

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

EUROPE

Faroe Islands

SNAPSHOTS SECTION

Country Name:

Faroe Islands
Foroyar

Country Founded in:

The Faroe Islands were first inhabited in the sixth century by Irish monks. The country is not independent but self-governing under the Danish crown

Population:

48,455 (1 June 2007)

Government Type:

Part of the Kingdom of Denmark; self-governing overseas administrative division of Denmark since 1948. Denmark has a constitutional monarchy

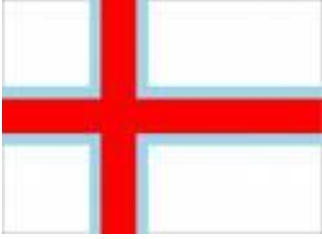
Geography/location in the world:

Northern Europe, island group between the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, about one-half of the way from Iceland to Norway
62 00 N, 7 00 W

Number of people groups:

Five people groups in Faroe Islands, with the Faroese forming the majority (47,344). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faroe_Islands reports people of 77 different nationalities living in the Faroe Islands.

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Evangelical Lutheran (33,800 affiliates)

Protestant (92.62%), includes Lutheran, Christian Brethren, Pentecostal churches, and house churches

Independent (0.94%)

Catholic (0.16%)

Marginal (0.25%)

Non-religious/other (5.84%)

Baha'i (0.20%)

Government interaction with religion:

The Constitution provides for complete freedom of religion. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the state church and is supported by a state-levied tax.

Sources consulted:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/fo.html>

http://www.hagstova.fo/portal/page?_pageid=33,316936&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71377.htm>

Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 21st Century Edition (Harrisonburgh: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 2001)

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

Faroe Islands

Western Europe

Basic Facts

Name:

Faroe Islands
Foroyar

Demographics:

The population of the Faroe Islands is 48,455 (1 June 2007, as given by the Faroe Islands statistics website, http://www.hagstova.fo/portal/page?_pageid=33,316936&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL; the CIA's world factbook gives an estimate of 47,511). The vast majority of Faroese is of Nordic or Celtic descent. For 2007, the age structure is as follows:

0-14 years: 20.6% (male 4,882/female 4,904)

15-64 years: 65.3% (male 16,353/female 14,668)

65 years and over: 14.1% (male 3,041/female 3,663)

A significant part of the age group 20-29 is missing, mainly because "this part of the population is receiving their education or job training abroad as only a few higher education opportunities are available in the Faroe Islands" (http://www.hagstova.fo/portal/page?_pageid=33,374556,33_374594&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL).

The median age is 35 years (male 34.8 years/female 35.3 years). With a birth rate of 14.12 births/1,000 population, a death rate of 8.69 deaths/1,000 population, and a net migration rate of 0 migrants/1,000 population, the population growth rate for 2007 is 0.543%.

The sex ratio is as follows:

At birth: 1 male/female

Under 15 years: 0.996 males/female

15-64 years: 1.115 males/female

65 years and over: 0.83 male/female

Total population: 1.045 males/female

The infant mortality is 6.01 deaths/1,000 live births (male: 7.25 deaths/1,000 live births; female: 4.76 deaths/1,000 live births). At birth, the life expectancy for the total population is 79.49 years (male: 76.06 years; female: 82.93 years; this is up from 72 and 77 years respectively in 1977). The total fertility rate is 2.15 children born/woman. (All of the statistics are 2007 estimates)

In 2007, the population density is 34.6 people/sq km (89.7 people/sq mi). Around 25% of the people live in the capital city, Tórshavn. The municipalities of Klaksvík and Runavík

are densely populated as well. Significant urbanization did not take place until some decades ago. In 1801, the Faroe Islands population numbered 5,000, in 1870 over 10,000, in 1933 about 25,000, in 1973 over 40,000. In the early 1990s, many people left the Faroe Islands due to economic decline. Nowadays, 90% of the population is connected economically and culturally due to the Government's large investments in sub-sea tunnels, bridges, and roads which connect the different islands.

