

## **ARI – Cardus/Faith in Canada 150**

### **Polling Phase Three: Religion and Faith in Canada’s Public Square**

Today’s survey looks at a number of different topics -- including life today, some public issues here in Canada, and people’s own faith and beliefs.

#### Overall – religion in the public square

Let's begin by considering the role of religious and faith communities in Canada today.

By “religious and faith communities” we are generally referring to a group of people who share a religious faith. This could be any religious tradition, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or any other shared faith. And the group could be members of a formal religious order (nuns, for example) or simply involved lay people, or a combination of the two.

A1. How would you describe the overall contribution religious and faith communities are making to Canada and Canadian society today?

- Very good
- More good than bad
- A mix of good and bad
- More bad than good
- Very bad

A2. What would you consider ideal when it comes to the overall participation and influence of religious and faith communities in Canadian public life today? In your view, should religious and faith communities have:

- A major influence on Canadian public life
- Some influence
- Not much
- No influence at all – religion doesn’t belong in public life

A3. Let’s think for a moment about some of the various social issues and challenges facing Canada today. This could be issues of medical ethics, for example, or how we approach challenges such as poverty and homelessness. To what extent do you think religious communities and faith groups are relevant to addressing these types of social issues and challenges today?

- More relevant than ever
- As relevant as ever
- Becoming less relevant

No longer relevant at all

A4. Overall, would you say the government of Canada generally shows too much respect or shows too little respect for religious communities and faith groups in Canada today?

Way too much respect

Too much

About right overall

Too little

Way too little respect

The landscape/world religions

["Split sample". All survey respondents will be asked about 4 of these groups, administered randomly. So, all 8 groups will be assessed by a sub-sample of 1,000 respondents.]

B1. Now, let's get a little more specific for a moment and think about some of the main values and beliefs related to faith and religion. We'll focus on four of the eight listed below, which the system will select at random.

Catholicism

Protestantism

Evangelical Christianity

Judaism

Islam

Hinduism

Sikhism

[Always last:] Atheism

a) First, in your view, would you say the overall presence of each of these in Canadian public life is benefitting or damaging Canada and Canadian society?

Damaging

No real impact

Benefitting

Don't know/Can't say

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

b) And, would you say the influence of each of these in Canada and Canadian public life is growing or shrinking?

Shrinking

Staying the same

Growing

Don't know/Can't say

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

c) Lastly, how much do you feel you yourself understand each of these religious beliefs and those who practise or share them?

Don't know anything

Understand very little

Understand the basics

Understand quite well

Understand very well

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

### Intersections

C1. Historically, most of Canada's immigration was from European countries with a Christian religious tradition. Canada today has more people from different religious and faith traditions. In your view, all things considered, is this increasing religious diversity a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?

Good thing

Bad thing

Mixed/Both

Not sure/Can't say

C2. Increasing numbers of Canadians have no religious faith and describe themselves as atheist. All things considered, do you think that having a growing number of atheists is a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?

Good thing

Bad thing

Mixed/Both

Not sure/Can't say

### Freedom of religion

D1. The Canadian Charter of Rights recognizes "freedom of religion". Very briefly, this means there is no official national religion and people have the right to choose a religion – or no religion – and to practise it without government interference. In your view, does having "freedom of religion" make Canada a better or worse country?

Better

Worse

No real impact either way

Can't say/No idea

D2. And would you say, generally speaking, that freedom of religion is becoming stronger or weaker here in Canada?

Becoming stronger  
Becoming weaker  
Staying about the same  
Not sure/can't say

### Religious accommodation -- selected scenarios

Now let's consider some specific issues that sometimes receive discussion and debate here in Canada.

E1. As far as you're concerned, do you personally think the following should be: welcome; discouraged but tolerated; or prohibited?

a) A woman visiting a government office in a "niqab" -- a veil worn by some Muslim women when they are out in public, covering all of the face except for the eyes.

b) A local community council meeting starting with a non-denominational prayer to God for good guidance.

