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On Thanksgiving Canadians will be far more likely than Americans to be thankful for the lesser influence of religion on their society

Jack Jedwab

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Introduction

On October 13, Canadians will celebrate Thanksgiving, an annual celebration meant to honor life's blessings while spending quality time with close family and friends. Both in Canada and the United States, the origins of Thanksgiving are based in religion, Canada's version of the holiday was initially created to express thanks for explorers' safe voyages into the New World.

When it comes to issues of identity one of the profound differences between Canada and the United States is the respective extent to which they value religion and see it as having a positive or negative impact on society. The difference is not without significance for politics, social policy and relations between groups in countries that traditionally like to describe themselves as separating Church from state. To examine the extent of that gap between the two countries regarding the value assign to religion, the Association for Canadian Studies commissioned Leger to ask Americans and Canadians about whether religion positively influenced societal values. America's broad commemoration to the memory of Charlie Kirk in the aftermath of his assassination was in part an indication of the importance of religion in the United States.

On the other hand, Quebec's continued fervor in seeking additional ways of restricting religion expression in public spaces is example of the perceived negative influence of religion on society.

The findings are based on surveys conducted via web panel by the firm Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between August 29 and 31, 2025 with 1627 Canadians and 1014 Americans. While no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample of 1627 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.52\%$, 19 times out of 20 while 1014 of $\pm 3.95\%$, 19 times out of 20

Americans are far more likely than Canada to believe that religion has a positive influence on societal values

Religion has a positive influence on societal values.	Canada	United States
Yes	34%	53%
No	46%	27%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	20%	20%

Quebec and BC value religion noticeably in comparison with ROC and USA

Religion has a positive influence on societal values. Canada	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Yes	34%	38%	20%	44%	34%	37%	28%
No	46%	40%	66%	37%	41%	38%	50%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	20%	21%	15%	19%	26%	26%	22%

Religion has a positive influence on societal values. United States	Total	NE	MW	South	West
Yes	53%	49%	50%	59%	48%
No	27%	26%	24%	24%	35%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	20%	25%	26%	17%	18%

With age, the gap in the value assigned to religion widens between Canada and the United States

Religion has a positive influence on societal values.	Total	Male	Female	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	65+
Canada	34%	37%	32%	32%	34%	37%	29%	31%	38%
		Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65 +	
United States	53%	56%	49%	44%	49%	51%	53%	63%	

In the United States white persons are far more likely than are non-White to assign value to religion

Religion has a positive influence on societal values. United States	Born in the USA	Born outside USA	Not White	White	Black
Yes	53%	50%	59%	49%	57%
No	27%	30%	22%	30%	22%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	20%	20%	19%	21%	21%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the United States white persons are far more likely than are non-White to assign value to religion

Religion has a positive influence on societal values. United States	Born in the USA	Born outside USA	Not White	White	Black
Yes	53%	50%	59%	49%	57%
No	27%	30%	22%	30%	22%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	20%	20%	19%	21%	21%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When comparing Canada and the United States, the latter's non immigrant population is considerably more likely to agree that religion has a positive influence on society as is the US white population far more likely to believe that religion is a positive contributor

Religion has a positive influence on societal values.	Born in the country Canada	Born outside of the country	Not White	White	Black	Indigenous
Canada	31%	50%	49%	30%	51%	32%
United States	53%	50%	59%	49%	57%	---
Difference	-21	---	-10	-19	-6	-----

Apart from being by far the least likely to value religion in North America Quebec francophones are far less likely than the province's anglophones to do so

Religion has a positive influence on societal values. Quebec	French	English	A language other than French or English
Yes	14%	31%	46%
No	71%	55%	42%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	15%	14%	12%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Contact

acs-metropolis.ca/acs

general@acs-aec.ca

850-1980 Sherbrook Street West, Montreal,

QC, H3H 1E8