http://www.hagstova.fo/portal/page?_pageid=33.316936&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/fo.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faroe_Islands

Language:

There are two official languages spoken in the Faroe Islands: Faroese, which is a derivative of Old Norse, and Danish. The deaf in the Faroe Islands use the Danish sign language. Faroese is an Indo-European, Germanic, North, West-Scandinavian language that is not inherently intelligible with Icelandic. All Faroese and some of the non-Faroese speak this language. Appointed every five years, the Faroese Language Committee is an advisory institute for the preservation and promotion of the Faroese language. Danish is an Indo-European, Germanic, North, East-Scandinavian, Danish-Swedish, Danish-Riksmål language. Over five million people speak the language worldwide. Most, if not all, of the Faroese population speaks Danish. The Danish sign language is spoken by the deaf in the Faroe Islands. Some of the signs are related to the French sign language. The Danish sign language is intelligible with the Swedish and Norwegian sign languages with moderate difficulty.

<http://www.fmn.fo/malnevndin/about.htm>
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=dan
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=dsl

Society/Culture:

The culture of the Faroe Islands is rooted in the Nordic culture. It has maintained much of its traditional culture since the islands “were long isolated from the main cultural phases and movements that swept across parts of Europe” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_Faroe_Islands). For 300 years (from the Reformation in 1538 onward), the Danish government forbade the use of the Faroese language in official documents, churches, and schools. As a result, nothing was written down in Faroese during this time. A rich oral tradition, however, developed. The oral works are divided into the following categories: “*sagnir* (historical), *ævintyr* (stories) and *kvæði* (ballads), often set to music and the medieval chain dance. They were eventually written down in the 19th century” (ibid.). A standardized form of Faroese was developed in 1890. Some famous Faroese authors are Jórgefrantz Jacobsen and William Heinesen. Faroese poets include Hans Andreas Djurhuus, the brothers Janus, and Rói Patursson.

The official and unofficial holidays for the Faroe Islands are as follows: New Year's Day (January 1), Maundy Thursday (March/April), Good Friday, Easter, Easter Monday, Flag

Day (April 25), Prayer Day (May 4), Ascension Day (May), Whit Sunday (Pentecost), Whit Monday, Constitution Day (June 5, 1953 – Danish Constitution), St. Olav's Eve (July 28), St. Olaf's Day (July 29), Christmas Eve (December 24), Christmas Day (December 25), Second Day of Christmas (December 26), and New Year's Eve (December 31).

The national holiday, St. Olaf's Day (July 29), is celebrated in commemoration of the death of St. Olaf. It begins on the eve of July 28 with the opening of the Faroese parliament, a 900-year old custom. Before the opening ceremony in the parliament building, the members of parliament and civil and church officials walk in procession to the Cathedral for a service. The festivities continue until July 31 and consist of sports competitions (like rowing), pop concerts, art exhibitions, and Faroese dance. Faroese dance is unique in that it is primarily vocal and not accompanied by musical instruments. The celebrations take place in the capital, Tórshavn. Many people wear the national Faroese dress.

Tórshavn houses the Nordic House in the Faroe Islands. Faroes' most important cultural institution, the Nordic House supports and promotes Nordic and Faroese culture. Part of the cultural experiences is the Faroese music scene made up of a symphony orchestra, a classical ensemble, different choirs, and various bands. Each summer the festival Summartónar is held and features classical and contemporary musical performances. Two other summer festivals focus on popular music: G! Festival and Summarfestivalurin.

Tórshavn is also the home of The Faroe Islands Art Museum. Among other objects, one finds here paintings by Faroese painters Sámuel Joensen-Mikines, Ruth Smith, Steffan Danielsen, and Ingálvur av Reyni. The Faroe Islands Natural History Museum is another interesting museum. Smaller, rural museums are located on some of the islands. The typical Faroese house is "a low and small longhouse, tarred brown or black with white painted mullioned windows, blending into the terrain under a large grass roof" (<http://www.faroeislands.com/Default.asp?sida=689>).

