

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

EUROPE

Norway

SNAPSHOT SECTION

Country Name:

(Kingdom of) Norway
(Kongeriket) Norge

Country Founded in:

994 – Norway already a known country. 1814 – Constitution. 1905 – Norway declared its independence from Sweden.

Population:

4,610,820 (July 2006 est.)

Government Type:

Constitutional monarchy with the country divided into 19 counties or administrative units.

Geography/location in the world:

Norway's bordering countries are Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Having one of the longest coastlines in the world, Norway is famous for its many fjords. Glaciers, high plateaus, fertile valleys, rugged mountain terrain, about 50,000 islands, and arctic tundra characterize Norway's landscape.

Number of people groups:

More than 71 different people groups with Norwegian forming the largest group (4,481,162).

Picture of flag:

**Religion Snapshot**

Major Religion and % of population:

Christianity (90.1%)

All religions and % for each:

Christianity (90.1%):

Church of Norway (Evangelical Lutheran) (85.7%)

Pentecostal (1%)

Roman Catholic (1%)

Other Christian (2.4%)

Islam (1.8%)

Other (8.1%)

Hindu

Buddhist,

Evangelical Lutheran Free Church,

Jehovah's Witnesses,

Methodist,

Orthodox Jews,

Russian Orthodox,

Greek Orthodox,

Anglican,

Government interaction with religion:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway is the state church. Bishops are appointed by the king and the government gives the Church an endowment. Norway has complete freedom of religion. The Ministry of Culture and Church affairs is responsible for church affairs and different kinds of cultural affairs.

Sources consulted:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/no.html>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Norway>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, vol. 5: *Europe*, 10th ed. (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001)

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

WESTERN EUROPE

NORWAY

Basic Facts

Country Name:

(Kingdom of) Norway
(Kongeriket) Norge

Demographics:

Norway's population of 4,610,820 people (July 2006 est.; 4,841,000 in 2015) consists for 65.9% of people between the ages of 15 and 64. 19.3% of the population fits in the age group 0-14 years. The remaining 14.8% is 65 years and over. The life expectancy is 76.91 years for males and 82.31 years for females. The birth rate is 11.67 and the death rate is 9.45.

The population is growing at 0.38% per year. The marriage rate is 5.2. Couples cohabiting account for 20% of all couples. The overall sex ratio is 0.98 male(s)/female. The number of households in Norway is 1,961,548 with an average of 2.3 persons per household (2001 est.).

The net migration rate is 1.73 migrants/1,000 (2006 est.). Norway has 14.42 people per square kilometer (about 36.2 people per square mile), which makes the country number 192 on the world list of population density.

Partly due to Norway's rough terrain, the urbanization rate is 75%, up from 71% in 1980. Around 702,000 people live in Norway's capital Oslo. Norway is divided into 19 counties (*fylker*, singular – *fylke*). Each of the 19 counties has its own capital. Bergen and Trondheim are the only other two cities with more than 100,000 in population. The provincial cities in general are small. Only Stavanger, Kristiansand, and Drammen have more than 50,000 people each.

Language:

The two official languages of Norway, Bokmål Norwegian (Dano-Norwegian) and Nynorsk Norwegian (New Norwegian) differ mostly in their written form. About 160 years ago, Norway did not have its own written language. The people managed quite well with the Danish language. Bokmål is the dominating language of the cities, industrial areas, area around the Oslo fjord, and the lowlands of eastern Norway. It is the media's preferred language as well as the country's status symbol. Nynorsk is the language

spoken by the people along the fjords on the Norwegian west coast as well as in the mountainous area of inland Norway.

Both languages are taught in schools. The parents of the individual communities decide which of the two languages is to be primary and which one is to be secondary. At the upper level of education, the student has to demonstrate writing skills in the secondary language. This is because public employees are required to respond to letters in the language in which the letter was written.

Besides the two official languages, many people speak dialects. The Sami language, being completely different from any of the two official Norwegian languages, is the official language in 6 of Norway's counties. The Finnish language is an official language in 1 county.

Society/Culture:

Although Norway has been isolated from trends in other parts of Europe, Norwegian culture is rich and has grown ever since at least the 9th century. The **Vikings** were great shipbuilders and possessed wonderful skills as jewelers, woodcarving, and crafts. The Vikings also transported their skills to the countries they occupied. Many Viking sagas, legends, and stories have been handed down.

The **Golden Age** of Norway's culture included the 13th century. Trondheim's Gothic cathedral stands as an example of this period. In 1349, the Black Death killed between 1/3 and 2/3 of the Norwegian population. After the Norwegian royal family had died out in 1387, Norway entered into a union with Denmark, which lasted until 1814. During this period, Danish culture and language influenced those of Norway.

The rise of the Norwegian romantic nationalism cultural movement took largely place during the **19th century**. The following people contributed to the area of Norwegian literature: Henrik Wergeland, Maurits Christopher Hansen, and Henrik Ibsen. Famous painters during this age were Hans Gude and Adolph Tiedemand. Edvard Grieg was an important musician. The Norwegian language, too, developed during this century into Bokmål and Nynorsk Norwegian.

During the **20th century**, Norway has experienced the influence of many foreign cultures. American influences have been noticeable especially since World War II. With the influx of foreign immigrants, Norwegian cultural life has been exposed to different foreign concepts. Along with this development, the Norwegians exhibit a widespread determination to uphold and support the uniqueness of Norwegian culture. A mix of traditional Norwegian culture and foreign elements is visible particularly in the larger metropolitan areas (for example, 23% of Oslo's population are immigrants). The latter part of the 20th century has given more attention to the uniqueness of the Sami and Finnish cultures as well as that of the Tatar and Romani cultures.

Currently, Norway has between 700 and 800 museums of which many are small and local. According to some research, Norwegians read more than any other nation in the world. Around 10% of the 2,000 new books published every year in Norway are written by Norwegian authors. Besides reading, Norwegians enjoy visiting cinemas and theaters for the latest productions. Concerning sports, soccer and handball are the favorite summer sports with skiing and ice-skating as the favorite winter sports. Hiking is another Norwegian favorite exercise.

The Norwegian **public holidays** do not differ significantly from those of other European countries. The **Easter** holiday provides a 10-day holiday for many since it includes Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Easter Monday. During this time, services are being held in almost every church. Many Norwegians go skiing or visit their relatives and friends. Every year on May 1, the trade unions of many cities and towns celebrate **Labor Day** with speeches, parades, and special TV and radio programs. **Constitution Day** is unique to Norway as Norwegians celebrate the day of the constitution of their country and the end of the personal union with Denmark (May 17, 1814). Many people wear traditional costumes and watch the parades through the cities and towns. These parades consist of children instead of military forces as is common in other countries. In the capital Oslo, children march to the palace where they are greeted by the royal family. **Ascension Day**, on a Thursday usually in May, is another Christian holiday, which Norwegians observe. Ascension Day is followed by the observance of **Pentecost** on Sunday and Monday (about 1.5 weeks after Ascension Day). During Ascension Day and Pentecost, there are services in most of the churches. In December, Norwegians celebrate **Christmas** (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day) followed by **New Year's Day** on January 1. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, there are church services. The Christmas break is a great opportunity for Norwegians to spend time with their families.

Whereas Norwegians emphasize the **family**, the traditional family structure is becoming less and less common. The divorce rates are going up with up to 45% of marriages ending in divorce. The primary causes for divorce are incompatibility and alcoholism. More Norwegians remain single and form single person households. The percentage of people cohabiting is increasing as well. In 2000, an estimated 49.6% of all children were born outside of wedlock – either to cohabiting couples or to single parents. The church, traditionally a promoter of family values and structure, is unable to retain its members. Women account for almost 50% of the workforce. In many families, both partners work outside the home. This may explain why many Norwegians place their children in kindergarten programs (5,800 kindergartens in 2001). Generally, one or both parents of one spouse live with the family. Sometimes they have their own rooms in the house or their own apartment nearby the house.

