

©Linda Wegner

FILLING OUT THE CENSUS

I've been intrigued by the recent kaffuffle over the government's announced plan to replace the mandatory long census with a voluntary survey. Without getting into the politics of the thing, I've been thinking a lot about the importance of censuses. In all honesty I never thought much about them prior to my work in market research but since then I've become a believer in participating in surveys put out by reputable companies; I've even become a kind of sucker when it comes to responding to *almost* every questionnaire that crosses my path – simply because I know how valuable information is to all of us. Collected data forms the basis for everything from housing to adding fibre to cereal...and everything in between.

Reviewing reports I'd researched and written for our local economic development office back in 2004 I was pleased to note that trends now are playing out as I'd discovered back then. Decisions by governments, developers, the financial community and businesses are made, based on the input we ordinary people give them.

An oft-read but until now, somewhat "ho-hum" (to me) Scripture passage leapt out at me in light of the controversial government announcement. I suspect that the majority of citizens of the land had no idea of the importance of that directive from the office of the Caesar:

"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city." Luke 2: 1-3

God used that census to send Mary and Joseph off to Bethlehem where Jesus would be born, No repeat on that one but it will be interesting to see what could come from the next survey I/you fill out!