Traditional Faroese dishes are mainly prepared with meat and potatoes, using few fresh vegetables. Mutton is a key ingredient in many meals, including skerpikjót (well-aged, wind-dried chewy mutton). Other dishes are Grind og spik (pilot whale meat and blubber), røstur fiskur (matured fish), and røst kjót (semidried mutton). Fresh fish and seabirds are served regularly as well.

The Faroese Islands have two national, daily newspapers: Dimmalaetting and Sosialurin. The public TV station is Sjonvarp Foroya. Utvarp Foroya is a public radio station. The public station Ras 2 is an FM network.

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

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

http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2007/faroe_islands.htm

<http://www.faroeislands.com/Default.asp?sida=689>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3434335.stm

Government:

The Treaty of Kiel (1814) dissolved the Norwegian-Danish union. The Faroe Islands continued as possession of Denmark. The Faroe Islands form a part of the Kingdom of Denmark: since 1948, the country has been a self-governing overseas administration of Denmark. Denmark is still responsible for the Faroe Islands' defense, legal system (judicial branch), and foreign affairs. The island group has close traditional ties to Shetland, Iceland, Orkney, Greenland, and the Outer Hebrides.

The Faroese government type is that of a parliamentary representative democratic dependency. The cabinet (Landsstyri) is appointed by its head, the Prime Minister (currently Joannes Eidesgaard, leader of the Social Democratic Party). Queen Margarethe II of Denmark is the Head of State and is represented by the High Commissioner (currently Søren Christensen). The cabinet, Prime Minister, and Queen represented by the High Commissioner form the executive branch with regard to all home affairs.

The parliament is responsible for the legislative branch. Elections are held every four years. Suffrage is 18 years of age and universal. The unicameral Faroese parliament or Logting has 32 seats. The members are elected from the seven electoral districts: Norðoyar, Eysturoy, Streymoy (divided into north and south), Vágar, Sandoy and Suðuroy. There are multiple political parties: Union Party, Social Democratic Party, Republican Party, People's Party, Center Party, Independence Party, and other parties. Elections for two seats in the Danish parliament (Folketing) are also held every four years.

For administrative purposes the Faroe Islands are divided into 34 municipalities with some 120 cities and villages. The current trend of decentralization of public services and municipal amalgamation may result in a decrease of municipalities (between 7 and 15).

After WW II, a part of the population favored independence from Denmark. A public election was held on September 14, 1946: a small majority voted for separation from Denmark. The election, however, was not a referendum and, therefore, not binding. The coalition in parliament could not agree on how the cessation would be carried out. As a result, the parliament fell. New elections gave enough seats to parties opposed to cessation so that the Faroe Islands remained under Danish rule. In 1948, the Danish parliament passed a law of home rule for the Faroe Islands. Presently, the population is almost evenly split over the issue of complete independence. A planned referendum in 2001 was cancelled "after Denmark [said] a pro-independence result would lead to a halt in annual subsidies" (http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3985771.stm).

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

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

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

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print.fo.html>

Economy:

The fishing industry is the main sector contributing to the Faroese economy. Due to price swings in this branch, the Faroese economy is vulnerable. The Faroese practice of whaling has drawn international criticism. Since 2003, the prices for housing and fish have increased, boosting the economy. In May 2007, the unemployment rate stood at 1.6%, one of the lowest in Europe. Recent oil finds will hopefully help diversify and strengthen the Faroese economy. Denmark contributes about 15% of the Faroese GDP, allowing the Faroese population to have a standard of living almost equal to that of the Danes and other Scandinavians.