An **independent** people, Norwegians are self-reliant and hard-working. While at first they may seem emotionally reserved, they welcome interaction with foreigners. Avoiding direct confrontation, Norwegians are courteous and polite. Norwegians eat 4 meals a day. The main **meal**, served between 4 and 6 pm, typically consists of boiled potatoes,

vegetables, and fish. The other meals are cold meals. Bread forms an essential part of the Norwegian diet.

Two **social problems**, which started a long time ago, are still present in Norway: binge drinking and related alcoholism, and drug use. Drugs are illegal in Norway and alcohol can only be purchased in state-operated liquor stores.

One department within the Norwegian government is that of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. After changing its name several times, the Ministry now functions under its current name, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, and “is responsible for culture, church affairs, the media (films, broadcasting, press and copyright) and sport, and for gaming and lotteries. Several other ministries also deal with cultural matters.”

<http://odin.dep.no/kkd/english/ministry/historical/043031-990047/dok-bn.html>

<http://appliedethics.anu.edu.au/inoslo/>

http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/fam_en/

http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/fruktbarhet_en/

http://www.ssb.no/nore_en/omsorg_en/

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http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-2061.html

http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-5.html

<http://odin.dep.no/kkd/english/ministry/historical/043031-990047/dok-bn.html>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, vol. 4: *Europe* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1998)

Government:

On May 17, 1814, Norway signed a constitution that changed Norway from an absolute monarchy to a limited democracy or **constitutional monarchy**: “The Kingdom of Norway is a free, independent, indivisible and inalienable Realm. Its form of government is a limited and hereditary monarchy.” (Article 1 of the Norwegian constitution) The monarch appoints a **Council of State** (or Government), consisting of Norwegian citizens who are eligible voters. The Council includes a Prime Minister and at least 7 other Members. State power is distributed between 3 institutions: the Storting (the legislative power), the Government (the executive power), and the courts (the judicial power).

The **Storting** is made up of 169 Members who are elected from the 19 counties for a 4-year period. The Storting is divided into 2 chambers, the Odelsting and the Lagting. These 2 chambers meet either jointly or separately depending on the legislative issue under consideration. The Prime Minister and the Council of State, together forming the **Government**, are responsible for 16 ministries. The head of each of the 16 ministries is called a Minister. His function is to translate policy relating to his ministry into action. The Ministers are members of the Council and advise the monarch on the decisions that the monarch needs to make. The highest **court** of law is *Høyesterett* (Supreme Court). The Supreme Court has a Chief Justice and 17 permanent judges. In addition to the Supreme Court, Norway has courts of appeal, city and county courts, and conciliation councils. The judicial system consists of customary law, civil law, and common law traditions.

Out of the 19 **counties**, Oslo is the only urban center that constitutes a county by itself. With Oslo being a county on its own, some say the total number of counties is 20. Each county is governed by a governor who is appointed by the king. In every county, a mayor leads the county assembly. The 19 administrative counties are divided into 431 (or 434) municipalities, led by assemblies. “Municipalities are the atomic unit of local government in Norway and are responsible for primary education (through 10th grade), outpatient health services, senior citizen services, unemployment and other social services, zoning, economic development, and municipal roads. Law enforcement and church services are provided at a national level in Norway. Municipalities do not collect taxes directly but are instead awarded block grants through the national budget.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipalities_of_Norway)

The last **elections** were held in October 2005. The governing group is a coalition between the Norwegian Labor Party, the Socialist Left Party, and the Center Party. Other political parties include the Progress Party, the Conservative Party, the Christian People’s Party, the Liberal Party, the Red Electoral Alliance, and the Coastal Party. Jens Stoltenberg of the Norwegian Labor Party is Norway’s current prime minister. The Norwegian Labor Party has been the largest party in Norwegian parliament since the election of 1927. For a 20-year period (1945-65), the Labor Party had a single party majority. Since 1965, minority and coalition governments were the norm for Norway. Whereas universal male suffrage was established in 1898, universal suffrage was established in 1913.

Norway has 4 **constituencies**: Bouvet Island, Queen Maud Land, Peter Island, and Svalbard.

Economy:

The **workforce** in Norway is defined as the number of males and females between ages 15 and 74. In 2002, around 2.3 million people (50% of the population) were employed in Norway. 47% of the workforce comprised women. The unemployment rate for men was 4.1% and that for women was 3.6%.

In 2002, Norway’s gross domestic product (**GDP**) was NOK 1, 531 billion. This high GDP has made Norway one of the richest countries in the world. Norway’s consumption expenditure per household, however, is around the average for several other European countries.

During the past 50 years, Norway’s primary and secondary industries have moved toward tertiary industries, causing some dramatic structural changes. In other words, manufacturing and agriculture have lost out to service industries. 4% of the labor force is employed by primary industries, around 22% by secondary industries, and 75% by tertiary industries. Primary industries contribute barely 2% to GDP, secondary industries close to 40%, and tertiary industries 59%.

Primary Industries: The number of farms has decreased as a whole since the 1950s. The forest industry has also been greatly reduced since 1950. Although there are fewer fishermen in Norway as compared to 1950, the catch has increased, putting “Norway in

10th place on the list of the world's largest fishing nations.” (http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/primar_en/)

Secondary Industries: Norway's secondary industries include manufacturing, mining and quarrying, oil and gas extraction, building and construction, electricity, and water supplies. Since the 1970s, the number of employees in secondary industries has dropped. Oil and gas extraction accounts for over 20% of GDP and is Norway's most valuable industry. Statoil is the government's oil company. The Norwegian government foresees an increase in the costs for pensions, care, and nursing due to the higher number of elderly people in the years ahead. “A Government Petroleum Fund, administered by Norges Bank, has therefore been set up, and it is made up of oil revenues that are not allocated in the Central Government Budget. This fund has increased from NOK 48 billion in 1996 to NOK 609 billion at the end of 2002, which is equivalent to more than 40 per cent of GDP.” (http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/sekundaer_en/)

Tertiary Industries: The public sector is the largest of tertiary industries, followed by retail trade, business services, transport, personal services, hotels and restaurants, post and tele-services, and sea transport. The main growth in the public sector in recent years has been in health and social care and in education. The ICT sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in tertiary industries, employing 92,100 people in 2001.

Neighboring Sweden is Norway's most important trading partner for both **import** and **export**. Norway imports 16% of its goods from Sweden and exports 12% to Sweden. Norway imports more from Germany than it exports to Germany. Norway exports more to the United Kingdom than it imports from the UK. Around 75% of Norway's total exports is to EU countries with around 67% of Norway's total imports coming from EU countries. 12% of Norway's imports comes from developing countries.

Norway does not belong to the European Union since a small majority voted **against EU membership** during referendums held in 1972 and 1994. Close co-operation with the EU, however, enables Norway “to maintain a very high level of economic integration, and political co-operation, with the EU and its Member States.” (<http://www.eu-norway.org/eu/norway+and+the+eu.htm>) Norway signed the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, which obligates the country to implement EU legislation that is relevant to the functioning of the internal market. Norway is also a member of the Schengen-Agreement. On the levels of EU research, education, and culture, Norway is an actively participating member. Last, along with many memberships of different international co-operations, Norway is a member of the Nordic Council and NATO.

Literacy:

The literacy rate in Norway is 100% for both males and females.

Land/Geography:



Geographic coordinates: 62 00 N, 10 00 E.

With almost 1/3 of the country located north of the Arctic Circle, Norway's mainland occupies an area of 324,220 square km (125,182 square mi). Water counts for 16,360 square km of the 324,220 km. Including its islands, dependants, and Svalbard, Norway's total area is 386,958 square km (149,405 square mi). Norway's length is 1,752 km (1,089 mi) and its width is 430 km (267 mi) from ESE to WNW. Norway's boundary length is 24,440 km (15,186) as it borders the North Sea, the North Atlantic Ocean, Finland, Sweden, and Russia. Land boundaries total 2,542 km.

