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– Say Religion Helps Find Answers to What's Going on in the
World; Majority (61%) of Canadians, Overall, Say Religion
Provides more Questions than Answers*

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Canadians Split On Whether Religion Does More Harm in the World than Good

Four in Ten (39%) Canadians – But 89% of Weekly Church Goers – Say Religion Helps Find Answers to What’s Going on in the World; Majority (61%) of Canadians, Overall, Say Religion Provides more Questions than Answers

Toronto, ON – Canadians are split down the middle on the topic of whether religion does more harm in the world than good, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Context with Lorna Dueck. While nearly half (44%) ‘agree’ (15% strongly/29% somewhat) that it does more harm than good, the other half (56%) ‘disagrees’ (26% strongly/31% somewhat). Men (48%) are significantly more likely than women (40%) to agree with this sentiment.

Furthermore, a majority (61%) of Canadians, overall, believe that ‘religion actually provides more questions than answers and that it doesn’t help to explain what’s going on in the world and in their own life’. A minority (39%) adopts the opposite stance, saying that ‘religion helps them find answers to what’s going on in the world and in their own life’ – a proportion which rises to 89% among those who attend a religious service on a weekly basis. However, only 14% of those polled say they attend worship services on a weekly basis.

One in three (37%) Canadians ‘agree’ (11% strongly/26% somewhat) that their ‘religion defines’ them as a person (86% of those who attend weekly worship services agree), while most (63%) ‘disagree’ (38% strongly/25% somewhat).

Canadians are split on the role of religion in the lives of Canadian society. One half (52%) 'agrees' (15% strongly/37% somewhat) that 'religious practice is an important factor in the moral lives of Canadians', while the other half (48%) 'disagrees' (17% strongly/30% somewhat) that it is. In fact, most (68%) 'disagree' (38% strongly/31% somewhat) that 'religious people are better citizens', while just three in ten (32%) 'agree' (5% strongly/27% somewhat) that religious people make better citizens – but 67% of those who attend weekly religious services agree that they do.

Likely reflecting the diversity and tolerance of Canadians, nine in ten (89%) 'agree' (50% strongly/39% somewhat) that they are 'completely comfortable being around people who have different religious beliefs', while just one in ten (11%) 'disagree' (3% strongly/8% somewhat). Similarly, most (88%) 'disagree' (60% strongly/28% somewhat) that they 'lose respect for people' when they find out they are religious'. Still, one in ten (12%) admit that they do, 'agreeing' (3% strongly/10% somewhat) with this sentiment. Nearly a quarter (22%) of those with no religious identity also agree.

The data also revealed some interesting facts about Canadians beliefs:

- A majority (57%) of Canadians believe in God. What is of particular interest is that 28% of Protestants, 33% of Catholics, and 23% of those who attend weekly religious services do not. One quarter (23%) of those with no religious identity still believe in God.
- Three in ten (30%) Canadians believe in heaven, with weekly service goers being most likely (71%), followed by those who say they are Protestant (48%), Catholic (30%), some other faith (24%), or have no religious identity (12%).



- Two in ten (20%) believe in hell, with only a slim majority (54%) of weekly service goers believing in it, followed by Protestants (36%), Catholics (17%), those of other faiths (13%) or those with no religious identity (7%).
- Two in ten (17%) Canadians say while they don't attend worship services regularly, they are curious about what the bible has to say. One in ten (12%) with no religious identity agree, as are 22% of Protestants who don't attend regularly, and 17% of Catholics.
- Protestants (24%) are twice as likely as Catholics (13%) to attend a religious service on a weekly basis.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Context with Lorna Dueck between September 2 and 7, 2011. For this survey, a national sample of 1,129 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and political composition to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100 per cent response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.0 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to, coverage error and measurement error.

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