The Faroese GDP (purchasing power parity) for 2001 was \$1 billion; the GDP (official exchange rate) for 2005 was \$1.7 billion with a growth rate of 2.4%; the GDP per capita (purchasing power parity) was \$31,000 (2001 est.) The agricultural sector contributed 27% to the GDP; industry 11%; and services 62% (1999 figures). In October 2000, the labor force numbered 24,450 people: agriculture 33%; industry 33%; services 34%. In 2005, the inflation rate for consumer prices was 1.8%. That same year, the Faroese revenues totaled \$588 million and expenditures \$623 million.

The Faroe Islands' agricultural products consist of milk, vegetables, potatoes, sheep, salmon, and other fish. Only 2.14% of the land is arable. The country's industries are fishing, fish processing, handicrafts, and small ship repair and refurbishment. In 1999, the industrial growth rate was 8%. Since 2000, the Government has invested in new business and IT projects with the hope of attracting investments and a generation with IT knowledge and skills.

In 2005, the Faroe Islands exported fish and fish products (94%), stamps, and ships worth \$598 billion to Denmark (38%), UK (29.4%), Nigeria (8.9%), Norway (6.1%), and the Netherlands (4.3%). The island group imported goods worth \$639 million in 2004. The goods consisted of consumer goods, raw materials and semi-manufactures, machinery and transport equipment, fuels, fish, and salt. The main import partners for 2005 were Denmark (47.4%), Norway (18.7%), Germany (8.4%), Spain (7.8%), Iceland (4.9%), and Sweden (4%). Denmark sent a \$105 million subsidy to the Faroe Islands in 2005.

The Faroe Islands uses the Faroese Króna which is pegged with the Danish Krone (DKK). The Faroe Islands is not a member of the European Union despite the fact that Denmark is a full member. The Faroe Islands is not a signer of the Schengen Agreement. However, the country has open borders with the Schengen countries. Denmark is responsible for the military defense of the Faroe Islands.

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

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

http://www.intute.ac.uk/sciences/worldguide/html/880_economic.html

Literacy:

There is no separate literacy rate for the Faroe Islands; it is included with Denmark. The literacy rate for Denmark is 100%.

Land/Geography:



62 00 N, 7 00 W

The Faroe Islands is located in Northern Europe between the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago is about midway between Norway and Iceland. Its total area is 1,399 sq km (540 sq mi) of which all is water. The coastline is 1,117 km (694 mi). The Faroese maritime claims are: territorial sea – 3 nm; continental shelf – 200 nm or agreed boundaries or median line; exclusive fishing zone – 200 nm or agreed boundaries or median line.

The island group consists of eighteen islands, of which seventeen are inhabited. The islands are: Borðoy, Eysturoy, Fugloy, Hestur, Kalsoy, Koltur, Kunoy, Lítla Dímun, Mykines, Nólsoy, Sandoy, Skúvoy, Stóra Dímun, Streymoy, Suðuroy, Svínoy, Vágar, and Viðoy.

The terrain of the islands is rocky and rugged with some low peaks. There are cliffs along most of the coastline. Its lowest point is the Atlantic Ocean (0 m; 0 ft) and its highest point is Slaettaratindur (882 m; 2,894 ft). The climate is mild winters and cool summers. Usually there is overcast, fog, and wind. The average winter temperature is 3 degrees Celsius (37 degrees Fahrenheit) with a rare freeze, while the average summer temperature is about 11 degrees Celsius (52 degrees Fahrenheit). (From <http://www.framtak.com/info/weather.html>)

Arctic-alpine plants, grasses, lichen, moss, and wild flowers dominate the flora of the Faroe Islands. There are some 400 plant species. One characteristic of the islands is the lack of trees, resembling the nature of Connemara and Dingle (Ireland) and the Scottish Islands. The fauna consists mainly of birds (seabirds and birds that are attracted to open land). A few species of land mammals roam the Faroese Islands, all of them introduced by man: Mountain hare, brown rat, and house mouse. Grey seals are very common around the shores. The short-finned pilot whale and the killer whaler both frequent the Faroese waters and fjords.