Norway is the land of the fjords. Deeply indented bays (as far inland as 182 km/113 mi), fjords are never closed by ice. They provide beautiful scenes of nature. Norway's coastline is among the most rugged and longest in the world. Around 2/3 of the country is mountainous. Norway's islands number around 50,000. Glaciers, high plateaus, fertile valleys, and arctic tundra are also abundantly present in Norway.

Norway's climate is mild due to the North Atlantic Drift. The north is much cooler than the south; the interior is cooler than the western coastal area. The average yearly temperature in Oslo is 6 degrees Celsius (43 degrees Fahrenheit) (from -5 degrees Celsius (23 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 17 degrees Celsius (63 degrees Fahrenheit) in July).

From the middle of May until the end of July, the sun does not set in the North Cape area. From the end of November until the end of January, the sun does not rise above the horizon. The northern lights can be seen most clearly during the months of winter.

History

According to archaeological findings, people lived in Norway about **12,000 years** ago. Most likely, these people came from more southern areas, such as Northern Germany. Most of the settlements are those of hunters-gatherers. Around **4,000-3,000 BC**, the transition to agriculture began. Farming was widespread in southern Norway by the **Bronze Age** (1500-500 BC). Hunter-gatherer lifestyles, however, were still predominant at that time. Many scholars think that by **AD 500** settlement in the fertile lowland regions of western Norway had begun to reach saturation point. During the next couple of centuries, the competition for land led to militarization and expansion.

In the **9th century AD**, Norway consisted of petty kingdoms. The process of unification took place over a number of years. The **Battle of Hafersfjord** in 872 under the leadership of Harald Fairhair (or Haarfagr) formed the culmination of the unification process. As a result, Fairhair became Norway's first king.

Unification and expansion marked the **Viking Age** (8th-11th centuries). Norwegian Vikings settled as far west as Ireland, Normandy, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Greenland, parts of the British Islands. The saga of Eric the Red is situated in Vinland, present-day Newfoundland. The Vikings also founded the Irish cities of Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick. King Olav II Haraldsson continued consolidating the kingdom of Norway until his martyr's death in the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030, which gave him saint's status. At that time, Norway was officially a Christian nation.

The **impact of Vikings** was mainly twofold. First, the Vikings' raids caused economic and political disruption, which contributed to the collapse of the Carolingian rule, especially in England and northwestern France. Second, Viking settlers created an independent duchy of the Northmen, or Normandy. The Normans would later become key players in Europe's military expansion and the Crusades.

During the **next two centuries**, marked by civil wars and dynastic conflicts, a landed aristocracy emerged. The aristocracy displaced peasant freeholders. In 1274-1276, Norway adopted a common legal code and fixed the right of succession to the royal throne. With the rule of Magnus II, son of a Norwegian Princess and Swedish Duke, over Sweden and Norway in 1319, Norway lost its independence. The **Black Death** in 1349 killed between 1/3 and 2/3 of the Norwegian population. The Norwegian royal line died out in 1387. In 1397, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were unified under the rule of the Danish **Queen Margrethe**. Whereas Sweden left the union in 1523, Norway remained under Danish control for almost 300 more years until 1814.

Protestantism was introduced in Norway in 1537, resulting in a loss of pilgrims to the relics of Norway's Saint Olav at the Nidaros shrine. A loss of much of the contact with the rest of Europe and its cultural and economic life accompanied the loss of pilgrims from all over Europe.

Because of the wars between Denmark/Norway and Sweden in the **17th century**, Norway lost three of its provinces (Båhuslen, Jemtland, and Herjedalen) to Sweden. Norway, however, was able to increase its status by exploiting the forest wealth in the country.

During the Napoleonic Wars (ending in 1815 with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo), the union between Denmark and Norway was dissolved because Denmark formed an alliance with France. When France was losing, the Danish King was forced to cede Norway to the king of Sweden. Norway refused Swedish domination and used this event to declare its **independence on May 17, 1814**. Norway elected the Danish Prince Christian Frederick as its King. Sweden invaded Norway and forced its western neighbor into a personal union. Norway was allowed to keep its independent institutions, except for the foreign service, and liberal constitution.

Since Norwegian powers were no longer located in Denmark, Norwegian nationalism was on the rise. The **19th century** was the period of the Norwegian romantic nationalism cultural movement. Toward the end of the century, the growth of Norwegian national culture and the Norwegian romantic movement led to a growing dissatisfaction with the union with Sweden. Finally, a referendum on **June 7, 1905**, dissolved the union. The Government offered the crown to the Danish Prince Carl. Upon acceptance, Carl assumed the name Haakon VII, after the medieval kings of independent Norway. In **1913**, women gained suffrage in Norway.

During **World War I**, Norway remained neutral yet its merchant marine suffered losses. At the beginning of **World War II**, Norway claimed neutrality. However, calling their operation *Operation Weserübung*, German forces invaded the country on April 9, 1940, the same day they invaded Denmark. Norway's Atlantic coast was strategically important. The allied forces invaded Norway to take control of the coast but were thwarted by the Germans. Norwegian resistance lasted for 2 months, ending with the Battle of Vinjesvingen in May. The Norwegian military forces surrendered in early June.

King Haakon and his Government fled to England in June where they established Norway's government-in-exile. The Fascist leader, Vidkun Quisling, wanted to take over in Oslo, but the real power fell in the hands of *Reichskommissar* Josef Terboven. Quisling, then, became Minister President and formed a Government under German control. In April 1940, Quisling had helped the German invasion and his name became a synonym for collaborator. In 1945, he was arrested, convicted of treason, and shot. A civilian resistance movement fought against the occupying forces with armed resistance and civil disobedience. The Norwegian Merchant Navy continued the fight against the Nazis throughout the war as it took part in every war operation from the evacuation of Dunkirk until the Normandy landings. The Nazis in Norway surrendered on May 8, 1945.

Norway's distrust of other countries respecting Norway's neutrality, led the country to turn to **collective security**. Norway was one of the founding members of NATO in 1949 as well as of the United Nations. In 1972 and 1994, Norway held a **referendum on joining the EU**. Both times, a small majority of the Norwegians voted against joining. Nowadays, Norway is a part of the EU internal market and a participant in many EU programs. The present King is Harald V. His second child, Crown Prince Haakon, will succeed him. Haakon's older sister, Märtha Louise, is not first in line to the throne because both she and her brother were born before 1990. Until 1990, the monarch had to be succeeded by his first son, if he had one, regardless of the son's position in the line of

siblings. The constitution was then changed so that the next monarch's first child (born after 1990) will be heir apparent regardless of the child's gender.

For an overview of Norway's present government and economy, see the sections Government and Economy.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway>

http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-2050.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald_V_of_Norway

http://www.faqs.org/faqs/nordic-faq/part6_NORWAY/section-2.html

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, vol. 5: *Europe*, 10th ed. (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001)

Christian History

Before Christianity was introduced to Norway, Norwegian religion consisted of Scandinavian religion or mythology. At that time, Scandinavia consisted of several small kingdoms. Norwegian sagas of those early days are still being told today. Thor was the main god in the spectrum of gods, goddesses, and heroes. Every spring, every group of people under the different kings would launch their boats when the ice broke in the fjords. After arriving in neighboring countries, they would destroy whatever spoil they could not carry back to their homes. In the autumn, they returned home with spoil and spent the winter around a fire. Gradually, the local groups organized into armies whose campaigns were organized expeditions for conquest. The Vikings settled as far away as Iceland, Ireland, England, Russia, France, and Sicily. Far away from home, the Vikings were exposed to Christianity and many became Christians themselves.

Meanwhile, **German, British, and Danish missionaries** traveled through Norway, introducing Christianity and weakening the traditional belief in the Nordic gods. Several of these missionaries were killed by Norwegians, who feared that by accepting the missionaries' message they would give over their freedom and independence to the Danish King. The work begun by these missionaries culminated in the Christianizing of Norway by 3 missionary kings: Haakon the Good (c. 934-), Olav Trygvasson (995-1000), and Olav the Stout or Saint Olav (1014-1030).

