

**A Great Ambassador to All Religions:
Canadians Score the Achievements of
John Paul II**

A COMPAS Survey for the *National Post*



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
April 1, 2005**

1.0. Introduction

Canadians of all denominations have enormous regard for the Pope John Paul II according to a National Post/COMPAS survey conducted in February before his health began deteriorating markedly.

The data show that the Pope is a major asset for the Church. Esteem for the Pope cuts across religious boundaries, and buttresses the Church in an era of sex abuse scandal.

According to Canadians, the Pope's four greatest achievements were:

- Standing up for traditional Catholic values;
- Bringing respect for the Church through his own person and character;
- Fostering enthusiasm for Christian beliefs among the young; and
- Bringing reconciliation and goodwill between Catholics and Jews.

Esteem for the Pope is especially high among English-speaking Catholics. It is higher among Protestants than French-speaking Catholics, reflecting the sense of estrangement from the Church that swept Quebec in the wake of the *Quiet Revolution*.

The immense contribution of the Pope to respect for the Church emerges from statistical analysis¹. Among Catholics and non-Catholics alike, high respect for the Pope drove up dramatically respect for the Church while a lack of respect for the Church's handling of sex abuse scandals kept the level of respect for the Church below what it would otherwise be.

Among Catholics alone, language also emerged as a driver with English-speakers appreciably more respectful of the Church, as of the Pope, than French-speakers.

¹ Causal modeling using stepwise regression.



2.0. The Pope as the Church's Major Asset, Sex Scandals as an Immense Liability

2.1. Pope John Paul II an Immense Asset across All Religious Groups

A recent COMPAS/National Post national survey conducted before the Pope's health turned for the worse confirmed that Canadians continued to see greatness in his lifetime accomplishments. In 2002 and even more clearly in 2005, Canadians perceived the Pope as outperforming the Church that he headed². On a 100 point, school report card-type scale, the Pope earned one of the highest scores ever in COMPAS' comparative database—an average of 66%, higher than the Church's 62% score for standing up for longstanding Christian traditions, as shown in table 2.

² In 2002, only Catholics were asked to provide performance scores.



A Great Pope: Canadians Score the Achievements of Pope John Paul II
A COMPAS Poll for the National Post, April 1, 2005

Table 2: Scoring the Pope's Accomplishments
"If you had to give the Catholic Church a 100-point, school
report card-type grade, what grade would you give it for..."
[ROTATE]

	All Canadians ³	All Catholics		English-speaking Catholics		French-speaking Catholics		Prot. ⁴
	Feb 2005	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005
The performance of Pope John Paul II								
Mean	66	70	68	76	74	62	62	67
DNK	15	5	7	5	9	5	6	19
Catholic Church for standing up for longstanding Christian traditions								
Mean	62	64	65	75	71	51	59	65
DNK	12	3	9	5	11	4	7	11
Catholic Church for handling the problem of sexual abuse by clergy								
Mean	36	42	39	44	39	40	39	36
DNK	11	7	11	11	12	8	10	9

³ In 2002, only Catholics were asked to provide performance scores.

⁴ See preceding note.



2.2. Pope John Paul II's Immense Impact among non-Catholics

Respect for the Pope cuts across all denominations with paradoxically the least enthusiasm among French-Canadians, long known for some estrangement from the Church following the "Quiet Revolution." Protestants emerge as a middle group, midway between the strong enthusiasm of English-speaking Catholics and the more modest enthusiasm of French-speaking Catholics.

The Jewish and Muslim minorities are too small to report with statistical confidence. But Muslims and especially Jews seem to harbour feelings towards Pope John Paul II that are at least as favourable as those of Protestants.

2.3. Damage of Clerical Abuse

While the Pope has been a source of strength for the Church in the eyes of Canadians, the Church's management of sexual abuse scandals has been a source of weakness. The Church earns very low (failing) grades from all groups of Canadians, as shown in table 2, and concern about the Church's handling of the issue reduces esteem for the Pope from the very high level that it would otherwise achieve.

3.0 Pope John Paul II's Accomplishments

The Pope earns high scores for all his accomplishments, as shown in table 3A. His highest recognition comes for standing upon for traditional values and bringing respect for the Church through his own character.

The public is almost as enthusiastic about the Pope's role in fostering enthusiasm among the young and enhancing Catholic-Jewish relations.

The public does consider the Pope's role in bringing down communism in Eastern Europe as a serious accomplishment, albeit less so than the preceding achievements.



*A Great Pope: Canadians Score the Achievements of Pope John Paul II
A COMPAS Poll for the National Post, April 1, 2005*

Causal modeling through stepwise regression was undertaken to identify the drivers of regard for the Pope. Among Catholics and non-Catholics alike, the two main factors or drivers accounting for respect for his performance are a feeling that he brought respect for the Church through his own person and character and his fostering enthusiasm among the young. Among Catholics, another driver of esteem for the Pope was a feeling that he had contributed to reconciliation between Catholics and Jews.

*Table 3A: The Pope's Accomplishments
"There's been some talk about the accomplishments of the current Pope. Using a 7 point scale where 7 means definitely his greatest accomplishment and 1, the opposite, please score each of the following..."[RANDOMIZE]*

	MEAN					7	6	5	4	3	2	1	dnk
	ALL CDNS.	ALL CAT H.	ENG. CAT H.	FR. CAT H.	PROT S.								
Standing up for traditional Catholic values	5.8	5.8	6.1	5.5	5.9	40	21	13	5	4	2	3	12
Helping to bring respect for the Church through his own person and character	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.2	5.5	34	18	16	9	5	5	4	10
Helping to create enthusiasm for Christian beliefs among young people	4.9	5.0	5.2	4.6	5.1	24	14	17	10	10	6	7	13



A Great Pope: Canadians Score the Achievements of Pope John Paul II
A COMPAS Poll for the National Post, April 1, 2005

	MEAN					7	6	5	4	3	2	1	dnk
	ALL CDNS.	ALL CAT H.	ENG. CAT H.	FR. CAT H.	PROT S.								
Helping to bring reconciliation and goodwill between Catholics and Jews	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.0	4.7	17	13	22	10	7	5	6	19
Helping to bring down communism in Eastern Europe	4.5	4.7	5.0	4.4	4.6	17	10	16	11	8	5	9	24

Canadians tend to perceive the Pope’s position on doctrinal matters as unduly conservative irrespective of their own denomination, as shown in table 3B. Yet, they admire him as an emblem of the Church, bringing pride and not shame, and building bridges to many communities outside the Church. When Canadians score John Paul II very highly for “standing up for traditional Catholic values,” they may well be emphasizing in their own minds his immense contributions as the Church’s chief ambassador rather than conservative Church doctrine, about which many are ambivalent.

Table 3B: Would you say the current Pope is...[ROTATE POLES]

	All Canadians	All Catholics		English-speaking Catholics		French-speaking Catholics	
	Feb 2005	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002
Too conservative	51	60	60	59	50	63	72
[UNPROMPTED] Just right	21	23	14	21	15	26	12



A Great Pope: Canadians Score the Achievements of Pope John Paul II
A COMPAS Poll for the National Post, April 1, 2005

	All Canadians	All Catholics		English-speaking Catholics		French-speaking Catholics	
	Feb 2005	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002	Feb 2005	July 2002
Too liberal	9	7	8	8	11	5	5
[UNPROMPTED] DNK	19	10	19	13	25	7	12

5.0. Methodology

A national representative sample of n=508, considered accurate to within 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20, was fielded by CATI February 25-26, 2005. The principal investigators on this study were Conrad Winn and Tamara Gottlieb.