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

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

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

History

Pre-Norse History

Starting around 625, Irish monks visited the Faroe Islands and used the islands as a hermitage. These Irish monks introduced oats and sheep to the country. Pollen analysis has shown that oats were cultivated in the Faroe Islands since 625. Around 795, Irish monks reached Iceland. Some have concluded that the first Norse settlers exiled the monks.

Norse History

The first group of Norse people, Norwegian Vikings, came to and settled in the Faroe Islands. They became mostly farmers. Some sources say that while some of the Vikings fled Norway to escape King Harald Fairhair's tyranny, most of these Vikings most likely came from Norwegian settlements in Orkney, Shetland, and around the Irish Sea. The latter group, then, consisted of Norse-Gaels. The Vikings established their own parliament. Local expressions were found on different islands, while the main parliament or Althing was located on Tinganes in Tórshavn. If indeed the Althing was founded around 900, it is the oldest parliament still existing worldwide.

Sigmundur Brestisson (961-1005) escaped to Norway after nearly all of his family members were killed in the southern islands of Faroe. Sigmundur became a Christian in Norway and was sent back in 983 by King Olaf Tryggvason in order to take possession of the islands for Norway. Sigmundur brought the islands under Norwegian control and introduced Christianity. In 999, the Althing adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Faroe Islands. Sigmundur, however, was murdered in 1005. The stories told about Sigmundur and others form part of the Færeyinga Saga. This Saga contains stories about the Christianization of the Faroese and the incorporation into the Norwegian kingdom. The earliest story dates back 969. The Faroe Islands became officially part of the kingdom of Norway in 1035.

Little is known from this time until the early fourteenth century when trading regulations were set up – the beginning of “a long era of foreign encroachment in the Faroese economy” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Faroe_Islands). The regulations stipulated that all Faroese commerce had to go through Bergen, Norway to be taxed. At the same time, the Hanseatic League (“an alliance of trading guilds that established and maintained a trade monopoly over the Baltic Sea, to a certain extent the North Sea, and most of Northern Europe for a time in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period, between the 13th and 17th centuries,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League) gained in power and thus formed a threat to the Scandinavian economy. Norway could not stop the process because the Black Death killed a large part of Norway’s population. At least one third of the Faroese population was killed, too. In 1361, the Hanseatic League was allowed to trade with the Faroe Islands. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Faroe_Islands, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faroe_Islands, <http://www.faroeislands.com/Default.asp?sida=654>, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3985771.stm, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A6reyinga_saga, and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmundur_Brestisson)

The Beginning of Danish Rule

The Faroe Islands were part of the kingdom of Norway until the Kalmar Union (1380). This union united Denmark, Norway, and Sweden and their constituencies. Initially, the Faroe Islands remained under the Norwegian crown because the crowns had not been joined yet. Later on, the countries and their constituencies had to submit to a single monarch – the Danish monarch. However, while giving up their sovereignty, the countries did not give up their independence. The Faroese Althing was renamed Løgting and was no more than a law court.

At the end of the fourteenth century, Henry Sinclair I, Earl of Orkney reigned over the islands as a vassal of Norway. The islands were part of the North Atlantic Sinclair principality. In the sixteenth century, English adventurers caused problems for the Faroese but were cleared by Magnus Heinason whom King Frederick II had sent. In 1535, King Christian III introduced the Lutheran expression of the Christian faith to the Faroe Islands, replacing Catholicism. The process took five years during which the Danish language was used instead of Latin. In addition, the state took possession of church property. Moreover, the bishopric at Kirkjubøur was abolished. The remains of the cathedral are still visible today. On the trade front, the King gave the German trader