King Haakon the Good was the first king to introduce the Christian faith to Norway starting around 934. His father, King Harald Haarfagr, had gathered Norway into 1 state in the last part of the 9th century. However, under the rule of his successor, his son Eric, internal wars broke out again in Norway. These struggles gave Haakon reason to lay claim to the crown. Haakon was an illegitimate son Harald and was educated in England at the court of King Athelstan where he had become a Christian. Upon his return to Norway, Haakon expelled Eric and subdued all of Norway. Haakon became popular overnight both because of his bravery coupled with his military ability and because of his refined manners. Haakon's priority was to Christianize Norway. He began by winning over those that were nearest to him. Then he called priests from England and built a church at Drontheim. Haakon decided it was time for a public step. He, therefore, exhorted the people, who had gathered for the Frostething (an assembly of the prominent people of Norway), to become Christians. Turning to Christianity did not pose a problem

in and of itself. The problem arose with the people thinking the King would take away their liberties and political rights if they were to become Christians. So, the people refused to become Christians and forced the King to partake in their pagan sacrifices and festivities. Thereafter, King Haakon got an army together to force Christianity upon the people. However, around that time, Eric's sons (Haakon was their father's half-brother) returned from their exile in England. In the ensuing battle, Haakon received a deadly wound.

Eric's sons, who had become Christians in England, ruthlessly overthrew all heathen practices in Norway and tried to enforce Christianity. The people hated the brothers for what they did. Therefore, their successor was a heathen, Haakon Jarl. Christianity did not really become a reality in Norway until Olav Trygvesson became King.

Olav Trygvesson was another of Harald Haarfagr's descendants. As a child, Olav was sold into slavery. He grew up in Esthonia, was recognized and ransomed by a relative, and educated in Moscow. As an adult, Olav lived as a sea-king. Like so many other Vikings, Olav was exposed to Christianity in England. He became a Christian and carried over his Viking-trades into his newfound faith. As a result, Olav was one of the fiercest knights of the cross ever. Upon proclaiming himself King of Norway in 995, Olav went about forcing every person to convert to Christianity. Oftentimes, he gave people the option either to fight him or to be baptized. Those, who chose to fight him, Olav mutilated, killed, and/or exiled. Fighting against the Danish and Swedish Kings, King Olav died in the Battle of Svold (1000). Olav's most important legacy was the establishment of Christianity in Norway. Despite his gruesome methods, the country as a whole never returned to paganism after Olav's death.

Olav Haraldsson became King of Norway 14 years after Trygvesson's death. It was left to Olav to complete the process of Christianizing those places that still contained some traces of heathenism. He resorted to craft and violence to accomplish his goal. Olav also organized the religion ecclesiastically by dividing the country into dioceses and parishes, building churches, and raising money for sustaining the clergy. With the consent of the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, under whose authority he placed the Norwegian church, Olav appointed for the most part English priests and monks. (http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/4_ch02.htm) As all over Europe, Christianity in Norway, therefore, was Roman Catholic.

Olav died a martyr's death at the Battle of Stiklestad (July 29, 1030). Upon canonization, Olav became Norway's patron saint – Saint Olav. A cult developed at his shrine in Nidaros. Shortly before the turn of the century, the first bishopric appeared at Olav's shrine. From 1152/3 onwards, the archbishop held office in Trondheim (new name of Nidaros), when Cardinal Nicholas Brakespeare established the archbishopric there. The Archbishopric of Nidaros/Trondheim consisted of “present-day Norway, parts of present-day Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, Orkney, the Faroes, the Shetland Islands, the Hebrides and the Isle of Man.” (<http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk.html>)

Despite the harsh methods, which the Kings employed in Christianizing the nation, many of the people may have converted to Christianity out of conviction. Several of the **Christian concepts** were **not foreign to those of Scandinavian mythology**. For example, whereas a brave man died and went to Walhall, a coward went to Niflheim after his death. In Walhall, he would live with the gods in brightness and joy. During the day, he would fight and during the night, he would feast. In Niflheim, on the other hand, he was a mere shadow, sitting by himself, and was surrounded by things that were disgusting and degrading. Walhall and Niflheim would not last forever, as they would be destroyed by fire when a deep darkness (Ragnarok) would fall over the universe. The All-Father, then, would create a new heaven and a new earth, and judge all people according to their good and bad deeds instead of bravery and cowardice. "It appears that, throughout Scandinavian heathendom, there now and then arose characters who, though they would not cease to be brave, longed to be good. The representative of this goodness, this dim fore-shadowing of the Christian idea of holiness, was Baldur, the young god standing on the rainbow and watching the worlds, and he was also the link which held together the whole chain of the Walhall gods; when he died, Ragnarok came." (http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/4_ch02.htm) The myth of Baldur showed strong resemblance with the Gospel of Christ. The question remains whether, along with other parts of Scandinavian mythology, the myth of Baldur was modeled after Christian ideas to begin with.

Notwithstanding the points of commonality between the Gospel and Scandinavian mythology, Christianity had to overcome a **major obstacle** in Norway: **Morality**. Although chaste, the average Norwegian considered gluttony and drunkenness major accomplishments. Endowed with much energy, he destroyed for the sake of destruction. He would do anything to make an enemy suffer. There was nothing he would not do, even to the point of giving his own life, for the sake of his wife, his child, his king, his friend. In other words, he could forget the gods, but not his duties. "The highest spiritual power among the old Scandinavians, their only enthusiasm, was their feeling of duty; but the direction which had been given to this feeling was so absolutely opposed to that pointed out by the Christian morality, that no reconciliation was possible. Revenge was the noblest sentiment and passion of man; forgiveness was a sin." (http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/4_ch02.htm) At first, the heathen Norwegians killed the missionaries and burnt their schools and churches, because they found these Christians guilty of corrupting Norwegian morals.

The **Roman Catholic** faith was the expressed religion of Norway from the 10th century until 1537. Since the Kings had introduced Christianity to Norway, there was a strong relationship between the State and the Church in Norway. During these almost 600 years, at times the State would be in power, at other times the Church. The only unchanging aspect was Norway's constant allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church in Rome and with that to the Pope. The country of Norway weakened in the 14th century due to economic decline and the Black Death (in 1349), leading to complete Danish rule of Norway toward the end of the century. Because of the strong ties between the secular and spiritual powers, the archbishops during this time, who aspired "to retain a national

church under the authority of Rome, came to be regarded as the guardians of Norwegian nationalism and cultural identity as well.” (<http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk.html>)

In **1537**, upon his own conversion, the Danish King **Christian III** adopted the **Evangelical-Lutheran faith** by royal decree, making it the official religion of both Denmark and Norway. At this time, only a few people in Norway were acquainted with Renaissance and Reformation ideas. Apart from personal reasons, King Christian III adopted the Evangelical-Lutheran faith because of a major political reason: A common religion would reinforce Norway’s political dependence on Denmark. Most of the Norwegian bishops and priest gradually changed over to the Evangelical-Lutheran faith. Changes that were more radical are the following: Convents and monasteries were dissolved; the liturgy was simplified with more emphasis on the preaching of the Gospel in the vernacular (mainly Danish) and with hymn singing; and anything of Roman Catholic origin, such as religious symbols, ideas, and customs, was forbidden. At the end of the 16th century, Evangelical-Lutheranism was formally established. During the 1600s, the changes took place on a popular level. In some areas, however, people expressed their faith in more or less Roman Catholic terms until the 1800s. In 1660, the concept of absolute monarchy was introduced. As a result, the State had now complete authority over the Church. Laymen, namely, the King, his advisors, and his representatives, now performed some of the roles, which church officials had performed until then. Laymen from the people did not fulfill any important roles in the Church.

