The Alliance Canada

2026

Discerning Strategic Places in Canada

Workshop | 45–60 minutes





To do this activity best, you'll need:

- A large map of Canada that you can lay out on a flat surface
- Space for groups to walk around the map
- A pack of post-it arrow flags for each group
- Each group should have a computer and an internet connection
- Know your MyAlliance log-in

Purpose

Canada is changing rapidly. This workshop is designed to help us discern together the places in Canada that may deserve particular attention for future ministry, partnership, and multiplication.

We will look at Canada through four different lenses:

1. **Population & Growth**: Where are people moving?
2. **Spiritual Opportunity**: Where are there significant gaps in Christian engagement?
3. **Alliance Presence**: Where has God already given us presence and capacity?
4. **Prayer & Conviction**: Where do we sense God drawing our attention?

No single lens identifies a strategic place. The goal is to layer these perspectives together, notice where they converge, and identify regions, cities, and communities that warrant deeper prayer, exploration, and investment.

What places across Canada are emerging as strategically important for the future of our shared mission?

Opening: Anticipation

As you look five to ten years into the future, where do you believe some of the most significant opportunities for new ministry in Canada might emerge?

And what would help us recognize those places before they become obvious?

There is reason for anticipation. Canada is changing. Communities are forming. People are moving. New leaders are emerging. And God is already at work.

The opportunity before us is to learn to pay attention, to recognize places that may become increasingly significant for our shared mission.



How Canada is changing from the Reach New People in New Places Seminar from General Assembly 2026

Today we are going to travel across Canada together through four different lenses. We will look at the data, explore the country, consider our presence, and pray together.

The goal is to help us see.

Lens 1: Where Are People Moving?

Population Growth and Growth Corridors

Our first lens is population movement. Before we think about where The Alliance is present or where Christian engagement is low, we simply want to ask: Where are people moving? Where are communities expanding? Where are new concentrations of people forming?

Using 120 Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs) that are expecting to experience significant population growth, nearby areas have been grouped into recognizable growth regions and corridors. The goal is not to create precise statistical boundaries. It is to see larger geographic patterns, places where communities are expanding and significant growth is occurring.

18 Growth Areas

Rank	Strategic Growth Area	Population Added	Arrows/Labels
1	Calgary & Region	+441,506	4
2	Edmonton & Region	+236,827	3
3	Surrey–Langley	+164,397	2
4	Brampton–Caledon	+128,857	1
5	Ottawa & Growth Belt	+96,437	1
6	York Region / North GTA	+93,851	1
7	Toronto	+80,597	1
8	Milton–Oakville–Halton	+76,959	1
9	Durham Region	+73,606	1
10	Saskatoon & Region	+57,733	.5
11	Waterloo–Wellington & Surrounding Region	+43,732	.5
12	Barrie–Innisfil–Simcoe	+40,125	.5
13	Victoria West Shore	+37,723	.5
14	London–Middlesex	+34,595	.5
15	North of Montreal Corridor	+31,319	.5
16	Peterborough–Northumberland	+29,332	.5
17	Steinbach & Southeast Manitoba	+22,384	Note
18	Moncton–Dieppe	+14,268	Note

Mapping Exercise: place all 18 growth areas onto the national map. Use green arrows to represent population growth.

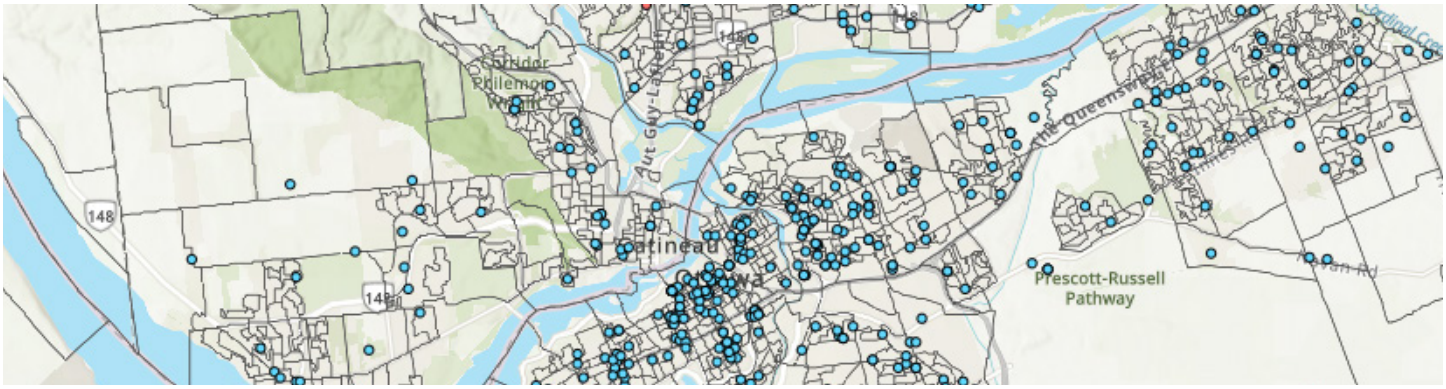
Green Arrow Key:

Population Added	Arrows	Meaning
400,000+	4 arrows	Exceptional
200,000–399,999	3 arrows	Extraordinary
150,000–199,999	2 arrows	Major
70,000–149,999	1 arrow	Significant
25,000–69,999	½ arrow	Emerging
Under 25,000	Label only	Noted growth

What do you notice?

- Where are the largest concentrations of growth?
- Where do corridors or clusters appear?
- What parts of Canada are changing most significantly?
- What surprises you?

We aren't deciding what is strategic yet. We are simply learning to see where Canada is changing.



Lens 2: Where Is the Spiritual Opportunity?

Engaged Christian Mapping

Population growth tells us something important. But growth alone doesn't tell us where the greatest ministry opportunities may exist. So now we add a second lens: **where are there significant gaps in Christian engagement?**

Start With a City

Open the Canadian Church Dashboard: https://theallliancecanada.ca/myalliance/church-dashboard (it works best on Chrome-based browsers) and choose a significant city in your region as your starting point.

Start with your city and then follow the major highways outward. Move from the city to the surrounding towns and population centres. See where the highways take you across the region.

SCAN TO OPEN
THE DASHBOARD

For example, you might begin in Ottawa and follow the major routes outward:

- Ottawa › Gatineau
- Ottawa › Arnprior › Renfrew › Pembroke
- Ottawa › surrounding population centres and communities

Don't worry about getting everywhere. See how far you get—**the purpose is to explore.**

We will divide into approximately 5-7 groups, with each group responsible for exploring a different part of Canada.

- Halifax › around Atlantic Canada
- Montreal › circle Montreal, over to Quebec City.
- Cornwall › West to Toronto
- Sudbury › around Northern Ontario and Down to Toronto
- Toronto › centered and out out
- Manitoba & Saskatchewan & Alberta
- Windsor › East to Toronto
- Victoria › Circle the island
- Vancouver › Move out to Hope
- Oliver › up to Prince George, Kamloops to the Alberta Border.

As You Travel, Pay Attention

At each city, town, or population centre, look at the Engaged Christian percentage.

We are particularly interested in places where that number is 3% or lower. But don't just collect numbers.

Ask:

- What are you noticing?
- Where are you finding communities under 3%?
- Are several communities along the same highway showing similar patterns?
- Does the pattern change as you move away from the major city?
- Are there clusters or corridors of low Christian engagement?
- Is there a town or population centre that surprises you?
- How far does the pattern extend?



Mark What You Discover

As you identify places with particularly low Christian engagement, mark them for the larger group.

Use yellow markers:

- Whole yellow marker = approximately 1%
- Half yellow marker = approximately 2–3%

You do not need to mark every community you encounter, instead identify the places and patterns that seem most significant.



Regroup and Tell the Story of Your Exploration

When we return to the larger group, don't simply give us a list of percentages.

- Where did you start?
- Which highways did you follow?
- Where did they take you?
- How far did you get?
- Where did you encounter communities under 3%?

And most importantly:

- What pattern did you begin to see across your region?

As each group shares, we will add the yellow markers to our national map. Then we will step back and ask: **What are we seeing now that population growth alone could not show us?**

Lens 3: Where Do We Already Have Presence?

Measuring Alliance Presence

We have now looked at two things without considering ourselves: where Canada is growing, and where Christian engagement is particularly low. Now we add a third lens: **Where has God already given The Alliance presence and capacity?**

This isn't simply about identifying where Alliance churches exist. We want to identify places where there is enough concentration of churches, leaders, relationships, resources, and ministry capacity that our existing presence could potentially contribute toward something beyond itself.

District Exercise

Each district receives a limited number of blue arrows, based approximately on the number of churches in the district. For approximately every 15 churches, the district receives 1 whole blue arrow and 1 half blue arrow.

