Way of the Jedi

**Way of the Jedi**

* **Sue Darby**
* **June 6, 2008**
* **Statistics**
* **Bernard Washington**

**It started as a practical joke circulated on the internet during the census in 2001. The rumor, circulated by e-mail, was that if enough people entered “Jedi” on the census it would become an official religion. While the governments of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom later denied that rumor was true, it has become an established church with more following in the last few years.**

**The number of people who entered “Jedi” on that first census was by country:**

* **Australia – more than 70,000 in 2001**
* **New Zealand – over 53,000 in 2001; 1.5%; dropping to 20,000 in 2006**
* **Canada – 20,000 in 2001 .7%**
* **England and Wales – 390,127 in 2001; .07% Jedi**
* **Scotland – 14,052, .277%**

**While I find this amusing it did cause more individuals to actually file the census which increased the accuracy (potentially) overall for how many people total and other demographic data.**

**In 2007 an official Jedi Church was setup and while the above numbers have dropped since the initial joke there is an increasing number of individuals who are Jedi Knights. In Texas there is a non-profit church that will train individuals to become Jedi Apprentices, Knights, Scholars, Masters and High Councilors. While the religion is based on Star Wars it is only loosely so. It is a faith based on peace, justice, love and learning. This particular Jedi group has 874 registered members in just the one Texas “church”. Another more recent article puts the Jedi religion at 400,000 members worldwide. I believe that the Church of the Jedi will only increase slightly in popularity over the coming years even though its core values are for the common good of everyone. It will almost always be viewed as a joke religion. There are many amusing sites and commentary left on each about the whole phenomenon citing Jar-jar as a door to door preacher or the amusing Photoshop picture of squirrels with light sabers making fun of the basis of the religion.**

**References**

**http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=297&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=1000**

**“Canada 2001 Census.” Wikipedia. 26 May 2008**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada\_2001\_Census#Religion>.**

**“Church of the Jedi reaches 400,000 members.” Current. 15 Apr 2008. 26 May 2008**

**http://current.com/items/88903619\_church\_of\_the\_jedi\_reaches\_400\_000\_members**

**Demography of England.” Wikipedia. 26 May 2008**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\_of\_England.**

**“Force strong for new Jedi Church.” BBC News. 21 Jan 2008. 26 May 2008**

**http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\_news/wales/7200531.stm.**

**“Home.” Jedi Sanctuary. 26 May 2008**

**http://www.jedisanctuary.org/articles.**

* **“Jedi census phenomenon.” Wikipedia. 26 May 2008**
* **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jedi\_census\_phenomenon.**
* **“Jedi census phenomenon.” Wookieepedia. 11 Jan 2008. 26 May 2008**
* **http://starwars.wikia.com/wiki/Jedi\_census\_phenomenon.**
* **“Jedi Religion in Australia.” Snopes. 14 July 2007. 26 May 2008**
* **http://www.snopes.com/religion/jedi.asp.**
* **“Jedi Religion.” Jedi Church. 26 May 2008**
* **http://www.jedichurch.com.**
* **“Jedi “Religion” Sees Dramatic Growth (we’re not kidding).” Explore Faith. 17 May 2005. 26 May 2008**
* **http://www.explorefaith.org/news/05\_17\_05.html.**
* **“Religion in New Zealand.” Wikipedia. 26 May 2008**
* **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\_in\_New\_Zealand.**
* **“United Kingdom Census 2001.” Wikipedia. 26 May 2008**
* **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\_Kingdom\_Census\_2001.**