Welcome  
Discouraged but tolerated  
Prohibited

E2. In Canada, organized religions qualify for special tax consideration. For example, religious buildings (such as a Church or temple or mosque) don't pay property taxes, and people's donations to their religion are tax deductible as charitable donations. Would you say this:

Is a reasonable policy -- Keep it in place  
Is not reasonable -- time to get rid of it

E3. There has also been some debate in the field of health care, specifically concerning physician-assisted dying which, as you probably know, is now legal in Canada, within guidelines.

Suppose a nursing home for the elderly built and managed by a specific faith community does not allow medically assisted death at its facility on moral and ethical grounds. Setting aside your own views on assisted dying for a moment, do you think this nursing home should:

[Rotate]

Be able to say no on moral grounds and patients who want a doctor-assisted death would be moved to another facility

Be required by law to allow these procedures at their facilities

E4a). There's also sometimes debate about public funding for religious or faith-based schools (grades K to 12). As far as you're concerned, should religious and faith-based schools receive:

Full funding, equal to support for public schools

Partial funding

No funding at all

[If "partial" at QE4a), ask:

b) By partial funding, would you support a level that is above or below 50% of public school funding?

Above 50%

Below 50%

Not sure/Can't say

E5. A Catholic priest has a religious duty and is legally entitled to not disclose what is told to them during confession -- similar to the legal privilege of confidentiality between psychiatrists and their patients. In your view, should Catholic confession maintain this status, or not?

Maintain

No, time to get rid of it

E6. Looking at these issues overall and the extent to which Canada accommodates different faith practises and religious minorities today – Overall, would you say Canada:

Does too much to accommodate  
Doesn't do enough/should do more  
Strikes the right balance

### The religious/spirituality spectrum

Now let's turn to a few questions about your own personal religious faith and beliefs. As always, there are no right or wrong answers.

F1. Do you believe that God or a higher power exists?

Yes, I definitely do believe  
Yes, I think so  
No, I don't think so  
No, I definitely do not believe

F2. How often, if at all, do you:

- a) Pray to God or some higher power
- b) Attend religious services (other than weddings or funerals)
- c) Feel you experience God's presence

Never  
Only rarely  
A few times a year  
Once or twice a month  
Once a week or so  
A few times a week  
Everyday

[Ask those who answered latter two "No" responses at QF1:]

F3. You have indicated that you do not believe that God or a higher power exists -- or that you don't think so. Just to confirm, how would you describe yourself when it comes to the whole area of personal faith or spirituality? Would you say:

You do not have any feelings of faith or spirituality



Have some/at some times  
 You do have feelings of faith or spirituality in your life

F4. Which one of the following best describes your religion?

Roman Catholic  
 United Church  
 Anglican  
 Lutheran  
 Presbyterian  
 Baptist  
 Pentecostal  
 Other evangelical Christian  
 Other Christian  
 Muslim  
 Hindu  
 Jewish  
 Sikh  
 Buddhist  
 No religious identity  
 Other (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

F5. Some people say Canadians variously (1) embrace faith and religion, (2) reject faith and religion, or (3) are somewhere in between the two extremes.  
 Where would you tend to locate yourself?

I am inclined to embrace my faith and/or religion  
 I am inclined to reject any faith and/or religion  
 I am somewhere in between

Your own religious community and personal faith

[QG1 a – c series to be asked of everyone except those indicating “no religious identity” at QF4]

G1. Let’s focus for a moment on your own specific religious or faith community – that is, the specific tradition or group that you, yourself, belong to or identify with.

a) What kind of role does your own faith community have in Canada today? Does it have a:

- Major role
- Some role
- Not much
- No role at all
- Don't know/can't say

b) To what extent *should* it have a role in Canadian public life? Should it have a:

- Major role
- Some role
- Not much
- No role in public life
- Don't know/Can't say

c) And would you say your faith community's influence in Canadian public life is becoming stronger or weaker?

- Stronger
- Weaker
- Staying about the same
- Don't know/Can't say

[QG2 a – c series to be asked of everyone except those indicating “no feelings of faith or spirituality” at QF3.]