Thomas Köppen monopoly rights in the Faroes. These were the conditions: “only good quality goods were to be supplied by the Faroese and were to be made in numbers proportionate to the rest of the market; the goods were to be brought at their market value; and the traders were to deal fairly and honestly with the Faroese” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Faroe_Islands). After Köppen, others took over the trading monopoly. The war between Denmark and Sweden over Danish influence on Sweden, however, caused the Faroese economy to suffer. Most of the Faroese goods were now taken to the Netherlands and sold at predetermined prices. The merchants did not always follow the monopoly conditions. As a result, the quality of the Faroese goods decreased. Piracy and smuggling increased as the trading monopoly neared collapse. The Danish crown intervened and gave the Faroe Islands to the Von Gabel family as a personal feudal state. The Von Gabel family, however, oppressed the Faroese, who, in turn, resented the family. In 1708, the Danish government took over the Faroe Islands again and two years later formed the Royal Trade Monopoly. In 1720, the Faroe Islands became an official county of Denmark; Denmark retained control over the islands after the Treaty of Kiel (1814) which dissolved the union between Denmark and Norway. In the mean time, the losses of the trading monopoly continued to increase. Eventually, the trading monopoly was abolished on January 1, 1856. The Faroe Islands, then, began to develop its fishing industry which later became its major source of revenue.

Toward Autonomy

The new Danish Constitution of 1849 gave the Faroe Islands two seats in the Danish parliament (Rigsdag). The Christmas meeting of 1888 formed the beginning of a cultural awareness movement and of modern Faroese politics. The struggle for the Faroese language played an important role in this movement. In 1890, Faroese became a standardized written language. After 1906, the movement shifted toward politics as people founded political parties in the Faroe Islands. In 1918, the flag of the Faroe Islands was created. It was not officially recognized until April 25, 1940, two weeks after the beginning of the peaceful British occupation of the islands. The British occupied the islands until 1945 to prevent the Nazis from using the country as a submarine base. During WWII, the British Royal Engineers built the first and only airport of the Faroe Islands – Vágur Airport. Denmark resumed control over the islands after the war. A part of the population, however, favored independence from Denmark. A public election was held on September 14, 1946: a small majority voted for separation from Denmark. The election, however, was not a referendum and, therefore, not binding. The coalition in parliament could not agree on how the cessation would be carried out. As a result, the parliament fell. New elections gave enough seats to parties opposed to cessation so that the Faroe Islands remained under Danish rule. In 1948, the Danish parliament passed a law of home rule for the Faroe Islands. Presently, the population is almost evenly split over the issue of complete independence. A planned referendum in 2001 was cancelled “after Denmark [said] a pro-independence result would lead to a halt in annual subsidies” (http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3985771.stm).

Christian History

The first Christians to visit and actually discover the Faroe Islands were Irish monks. In the late seventh and early eighth centuries, these monks used the islands as a hermitage. Because the monks were all celibate and lived in all-male communities, they were not self-sustaining. Norwegian and Norse-Gael Vikings settled in the Faroe Islands beginning around 800. Sigmundur Brestisson (961-1005) and his family lived in the southern islands of the Faroes. They were nearly all killed. The survivors, including Sigmundur, fled to Norway. In 983, King of Norway, Olaf Trygvason, sent Sigmundur, who was the first Faroese man to become a Christian, back to the Faroe Islands to take possession of it for him. Sigmundur accomplished this task. His greater accomplishment, however, was to introduce Christianity to the Faroese people. Sigmundur's method was not as admirable: "Initially Sigmundur sought to convert the islanders by reading the decree to the Althing in Tórshavn, but was nearly killed by the resulting angry mob. He then changed his tactics, went with armed men to the residence of the chieftain Tróndur í Gøtu, broke in his house by night, and gave him the choice between Christianity or beheading. That worked" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmundur_Brestisson). In 999, the Althing adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Faroe Islands. Sigmundur, however, was murdered in 1005.