Around 1670, the **Pietistic Movement** emerged in Germany. This Lutheran revival movement, which focused on the individual and his personal surrender to God, arrived in Norway in the early 1700s, where it made profound changes to the spiritual life of the members of the Church. The Pietistic influence is still visible in Norway’s Lutheran Church today. At the King’s request, Erik Pontoppidan wrote the Pietistic textbook *Sannhet til gudfryktighet* (Truth to fear of God) in 1737. Two years later, the Church supported the establishment of general education in Norway because it was intent on helping youngsters to study for confirmation. A 2nd phase of Pietism was initiated by Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), a farmer’s son. Hauge claimed that every person had the right to proclaim and preach the Good News. This was against Norwegian law that dictated that only clergy could preach the Gospel. The 2nd phase of Pietism, therefore, opposed the clergy as well as the ruling class (the King appointed only lay people of the ruling class as servants of the Church). The present pattern of autonomous Church organizations for national and international missions grew out of Hauge’s efforts.

In 1814, Norway rejected Danish rule and adopted its first **Constitution**. Article 2 of the Constitution reads, “All inhabitants of the Realm shall have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Evangelical-Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State. The inhabitants professing it are bound to bring up their children in the same.” The Church of Norway was now the State Church, protected by the King as Article 4 of the Constitution stipulates: “The King shall at all times profess the Evangelical-Lutheran religion, and uphold and protect the same.” Although Norway would be in a union with Sweden until 1905, the Swedish Lutheran Church never influenced the life and structures

of the Church of Norway. Norway formed a state office for church administration – the Royal Ministry of Church and Education – in Christiania (now Oslo).

A time of **church reform** began around this same time. Throughout the **19th century**, there were 2 movements for church reform: an official one, which was slow, and an unofficial one, which was impatient. The official movement addressed the issues of lay preaching (1842) and freedom of religious expression. Norway's Government supported the establishment of a certain degree of parish democracy, resulting in parish synods with little influence in 1873. Encouraged by the process of democratization, the unofficial movement formed unofficial diocesan synods, which sent representatives to biennial national assemblies from 1873 to 1982. The major area of church reform in the **20th century** was “the legal establishment of parish councils (1920), diocesan councils (1933), the National Council (1969), diocesan synods (1984) and the General Synod (1984).” (<http://www.kirken.no/english/engelsk.cfm?artid=5730>)

In 1842, Norway lifted the ban on lay preaching because of the Pietistic movement. Since the Constitution provided for freedom of religion, a variety of Christian free churches now emerged. The largest of the free churches in the Pentecostal Church, followed by the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church in Norway, and the Norwegian Baptist Union. In the 1850s, the Roman Catholic Church was reestablished in Norway and is presently thriving. Nowadays, a religious group must register with the Government only if it wishes to receive state support. The Government provides support “to all registered denominations on a proportional basis in accordance with membership.” (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24426.htm>)

While the Nazis governed Norway during **World War II**, the Church of Norway temporarily dissolved its ties with the Government. After the war, the ties were reestablished.

Throughout Norway's history, Christianity has been taught in schools. On **3 May 1995**, “a ministry-appointed committee put forth a recommendation to strengthen the role of **Christianity as a school subject** in Norwegian schools. The Government minister responsible for education and church affairs believes that all Norwegian children will gain from a basic knowledge about [the] nation's Christian cultural basis and the main stories of the Bible.” (<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/history/032005-990468/index-dok000-b-n-a.html>)

Mission, both on national and international levels, is an important aspect of Christianity in Norway. One of the larger mission organizations is **Normisjon**, “a voluntary and independent mission agency within the Lutheran Church of Norway, with its focus on fellowship and mission.” (http://www.normisjon.no/index.php?kat_id=116) Normisjon is a union of The Norwegian Santal Mission (1867) and The Norwegian Lutheran Inner Mission Society (1868). The former mission was established by Lars Olsen Skrefsrud (1840-1910), one of Norway's most important missionaries. Skrefsrud began missionary work among the Santal people in India, which later spread to more countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. The Pietistic leader Hauge formed The Inner Mission. Other mission organizations include YMCA, YWCA, the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel, the

Norwegian Missionary Society, and Norwegian Church Aid. Most of the non-Lutheran denominations have their own mission expressions.

The Church of Norway founded the **Norwegian Bible Society** in 1816. Since 1984, the Norwegian Bible Society has been an ecumenical organization that forms the central institution for the translation, production, and distribution of the Bible in Norway. The most recent Norwegian Bible translation dates back to 1978 with a revision in 1985. Projects to translate the Bible into different Sami languages are undertaken presently.

http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/4_cho2.htm

<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/history/023005-990454/>

<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/history/032005-990468/indez-dok000-b-n-a.html>

<http://ctlibrary.com/4358>

<http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk.html>

<http://www.norway.org/facts/religion/church.htm>

http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk_mission.html

<http://www.kirken.no/english/engelsk.cfm?artid=5730>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24426.htm>

http://www.normisjon.no/index.php?kat_id=116

Religions

Non-Christian

Buddhism (3.3%, 9,898 members; 0.3% of the unregistered groups, 70 members): Buddhism in Norway has several expressions: Japanese Zen, Tibetan Buddhism, Theravada, Vietnamese Zen, Chinese Zen, Korean Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, and The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Buddhists belonging to these different expressions have established organizations for each of the forms of Buddhism. Although the Vikings brought a Buddha statue to Norway, Buddhism did not have an impact in Norway until late in the 19th century. With the interest in Eastern religions during the 20th century, several Norwegians became fascinated with Buddhism. The organization for Zen Buddhism (founded in 1972) and the organization for Tibetan Buddhism (formed in 1975) established the Buddhist Federation of Norway in 1979. Many of the other Buddhist organizations are now members of the Federation as well. Most of the Buddhists in Norway are immigrants from countries where Buddhism formed the major religion.

Orthodox Jews (0.3% of the registered groups, 961 members): Having been expelled from Norway for long periods since the year 1000, the Jews now form a small ethnic and religious community in Norway. In 1892, the first Jewish synagogue was established in Oslo. At the outbreak of World War II, there were around 1,800 Jews in Norway. Nearly all of them were either deported to concentration and death camps or fled to neutral Sweden and other countries. The number of Jews since the end of the war has grown from 559 in 1946 to around 1,500 today. Besides the synagogue in Oslo, there is a small Jewish community and synagogue in Trondheim. The Jews are well integrated into Norwegian society.

Hindu (1.0% of the registered groups, 3,009 members; 1.2% of the unregistered groups, 312 members): The majority of the Hindus in Norway are originally from Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan. Founded in 1964, Vishwa Hindu Parishad is a world body of Hindus in the service of humanity. The Norwegian chapter has as its mission to strengthen the Hindu society in Norway and to spread the Hindu values of life. Another Hindu religious group is Sanatan Mandir Sahba. In Norway, the Hindus' main festival is the 12-day annual temple festival, the *mahotsav*. Processions are its main feature. For an interesting summary of Hindu death ritual, see <http://www.khm.uio.no/utstilling/farvel/hinduism.html>.

Islamic Communities (25.8% of the registered groups, 77,857 members; 11.1% of the unregistered groups, 2,981 members): In 2004, Norway counted 82 Islamic congregations. Muslims have some difficulties in obtaining local permissions to build mosques in Norway. Many of the Muslims come from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. In Norway, Islam forms the largest non-Christian religion.

Sikh (1.0% of the registered groups, 3,110 members): Sikhism is a monotheistic faith that acknowledges God as the only One, the One who is not subject to space and time. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the Universe. Sikhs believe that the goal of human life is to merge with God by following the Guru's teachings, by meditating on the holy Name, and by performing acts of service and charity. The Sikh's holy book is the Sri Gur Granth. The Sikh have a gurdwara (Sikh temple) in Oslo.

Philosophical Communities: Human Ethical Union (99% of the total of philosophical communities, 69,610 members); **Other Philosophical Communities** (1% of the total of philosophical communities, 694 members). The Human-Etisk Forbund (Human Ethical Union) was founded in 1956, partly in an effort to limit and counter the Church of Norway's influence. Its membership has slightly decreased in recent years.

Other Registered Religious Communities (8.0% of the registered groups, 24,079 members): No other information found.

Other Unregistered Religious Communities (6.4% of the unregistered groups, 1,726 members): No other information found.