G2. And now let's focus for a moment on your own personal faith and spirituality -- aside from your faith community and religious traditions, and just focusing on the personal.

a) Overall, would you say your own personal faith and spirituality is increasing or decreasing in depth and intensity?

- More intense/increasing
- Less intense/decreasing
- Staying about the same

b) Thinking ahead to future generations – say, to your own grandchildren (or people that age), do you think that generation will have stronger or weaker personal faith and spirituality than your own generation?

Will be stronger  
 Will be weaker  
 About the same  
 Don't know/can't say

c) Overall, do you feel Canadian society today tends to make room for or shuts out your own personal values and faith?

Makes room for  
 Shuts out  
 No real impact either way  
 Don't know/can't say

Focus on the faithful and political involvement

H1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[Randomize statements]

I'm prepared to stand up for what I believe in, even if it's an unpopular view

It seems like the values I care about are losing ground – and it's time more people did something about that

Disagree strongly  
 Disagree moderately  
 Agree moderately  
 Agree strongly

H2. Turning to day-to-day life for a minute, are you yourself involved in any of the following?

[RANDOMIZE]

Volunteer for a community/non-profit organization(s)

Follow current issues and events in the news

Involved in politics and elections (party member/worked on a campaign)

Write letters to elected representatives or the news media

Protest on public issues – demonstration/petition/boycott

- No, not at all
- Not really
- A bit/Occasionally
- Yes, fairly often
- Yes, very involved

H3a. Are you on social media (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter etc)?

- Yes, frequently
- Yes, I'm a lighter user
- No, not on social media

[If yes, on social media, ask:]

H3b. Do you do any of the following on social media?

- Follow politicians/public figures
- Like political posts that you agree with
- Argue or debate with people and views you disagree with

- No, do not
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Yes, often

H4. Thinking about past elections, which of the following best describes your own personal voting habits?

- I vote in every election (federal, provincial, and municipal)
- I vote in most elections (three of the last four elections)
- I vote in some elections (two of the last four elections)
- I rarely vote (one of the last four elections)
- I never vote

H5. There has been some discussion about different religious groups and faith communities getting together in more organized inter-faith umbrella organizations to promote and advance common causes they believe in -- such as maintaining tax status for religious institutions, taking a united position on medical ethics issues, or working on supporting refugees and immigrants, that sort of thing. Very generally, do you think that kind of inter-faith co-operation sounds like a good or a bad idea?

Very good idea – would have a positive impact

Good idea

Mixed/depends

Bad idea

Very bad idea – would have a negative impact

#### Other Attitudes/Angles

Just a few more questions to finish up the survey.

I1. How important is this whole issue to you – the role and influence of religious communities and faith groups in public life in Canada today?

Very important – you care a lot about this issue

Fairly important

Not very important

Not important at all – you don't care about it at all

I2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[Randomize statements]

I'm public about my religion and faith and don't mind other people knowing I'm a believer

My personal faith is a very central and fundamental part of who I am

Reducing the presence of religion in our public life is a sign of progress in our society

Generally speaking, I feel a bit uncomfortable around people who are religiously devout

The Canadian government respects my own religious tradition or faith community

Religious and faith communities strengthen Canadian values such as equality and human rights

Having a religious or faith-focused upbringing helps shape good citizenship characteristics

All of the great religions of the world are equally good and true

Disagree strongly

Disagree moderately

Agree moderately

Agree strongly

13. One other issue concerns Canada's indigenous peoples and their relationship with Canadian Christian churches. There is some painful history here – most notably, the federal government's residential school system, in place for over 100 years (ending in the 1990's), which was largely run by Christian churches.

Looking ahead to the future now, what are your overall expectations for the future relationship between the Christian churches and Indigenous people in Canada – do you think it will improve or get worse?

Improve

Get worse

Stay the same

Really can't say/Don't know

Socio-demographic Info

Region

Gender

Age

Formal education

HH income

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