District	Whole Arrows	Half Arrows
SLD	2	
ECD	7	
CCD	6	
CMD	7	
WCD	9	
CPD	7	

You Have to Choose

The limitation is intentional. You cannot put an arrow everywhere there is an Alliance church. Instead, look across your district and ask:

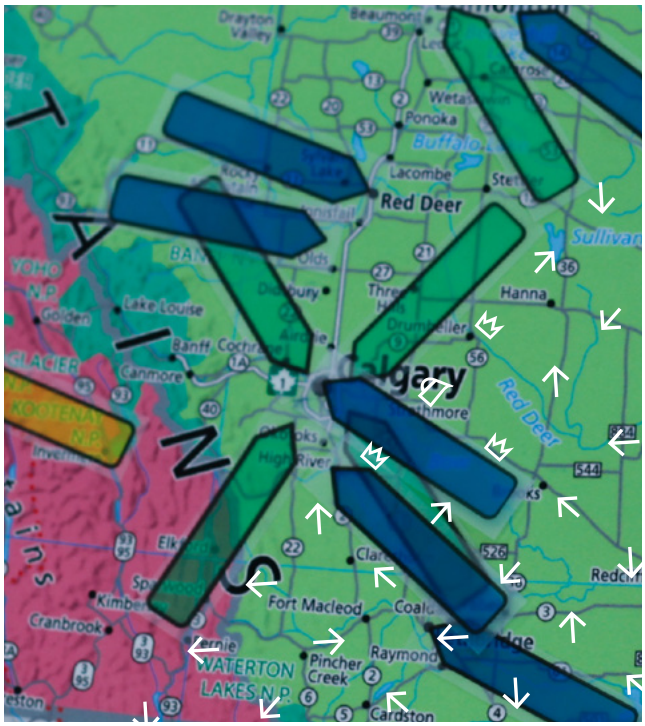
- Where is our presence strongest?
- Where do we have concentrations of churches?
- Where are there significant leaders and relationships?
- Where is ministry capacity?
- Where could our existing presence potentially contribute toward something new?

Mark the Map

- Whole blue arrow — Strong Alliance presence/capacity
- Half blue arrow — Meaningful Alliance presence/capacity

Place your arrows on the national map.
Then step back again and ask:

- Where does Alliance presence overlap with population growth?
- Where does Alliance presence overlap with significant spiritual opportunity?
- Where are there places with both significant growth and spiritual opportunity— but very little Alliance presence?
- Where might existing Alliance strength become a launching point for ministry somewhere nearby?



Lens 4: Where Do We Sense Conviction?

Prayer and Discernment

By this point, we have spent significant time travelling across Canada together. We have looked at Population Growth, Spiritual Opportunity, and Alliance Presence.

Now the nature of the exercise changes. We move from primarily analysis to discernment. We aren't adding another dataset. Having seen what we have seen, where do we sense God drawing our attention?

Pray

Spend some time quietly looking at the map. Don't immediately calculate where the most arrows or markers overlap. Pray.

- God, where are you drawing our attention?
- What places should we not overlook?
- Where might you already be preparing something that we need to notice?

Think

- What surprised you?
- What places kept appearing?
- Where is significant growth intersecting with spiritual opportunity?
- Where is there significant opportunity but very little existing Alliance capacity?
- Where might existing Alliance presence become a platform for something new?
- What place are you finding difficult to ignore?

Walk

Get up and walk around the map. Look beyond your own district. Look across the country. Notice the green growth arrows, the yellow spiritual-opportunity markers, and the blue Alliance-presence arrows. Spend some time seeing the whole picture. Then make a choice.

Mark Your Convictions

- 2 whole conviction markers — strong conviction
- 2 half conviction markers — emerging conviction

Place them on the map. You are not necessarily identifying the places with the best statistics.

After everything we have seen, where do I sense particular conviction that we should pay attention?

Stepping Back — What Is Emerging?

Now look at the map as a whole. We have layered four perspectives:

- Growth
- Spiritual Opportunity
- Alliance Presence
- Conviction
- Where are several lenses converging?
- Where is there significant population growth and low Christian engagement?
- Where is there existing Alliance capacity that could become a platform for multiplication?
- Where are there significant gaps?
- Where is something emerging just beyond our existing presence?
- Where have multiple people independently placed conviction markers?

We are not trying to leave this room having decided exactly where we will plant churches. We are identifying places that deserve greater attention—places we might pray about more intentionally, explore more deeply, begin conversations, look for emerging leaders and communities, strengthen partnerships, or intentionally invest resources.

The map doesn't make the decision for us. It helps us see.

What are we seeing together that God may be inviting us to pay attention to?

