

**SIX IN TEN (59%) CANADIANS THINK RELIGIOUS  
LEADERS ARE A FORCE FOR GOOD IN SOCIETY**  
*Majority (62%) of Canadians Believe That Religious  
Communities Are A Force For Good In Society*  
*Three-Quarters (74%) Of Canadians Feel That Interfaith  
Dialogue Would Have A Positive Impact On Their Community*



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**Toronto, ON** – As the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu begin their official visits to Canada, a new Ipsos-Reid/The Whistler Forum For Dialogue survey released today shows that six in ten (59%) Canadians think that “religious leaders are a force for good in society,” and a further majority (62%) of Canadians believe “religious communities are a force for good in society.”

When considering interfaith dialogue that brings together different religious communities and leaders to improve understanding across religions, three-quarters (74%) of Canadians believe that interfaith dialogue would have a “positive impact” on their community.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/ The Whistler Forum For Dialogue poll conducted from April 13<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004. For the telephone survey, a randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*

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## ***Six in Ten (59%) Canadians Think Religious Leaders Are A Force For Good In Society***

When considering religious leaders, six in ten (59%) Canadians feel “religious leaders are a force for good in society,” as opposed to 29% of Canadians who believe “religious leaders tend to contribute to intolerance.” One in ten (9%) Canadians feel that “neither” of these two viewpoints reflect their own opinion, and 3% “don’t know.”

- Those most likely to feel that “religious leaders are a force for good in society” are residents of Alberta (65%), followed by residents of British Columbia (62%), Ontario (60%) and Atlantic Canada (60%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (54%) and Quebec (54%).
- Canadians with annual household income levels of less than \$60,000 are less likely than Canadians with annual household income levels of \$60,000 or more to believe that religious leaders tend to contribute to intolerance (28% vs. 34%).

## ***Majority (62%) of Canadians Believe That Religious Communities Are A Force For Good In Society***

The majority (62%) of Canadians believe “religious communities are a force for good in society,” while one-quarter (25%) feel “religious communities tend to contribute to intolerance and mistrust.” One in ten Canadians (11%) take “neither” of these two viewpoints, and 3% state that they “don’t know.”



- Those most likely to think that religious communities are a force for good in society are residents of Alberta (66%), followed closely by Ontario (65%), British Columbia (61%) and Atlantic Canada (61%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (59%), and Quebec (57%).
- Men are more likely than women to believe that religious communities tend to contribute to intolerance and mistrust (27% vs. 22%).
- Canadians with an education of a completed high school diploma or less are less likely than Canadians with some university, a college diploma, or a university degree, to believe that religious communities are a force for good in society (56% vs. 65%).

### ***Three-Quarters (74%) Of Canadians Feel That Interfaith Dialogue Would Have A Positive Impact On Their Community***

When considering interfaith dialogue that brings together different religious communities and leaders to improve understanding across religions, three-quarters (74%) of Canadians state that interfaith dialogue would have a positive impact on their community (“somewhat positive impact” 58%, “very positive impact” 16%). In comparison, one in five (21%) Canadians indicate that interfaith dialogue would not have a positive impact on their community (“not very positive impact” 11%, “not at all positive impact” 10%). The remaining 5% of respondents “don’t know.”

- Three-quarters of the respondents in Ontario (76%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (75%), Alberta (75%), and British Columbia (75%), and seven in ten in Atlantic Canada (71%) and Quebec (69%), believe that interfaith dialogue would have a “positive impact” on their community.



- As education level climbs the proportions who believe that interfaith dialogue would have a positive impact on their community rises (63% among those with less than a high school education, 70% among those with a completed high school education, 74% among those with some university or a college diploma, and 82% among those with a university degree).
- As income level rises those who think interfaith dialogue would have a positive impact on their community rises (70% among those with an annual household income of less than \$30,000, 74% among those with an annual household income of \$30,000 to under \$60,000, and 77% among those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more).

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