

GOD AND POLITICS

Canadians Clearly Want Religion Disconnected from Politics

Large majorities voice disagreement with politicians discussing religion, and religious leaders talking about politics.

[VANCOUVER – Aug. 6, 2008] – As talk of an early federal election intensifies, Canadians are adamant about keeping politics and religion away from each other, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 82 per cent of respondents consider it inappropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate.

The highest level of rejection for this practice comes in Quebec (89%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (89%). Respondents over the age of 55 (88%) and those with a high school education or less (87%) also deem this action inappropriate.

Two-thirds of Canadians (66%) believe it is inappropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their campaigns, while one-in-four (25%) considers these actions as appropriate.

Alberta appeared to buck the national trend, boasting the highest proportion of respondents (36%) who believe that it is appropriate for politicians to talk about their religious beliefs. Conversely, Quebecers (78%) and respondents with a high school education or less (70%) seemed more upset at the thought of politicians discussing religion.

When the results are analyzed by political allegiance, one-in-five Conservative Party voters (21%) believe it is appropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate, while less

KEY FINDINGS

- **82% think it is inappropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate**
- **66% think it is inappropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their political campaigns**
- **Conservatives more likely to agree with political leaders talking about religion (39%) and religious leaders talking about politics (21%)**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From July 29 to July 30, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

than 10 per cent of supporters of the other three parties currently represented in the House of Commons concur.

In addition, almost two-in-five Tory supporters (39%) think it is appropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their campaigns, while less than one-in-four backers of the other major federal parties agree.

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Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Appropriate	12%	13%	15%	8%	16%	7%	7%
Inappropriate	82%	76%	77%	89%	80%	89%	77%
Not sure	6%	12%	8%	4%	5%	4%	16%

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Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate?

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K +	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
Appropriate	15%	8%	14%	12%	9%	8%	11%	20%	5%	12%	19%
Inappropriate	81%	83%	76%	80%	88%	85%	83%	74%	87%	81%	76%
Not sure	4%	9%	10%	7%	2%	7%	5%	6%	8%	6%	5%

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Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their political campaigns?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Appropriate	25%	25%	36%	28%	29%	14%	24%
Inappropriate	66%	63%	57%	62%	64%	78%	58%
Not sure	9%	12%	7%	11%	7%	8%	19%

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Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their political campaigns?

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K +	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
Appropriate	28%	21%	22%	23%	29%	19%	27%	32%	18%	26%	30%
Inappropriate	64%	68%	65%	69%	63%	71%	65%	58%	70%	67%	60%
Not sure	8%	11%	12%	8%	8%	11%	8%	10%	12%	7%	10%

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Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for or against a political candidate?						
	Will vote for or intends to vote for in next federal ballot					
	Total	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Green
Appropriate	12%	21%	9%	6%	4%	13%
Inappropriate	82%	75%	86%	87%	94%	82%
Not sure	6%	4%	6%	7%	2%	5%

God and Politics						
Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for political candidates to talk about their religious beliefs as part of their political campaigns?						
	Will vote for or intends to vote for in next federal ballot					
	Total	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Green
Appropriate	25%	39%	21%	21%	10%	23%
Inappropriate	66%	57%	69%	71%	80%	68%
Not sure	9%	5%	9%	8%	9%	9%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**