Catholics/Orthodox Churches

The Orthodox Church (1.6% of the registered groups, 4,827 members; 1.1% of the unregistered groups, 4,032 members): The Russians brought the Russian-Orthodox Church to Norway in the 1920s. The congregation of Holy Nikolai Orthodox Church, formally established on 8 April 1931, numbers around 1,000 members of different national origin. This Orthodox Church has branches in Bergen, Stavanger, Neiden, and Hurdal. There are also some Greek Orthodox Churches in Norway.

The Roman Catholic Church (15.4% of the registered groups, 46,308 members): The Roman Catholic faith was first introduced in Norway by several of its Kings (see the

section Christian History). With the introduction of the Reformation in the 1530s, the Roman Catholic faith was outlawed. Many people, however, continued expressing Roman Catholic beliefs. In the 1840s, the Roman Catholic Church in Norway was reestablished. During World War II, the Protestants and Catholics joined forces in opposing the Nazi regime. Today, the country is divided into 3 church districts: the Diocese of Oslo, the prelatore of Trondheim, and the prelatore of Tromsø. The districts are made up of 32 parishes. Around 70% of today's church members were born outside of Norway.

Christian Cults and Sects

God's Congregation (0.3% of the registered groups, 998 members; 1.3% of the unregistered groups, 349 members): No other information found.

Jehovah's Witness (4.8% of the registered groups, 14,553 members): In 1869, Charles Russell formed a Bible study group in Allegheny, PA, which led to the movement of the Jehovah's Witnesses. In 2004, the Jehovah's Witness group did not experience any growth in Norway. Jehovah's Witnesses differ from evangelical Christians on different points of doctrine. For example, Jesus is only human, not divine; there is no Trinity; and only 144,000 people will enter heaven.

Protestants/Evangelicals/Pentecostals

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway (85.7% of the population, 3,900,000 members): Unless Norwegian citizens specify otherwise, they are considered members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. Despite a high number of members, only 3% attends church on a regular basis. The Church of Norway has been the State Church since 1814 (Constitution).

The number of churches and chapels is 1,600. Norway is divided into 1,310 parishes, 102 (rural) deaneries, and 11 dioceses. Of the more than 1,200 clergy, around 12% are women (ordained since 1961). In February 1993, the first female bishop was appointed to the bishopric of Hamar. In 2003, 77.7% of the infants were baptized in the Church of Norway, down from almost 97% in 1960.

Adventists (Seventh-Day Adventists) (1.8% of the registered groups, 5,530 members): Organized in 1863 in Battle Creek, MI, the denomination was first introduced to Norway by John Gottlieb Matteson in 1878. On January 11, 1879, Seventh-Day Adventists had a first national meeting with 34 fellows.

There are 3 districts in Norway (North Norway, West Norway, and East Norway) with a total of 72 churches and around 30 ordained ministers. Seventh-Day Adventist are well-known for their promotion of good health through a vegetarian and/or Old Testament diet. The President of the General Conference (the worldwide head of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church) is Jan Paulsen from Norway.

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway (7.1% of the registered groups, 21,389 members): A nationwide church, the Free Church consists of 81 congregations of which the first was established in Moss in 1877. The Bible and the Lutheran Church's confession form the foundation of the Free Church. Those, who have been baptized and who profess the Christian faith, have the voting power and make important decisions. This practice differs from that of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Norway, since in the latter church the political authorities make these decisions.

Being economically independent, the Free Church has the authority to appoint its own clergy and other personnel. It also passes its own laws. In January 2006, the Free Church ordained its first female pastor, Caroline Vesterberg. The Free Church is active in evangelism, church planting, and social work both abroad and at home.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church Community (1.3% of the registered groups, 3,821 members): No other information found.

The Norwegian Baptist Union (3.4% of the registered groups, 10,261 members): Formed in 1978, Det Norske Baptistsamfunn (The Norwegian Baptist Union) today counts 71 churches and over 10,000 members (the Union's website lists only 4,876 members). The first Baptist church in Norway was founded at Skien in 1862. In 1910, the Baptists established a theological seminary, supported by the American Baptist Missionary Union. A youth association was formed in 1922, followed by a high school in 1958.

The Norwegian Baptist Union is a member of the Baptist World Alliance, European Baptist Federation, The Council of Free Churches, The Missionary Association, and The Ecumenical Council. In 1920, Norwegian Baptist missionaries arrived in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Their efforts have resulted in 2 indigenous Baptist Unions with around 50,000 baptized members. The Union now also works in Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Eastern Europe.
(<http://www.baptist.no/>)

Church of Norway Mission Covenant (2.9% of the registered groups, 8,745 members): With 99 congregations, the Church of Norway Mission Covenant (Det Norske Misjonsforbund) is a non-state and non-Lutheran church. In theology, it is evangelical and conservative. The Church of Norway Mission Covenant runs Ansgarskolen just outside of Kristiansand. Ansgarskolen consists of Ansgar Bible School and Ansgar School of Theology and Mission.

The Methodist Church of Norway (4.1% of the registered groups, 12,468 members): John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist denomination in the USA. In the 1850s, Ole Peter Petersen brought the denomination to Norway. Norwegian Methodists' involvement includes schools, a theological school, hospital, nursing home, and missions. In January 1997, the Methodist Church of Norway signed an agreement with the Church of Norway, acknowledging each other's baptism, administration of the communion, and ordained ministries. The agreement also emphasized joint church fellowship, mission, and service to Norway.

Pentecostal Congregations (15.2% of the registered groups, 45,875 members; 4.9% of the unregistered groups, 1,319 members): With roots in the Holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement originated in the USA in the 19th century. Thomas Ball Barratt, a Norwegian Methodist pastor, spread the Pentecostal beliefs in Norway, Sweden, and England after 1906. Around 280 Pentecostal congregations own Norway's 3rd largest missionary organization, the Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway. The organization is active in 36 countries on 4 continents. The Pentecostal Gospel Centers of Norway, founded in 1983, helps more than 1,000 alcoholics and drug addicts per year.

Foreign Evangelical Community in Norway (0.6% of the registered groups, 1,756 members; 58.5% of the unregistered groups, 15,763 members): No other information found.

Free Evangelical Congregations (15.0% of the unregistered groups, 4,032 members): Belonging to the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches, the Free Evangelical congregations have their origin in the revivals that took place in Europe and elsewhere in the 19th century. Personal faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition of membership in the local church. The Bible is the only basis of doctrine and conduct. The Free Evangelical congregations emphasize both national and international mission endeavors.

The Christian Community (0.8% of the registered groups, 2,428 members): No other information found.

Christian Centers (1.2% of the registered groups, 3,584 members; 0.4% of the unregistered groups, 104 members): No other information found.

http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk_stat.html

http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-2065.html

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http://www.ted-adventist.org/countries/europe/norway_sda.html

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<http://www.misjonsforbundet.no/default.asp?submeny=Forside>

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<http://home.online.no/~thoros/Kirkeside/EN/sider/TEMA1/TEMA1A.html>

<http://home.online.no/~thoros/Kirkeside/ENsite.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Norway

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People Groups

From Europe:

43171

Anglophones (17,000 – 1994)

The Anglophones are English-speaking people from Great Britain. They consist of English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish people. These people groups share a similar culture with many individual/national elements. The majority belongs to the Christian faith.

447 Arctic Lapp (500)

450 Lule Saami (500)

451 Northern Saami (15,000)

457 Southern Saami (300)

These 4 people groups are separate families of the Sami people group. One source estimates the number of Sami in Norway around 70,000. Their homeland, also known as Lapland, is largely within the Arctic Circle. Lapland does not have an official political status. About 1/3 of Sami are nomadic. The majority live in permanent settlements along the Norwegian coast and fjords.

In Norway, the Sami are commonly called Finn but must not be confused with the Finnish people. Originally, the Sami were short and muscular. Nowadays, one can hardly distinguish them from their Scandinavian neighbors.