Around 1100, the Faroe Islands became a diocese of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen (present Germany). Kirkjubóur was the seat of the Faroese bishop and remained so until 1538, when Lutheranism was introduced and replaced Catholicism. In 1104, the diocese came under the archbishopric of Lund (present Sweden). From 1152/3 until 1538, the Faroese diocese became part of the archbishopric in Nidaros (Norway). Between 1100 and 1538, the Roman Catholic Church in the Faroe Islands had twenty-three bishops. The last bishop, Amund Olafsen, had to yield to Jens Riber, the Lutheran superintendent who took on the title of bishop. Immediately following the introduction of Lutheranism, the Roman Catholic Church elected only provosts. The provost and other Catholic clergy remained steadfast and promoted the Catholic faith. However, they were unable to keep the Faroese from joining the Lutheran church. By the end of the sixteenth century, Roman Catholicism had almost completely disappeared from the Faroe Islands.

In 1156, Sverre, a five-year old Norwegian boy, came to Kirkjubóur for education. In 1176, he returned to Norway and became King. Around 1200, King Sverre abolished slavery in the Faroe Islands. Not much is known about the Roman Catholic Church in the Faroe Islands from the twelfth through the early sixteenth centuries. In 1538, King Christian II of Denmark introduced Lutheranism to the Faroe Islands. The process took five years during which the Danish language was used instead of Latin. In addition, the state took possession of church property. Moreover, the bishopric at Kirkjubóur was abolished. The remains of the cathedral are still visible today.

No information was found on the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Faroe Islands. Initially, the Church fell under the auspices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark, the Danish state church. As of July 29, 2007, the Church in the Faroe Islands is independent. This makes it the smallest state church in the world. Around 80% of the Faroese are members of the Lutheran Church. The YMCA and YWCA scouts are connected to the Lutheran Church (<http://n2zgu.50megs.com/FARO.htm>).

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

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

Religion

Non-Christian:

Baha'i (0.20%):

The Baha'i religion began in Persia in 1844 under the leader and founder Bahá'u'lláh, whose name means "Glory of God." According to Baha'i the world is but one country and all people are its citizens. Baha'i emphasizes the unity of humanity, the equality of male and female, elimination of extreme riches and poverty, religious tolerance, and access for all to education and culture. According to Baha'i, all religions are diverse expressions of the one universal religion. The Swede Eskil Ljungberg was the first Baha'i to live in the Faroe Islands (1953). In 1973, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tórshavn was founded. Today, there are Local Spiritual Assemblies on other islands as well.

(<http://www.bahai.fo/english/english.html>)

Jehovah's Witnesses (0.17%, 77 adherents):

Jehovah's Witnesses believe they are the restoration of first-century Christianity. The Watchtower and Awake! are two of their magazines. The group's headquarters are in Brooklyn, New York. Jehovah's Witnesses trace their origin to the Bible Students (late 1870s). A schism occurred in 1917 and in 1931 the believers, who remained supportive of the Watch Tower Society, took on the name Jehovah's Witnesses under the leadership of Joseph F. Rutherford. Jehovah's Witnesses consider their translation of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. Rejecting the concepts of Trinity and hell, they instead believe in Unitarianism. Using God's name, Jehovah, is a requirement for true worship. Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their rejection of blood transfusions. In 1998, there were four units or meeting places of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Faroe Islands

(http://www.adherents.com/adhloc/Wh_98.html).

Catholic (0.16%):

Irish Catholic monks discovered the Faroe Islands and introduced Christianity around the ninth century. By the end of the sixteenth century – the century of the Reformation – the Roman Catholic faith had disappeared from the islands. The Catholic Church of the Faroe Islands is part of the bishopric of Copenhagen, Denmark.

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=MnYqAAAAMAAJ&dq=faroe+islands+roman+catholic+church&pg=PA789&ots=DG1E1cvYdH&sig=A00YYJcBS45Kq9vDhTxT-iSQK0w&prev=http://www.google.com/search%3Fhl%3Den%26q%3Dfaroe%2Bislands%2Broman%2Bcatholic%2Bchurch&sa=X&oi=print&ct=result&cd=1>).

Roman Catholics have one church for gathering: St. Mary's Church in the capital city, Tórshavn (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_Faroe_Islands). The Roman Catholic Church falls under the ultimate authority of the Pope in Rome.

