Bible in Greenlandic.
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should introduce the idea of house churches and small groups to uncover various groups responsive to the gospel. Christian groups should help provide training for Evangelical leaders in Greenland.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should teach the necessity of Christian living as a revelation of the truth of Christianity and as an alternative to the secularism that dominates the country.

5. Evangelical Christianity and Churches should mount a prayer initiative for the peoples of Greenland. Evangelism among the nominal Lutheran groups should be a priority for Evangelicals.

### **Links –**

<http://www.greenland.com/>

<http://www.greenland-guide.gl>

<http://glby.net>

<http://www.marktanner.com/travels/greenlnd.html>

<http://www.arcticphoto.co.uk/gallery2/arctic/peoples/greenlandw/greenlandw.htm>