The Sami society is divided by labor – mainly hunters, fishermen, and whalers. The majority of the Samis are Lutheran. Only those Samis, who are refugees from the former Soviet Union, are Eastern Orthodox. The Sami language, consisting of 3 major dialects and over 50 subdialects, is related to Finnish and other Finnic languages. In 1992, Norway gave the Sami language equal status with Norwegian. The Sami language is now the official language in 6 of Norway's counties.

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Austrian (655)

The Austrian people group's ancestry is a mix of Germanic, Hungarian, Slavic, and Latin people groups. Their language is German. Austrians are known for music, art, architecture, and literature. The majority of Austrians are Roman Catholic. Protestant denominations only make up for about 5%. Austrians in Norway form a very small group.

000

Belgian (508)

The Belgians are mainly made up of Flemish and Walloon people. The Flemish originate from the western part of Belgium, whereas the Walloons come from the eastern part of Belgium. The Flemish, a Germanic people, are closely related to the Dutch. The majority of the Flemish adheres to the Roman Catholic faith. The Flemish language is closely related to Dutch, a Germanic language. The Flemish language has been suppressed by the French language that is spoken by the Walloons, a Latin people. The Walloons are shorter and darker than the Flemish. Like the Flemish, the majority of the Walloons confess the Roman Catholic faith. The Belgian royal family is related to the Norwegian royal family. Political institutions and social-economic structures in both countries show much resemblance. On several levels, the fish industry in both countries cooperates.

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Bosnian (13,300 – 2002)

The Bosnians are originally from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosnian capital is Sarajevo. As a result of the Bosnian war, which started in 1992, Norway opened its doors for Bosnian refugees. A total of around 1.5 million Bosnians are still refugees today. Bosnian or Serbo-Bosnian, a dialect of Serbo-Croatian, is the language spoken by the Bosnians.

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Bulgarian (606)

The Bulgarians, a South Slav people group, are made up of early Slav and Turkic peoples. The Bulgarians are thought to have originated in the Volga River basin. The Bulgarian language is a South Slav language written in the Cyrillic alphabet. The majority of Bulgarians profess the Orthodox faith.

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Croats (1,403)

The Croats, a South Slav people, are originally from the northern Balkan Peninsula in South-Central Europe. The Croats base their identity on their history, which is separate from other South Slav people, and their Roman Catholic faith. Croatian is now a separate language from the Serbian language. It uses the Latin alphabet. The war in former Yugoslavia left many refugees. Several of them were granted refugee status in Norway.

448

Dane (19,300 – 2004)

The Danish in Norway originated from Denmark, the most densely populated of the Scandinavian countries. Like other Scandinavian people groups, the Danes are descendants of the early Vikings. The Danish are generally tall with fair skin and light-colored eyes, which make this people group look similar to the Norwegians. The majority of the Danes in Norway profess the Lutheran faith. A minority adheres to the Roman Catholic faith.

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Dutch (4,604)

The Dutch are a western-Germanic people. They speak Dutch and/or Frisian along with many dialects. The Dutch are known as hardworking, devout, yet tolerant and liberal people. Most of the Christians belong to the Roman Catholic and the Reformed churches. The Dutch are tall with fair skin.

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Estonians (661)

The Estonians form a small group in Norway. Coming from their home country Estonia, the Estonians are a Finnic people. Socially, physically, and religiously, the Estonians are closer to the Finns and Scandinavian peoples than to Slavic people to the east of Estonia. In 1991, Estonia declared its independence from Russia. The majority of the Estonians is of the Lutheran faith. Their language is closely related to Finnish, is spoken in five major dialects (Tallinn, Tartu, Mulgi, Voru, and Setu) and is written in Roman characters.

449

Finns (13,000 – 2000)

The Finns form a part of the Finno-Ugric people with origins in the Volga River basin of European Russia. The Finns are generally tall and fair. About 89% of the Finns in Finland belong to the Evangelical Lutheran church. A majority of the Finns in Norway most likely belong to the Lutheran church as well. Permanent Finnish settlements began to develop in the 18th century in the northernmost province of Norway, Finnmark. Famines were the main reason for Finnish migration to Norway. Many of the Finns now work in the Norwegian fish processing industry and oil industry. Finnish women tend to work in health care and other service-oriented professions. The Finns have their own Finnish language but speak one or both of the Norwegian languages as well.

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French (2,583)

The French in Norway come from France, one of the most powerful nations in the world. The French are a Latin people with a mix of Germanic, Mediterranean, and other European peoples. French is one of the Gallo-Romance languages (part of the Romance group of Indo-European languages). Close to 90% of the French are Roman Catholic. Although the majority of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, most of the people are secular. For centuries, the French have been known for their art, letters, and fashion.

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German (10,623)

The Germans form an ancient ethnic group, dating back as far as the 4th century B.C. The official language is German (Deutsch or Hochdeutsch). There are many local dialects in addition to the official language. The northern Germans are mostly Protestant (Lutheran) and the southern Germans mostly Roman Catholic.

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Greek (378)

The Greeks are an ancient people and form a separate branch of the Indo-European peoples. Today's Greek language is derived from the Hellenistic standard Greek. The majority of the Greeks (98%) are Greek Orthodox. Greek culture is influenced by the Turkish people and culture. Greece is known for its history, culture, and literature.

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Hungarian (395)

The Hungarians, or Magyars, are a Finno-Ugric people originating from western Siberia. The Hungarian language, Magyar, is the most important of the Ugric languages of the Finno-Ugric language group and has 7 major dialects. 64% of Hungarians is Roman Catholic and 23% Protestant (mainly Reformed tradition). For 40 years, Hungary was under Communist rule.

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Icelander (3,824)

The Icelanders are a Scandinavian people group of Scandinavian and Celtic origin. The Icelanders do not have family names. The language, Icelandic, is a West-Scandinavian language. Around 97% of the Icelanders belong to the Lutheran denomination.

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Irish (497)

The Irish are a Celtic people and are related to the Scots, Bretons, Welsh, Cornish, and Galicians. Their outward appearance ranges from red hair with fair skin and light eyes to dark hair. English and Gaelic are the official Irish languages. Gaelic is spoken in 5 dialects. English is spoken in 2 dialects. 97% of the Irish in the Irish Republic and 46% of those in Northern Ireland are Roman Catholic. The Republic has a Protestant minority. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, has a Protestant majority.

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Italian (1,287)

The Italians are a Latin people with a mixture of Germanic and Mediterranean people groups. Known for their long and glorious history, the Italians are predominantly Roman Catholic (84%). However, church attendance is only about 25%. Standard Italian is the official language but different dialects are spoken all throughout the country.

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Latvian (647)

The Latvians are a Baltic people. They are generally tall and fair, resembling the Scandinavian peoples. The language, Latvian, is one of 2 Baltic languages (the other language is Lithuanian). Written in the Roman alphabet, the language is spoken in 2 main dialects. The majority of the Latvians are either Lutheran or Roman Catholic.

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Lithuanian (1,894)

The Lithuanians are a Baltic people, closely related to the Latvians. The Lithuanians are divided into 4 major subgroups: Aukstaiciai, Zemaiciai, Dzukai, and Suvalkieciai. The language, Lithuanian, is related to the ancient Sanskrit. Each of the ethnic groups has its own dialect. The majority of the Lithuanians are Roman Catholic with the Roman Catholic Church playing an important role in the Lithuanian culture.

453

Norwegian (4,481,162)

452

Norwegian (Nynorsk) (1,000)

The Norwegians are of Germanic stock. They are generally tall, fair skinned, and light-colored eyes. As a Scandinavian people group, they are closely related to the Danes and Swedes. Norwegians speak Bokmål Norwegian and/or Nynorsk Norwegian. Both languages have some dialects. The majority of Norwegians belongs to the Lutheran Church. Most of them, however, are nominal Lutherans.

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Poles (6,773)

The Poles are a West Slav nation. Polish culture exhibits many borrowings due to centuries of domination by neighboring countries. Germanic influence is most obvious. Spoken in 4 dialects and written in the Roman alphabet, the Polish language, Polska, is a Lechitic language. The majority of the Poles are Roman Catholic in faith.