Protestants/Evangelicals/Pentecostals:

Evangelical Lutheran Church (80%):

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Faroe Islands is the product of the Reformation period. Until July 29, 2007 the Church was a diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. Now it is an independent State Church, one of the smallest state churches worldwide (<http://www.interchurch.dk/cn/cn.php?key=1807>). The Evangelical Lutheran Church practices both infant and adult baptism. The Church believes that salvation comes through faith alone, not through works. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faroese_People%27s_Church.

Christian Brethren (10%):

The Christian Brethren, also known as Plymouth Brethren, originated as a Christian Evangelical Movement in Plymouth, London, Dublin, and mainland Europe in the 1820s. There are open and exclusive Brethren groups. Some of the characteristics of this Christian group are the following: verbal, plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts of the Bible; pretribulational, premillennial, and dispensational; no salaried ministry but ministry by gifted men (gifted women only minister to other women); board of elders; eternal security; believer's baptism by immersion; eternal sonship of Jesus Christ; Trinitarian; and salvation through faith in Christ alone. For more information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Brethren and <http://www.brethrenonline.org/faqs/Brethren.htm>.

Pentecostal Churches (percentage unknown):

With roots in the Holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement originated in the USA in the 19th century. Pentecostal churches emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer. The website for Filadelfia Pentecostal Church in Tórshavn is <http://filadelfia.net.dynamicweb.dk/>.

House Churches (percentage unknown):

No information found on house churches in the Faroe Islands.

Independent (0.94%):

No information found on Independent churches in the Faroe Islands.

People Groups

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British (50)

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.

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Danish (1221)

The Danes are a Scandinavian people group and speak Danish. 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 profess the Lutheran faith.

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Deaf (number unknown)

The Faroese Deaf Association was established in 1972 and is a member of the Nordic Board of the Deaf. In 2006, the Association had 46 active and 900 supporting members. Since 2002, the news broadcasts on Faroese television have been translated into sign language for the deaf population (<http://www.deaf.fo/htm/savn1999.htm>; <http://www.deaf.fo/htm/savn1999.htm>). The Faroese deaf speak Danish sign language.

102

Faroese (47,344)

The Faroese are descendants of early Viking settlers and the original Celtic population with the majority being descendants of the Norwegian Vikings. The Faroese have retained much of their culture and traditions. Their language, Faroese, is based on Old Norse. The majority of the Faroese profess the Lutheran expression of the Christian faith. Faith forms an integral part of Faroese culture.

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Icelander (0.4%)

Iceland and the Icelanders were part of the Danish kingdom until 1944 when they declared their independence and constituted a republic. The Icelanders are descendants of the Norse settlers in the ninth century and of the many Irish and Scots slaves which the Norse brought with them. Icelanders speak Icelandic, a West Scandinavian language without any real dialects. Around AD 1000, Christianity was introduced in Iceland. Today, most Icelanders are Protestant with 94% of the population belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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Norwegian (0.2%)

The Norwegians are of Germanic stock. They are generally tall, fair skinned, and have 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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Polish (0.2%)

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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Swedish (102)

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 77% of the Swedes in Sweden belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Swedish language, spoken in 4 major dialects, is an East Scandinavian language of the North Germanic language group.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faroe_Islands reports people of 77 different nationalities living in the Faroe Islands. No information found on nationalities in the Faroe Islands besides those described above.

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 accept the fact that more than 80% of the Faroese belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Faroe Islands. Moreover, a majority of the other Faroese belong to a church other than the Lutheran Church.
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should also be aware that Christianity plays a large role in daily life and Faroese culture.
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches must, however, question the numbers of people who allow Christianity only a part of their culture and for how many people is Christianity a personal relationship with God through faith and salvation in Christ Jesus.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to work with the Evangelical churches in Faroe Islands to enable any nominal Christians to come to true faith in Christ

Pictures:

See separate folder.

Links:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print.fo.html>

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