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Portuguese (685)

A Latin people, the Portuguese display Iberian, Roman, Visigoth, and Moorish ethnic elements. Having 4 distinct dialects, the Portuguese language is a Western language of the Romance language group. Around 97% of the Portuguese consider themselves Roman Catholic.

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Romanian (914)

The Romanians are a Latin nation. Their culture and language are influenced by Germanic, Slavic, Rom, and Hungarian people groups. The language, a Romance language of the Italic subgroup, has 4 major dialects: Moldavian, Muntenian/Walachian, Transylvanian, and Banat. The majority of the Romanians are members of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Large minorities are Roman Catholic and Protestant.

456

Roma Gypsy (500)

The Roms, popularly known as Gypsies, are a transnational European group. Communities live in almost every European state. The Roms are dispersed all over the world. They speak local languages. Their native language, Romani, has 17 dialects, many of which are mutually unintelligible. The majority of the Roma Gypsies are Christians – Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. In most countries, the Roms do not have an official status. An official of the Roms in Norway estimates the number of Roms in Norway is close to 20,000. (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/149/56.0.html>; a good article on the Church of Norway's apology to the Roms for the way it has treated them in Norway)

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Russian (8,185)

The Russians are the largest national people group of Europe. The Russian culture has Oriental and Occidental influences. The low birthrate and the high mortality rate among Russians is a major concern among Russian nationalists. The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest church in Russia. The Russian language, an East Slav language, has 2 major dialects: North Russian and South Russian. The language is also the lingua franca in most of the republics of the former Soviet Union.

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Serbs and Montenegrins (5,436)

The Montenegrins, a South Slav people, are ethnically Serbs but consider themselves a separate people. The Montenegrins, a mountain people, adhered to a clan system well into the 20th century. The males are known for their personal tenacity and combat skills, while the women are known for performing their traditional roles. The language, a dialect of the Serbian branch of the Serbo-Croatian language, uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Most of the Montenegrins consider themselves Montenegrin Orthodox Christians. A minority of Montenegrins are Muslims.

The Serbians are the largest of the South Slav people groups. The Turks greatly influenced the Serbian language and culture. The Serbian/Serbo-Croatian language, written in the Cyrillic alphabet, is a western language of the South Slav language group.

It has 4 major dialects: Chakavian, Kajkavian, Stokavian, and Torlakian. The majority of Serbs adhere to the Serbian Orthodox tradition.

458

Spaniard (1,350)

The Spaniards, an Iberian people, are descendants of early Iberians, Celts, and Romans. Semitic, Teutonic, and Mediterranean elements influenced the Spanish culture. Other important influences on the Spanish music, food, and culture are the Rom population and the Latin-American populations. Around 97% of the Spaniards profess Roman Catholicism. The Spanish language is descended from the Vulgar Latin and has 7 major dialects.

459

Swede (22,900)

The Swedes, tall and often very fair with light eyes, are a Scandinavian people and as such related to the Danes and Norwegians. They are descendants of the early Vikings. Around 94% of the Swedes belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Swedish language, spoken in 5 major dialects, is an East Scandinavian language of the North Germanic language group.

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Swiss (898)

The Swiss are made up of the Swiss-Germans, Swiss-Italians, Romansh, and Savoyards. The Swiss-Germans form the largest group (92%). They are an Alemannic German people with a distinct Alpine culture. The Swiss-Germans are almost evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The language, Schwyzerdütsch, is a group of 20-70 related dialects belonging to the Alemannic group of German languages.

460

Tatar Gypsy (6,000)

The Tatars are a Turkic nation of mixed ancestry: Mongol, Finnic, and Slav. Their homeland, Tatarstan, forms part of the Russian Federation. The majority of the Tatars are Sunni Muslim. The Kreshen Tatars form an important Orthodox Christian minority. The Tatars speak a Uralian language that is a member of the Altaic language family. The language is spoken in 3 major dialects and many subdialects and mixed dialects.

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Turks (3,487)

The Turks are an Altaic people. The Turks display a mixture of European and Asian culture and ethnicity. The majority of the Turks are Sunni Muslim. The language,

(Anatolian) Turkish, is part of the Oghuz branch of the Altaic languages and consists of 9 different dialects.

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Ukrainian (1,101)

The Ukrainians, a Slavic people, are divided into 3 major ethnographic groups: Central/South-Eastern, Northern, and Western. The majority of the Ukrainians belong to the Russian/Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In the west, a large group is Roman Catholic. Evangelical groups are growing. Ukrainians speak Ukrainian and Russian. Ukrainian is an East Slav language spoken in 3 major dialects.

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Yugoslavs (14,500)

The Yugoslavs are mainly made up of Montenegrins, Sanjakis, and Serbs. See Montenegrins and Serbs for information on these people groups. The Sanjakis or Sanjak Muslims are a South Slav people related to the Bosnians. The Sanjaki culture contains many Turkish elements. Their language, Sanjaki, is a dialect of Serbian, written in the Cyrillic alphabet. The majority of the Sanjakis are Sunni Muslim.

From Africa:

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Algeria (409)

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Ethiopia (1,981)

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Gambia (376)

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Ghana (682)

000

Kenya (401)

000

Morocco (1,202)

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Nigerian (353)

000

Somali (10,623)

000

Tanzanite (388)

From Asia:

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Afghanistan (5,933)

000

Bangladesh (216)

000

China (2,236)

000

India (1,981)

000

Iran (4,441)

000

Iraq (13,136)

000

Israel (243)

000

Japan (457)

000

Korea (284)

000

Lebanon (243)

000

Pakistan (26,300)

000

Philippines (3,255)

000

Sri Lanka (2,498)

000

Syria (369)

000

Thailand (5,698)

000

Vietnam (1,625)

From North America:

000

Canadian (1,307)

000

American (7,597)

From South America:

000

Brazilian (1,191)

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Chilean (2,024)

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Colombian (486)

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Peruvian (377)

From Oceania:

000

Australian (749)

More than 90% of the Australians are Caucasian (mainly of British and Irish descent). Asians account for 7%. Aboriginals and other groups only form 1% of the total population. The official language is English. The aboriginals have many languages/ dialects. 25-30% of the Australians are Roman Catholic, 22% Anglican, and 22% belong to other Christian denominations.

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New Zealander (214)

The New Zealanders are mainly of European descent (75%). The Maori form 10% of the population. Minority groups are Asian, Pacific Islander, and others. The Maori are a Polynesian people group. English is the official language with Maori spoken by the Maori population as a 2nd official language. Over 50% of New Zealanders belong to

Protestant denominations. Roman Catholics number around 15%. There are 2 Christian sects, a small Jewish community, and a small Hindu community.

Most of the people groups, the number of people per group, and information about each group were taken from http://ssb.no/english/subjects/02/01/10/folkemengde_en/tab-2006-03-33-en.html and James B. Minahan, *One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000).

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should recognize the vast secularism that is present in Norway. While most of the people are considered as members of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway* only 3 % attend church services. Evangelicals should consider the majority of these people as needing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to introduce spiritual revival into the churches of Norway
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek means to reach the minority peoples of Norway with the Gospel of Jesus.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should find ways to present the biblical vision of marriage and family to the peoples of Norway. The increasing number of cohabiting couples forms a challenge for missionaries as they espouse the family form of husband and wife with or without children.
5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should introduce efforts to teach biblical truth into the society of Norway.

Pictures:

See separate folder.

Links:

http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/no.html>
<http://www.kirken.no/english/>
<http://www.norway.com/>
http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-2050.html
<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway>

Sources Consulted:

<http://www.nationmaster.com/country/no-norway/peo-people>
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/no.html>
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Norway>
Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, vol. 5: *Europe*, 10th ed. (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001)
<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/history/032005-990497/index-dok000-b-n-a.html>
http://www.ssb.no/norge_en/
http://ssb.no/english/subjects/02/01/10/folkemengde_en/tab-2006-03-33-en.html
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway>
<http://www.urmila.de/DesisinD/Europa/Norway.pdf>
And sources listed under separate headings in the profile.