

Evangelicals and poltics

[Countries](#), [Canada](#)



This essay will be summarizing and expanding on the article; *Between America and Europe: Religion, Politics and Evangelicals in Canada* written by Jonathan Malloy from Carleton University in Ottawa. In his article, Malloy describes the different role religion plays in the politics of Europe, America, Canada and Australia. Europe has state churches and is highly secularized with a decline in religious beliefs and its effect on politics. The United States has a separate state and church but there is still a very large religious presence in American politics particularly evangelical Christianity. Canada and Australia are, in some ways, a mix of the European and the American model but with a growing prevalence of evangelicals in politics (Malloy, 2011). Political and religious literature such as articles, newspapers, journals, books and movies are ever abundant throughout the world but historically, not much attention has ever been given to the link between the two. The connection between evangelicalism and politics in the West has largely been overlooked with the exception of the United States of America. In the United States substantial research has been done about the apparent presence of religion (in particular evangelical Christianity) in American politics. In Canada and other similar nations such as Australia, UK and New Zealand not much consideration has ever been given to the role religion plays in the politics of that country (Malloy, 2011). Increasing amounts of literature has looked at evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in currently developing nations but not in detail in already developed nations. The inadequate studies in developed nations can be explained through the lack of religious influence throughout most of Europe. The American research that was done concerning the association of religion and politics is hard to compare because of differences

between methodologies and categorization (Malloy, 2011). Canadians from the 1960s have been looked at as more religiously inclined than Americans with frequent intermingling of church and state institutions and generally more church-goers. It has been proven that in the past, Canadian evangelicals have been less politically active than those in America which is particularly interesting considering the many similarities between the cultures and societies of these two countries. In the 1980s and 1990s the United States experienced Christian Rights assemblies whereas Canada did not, despite stronger religious observance. Through research based largely in the UK the reasons for the lack of Christian Rights movement in Canada was institutional. The American parliamentary and political system, because of its decentralized political parties and more direct democracy approach, enables evangelicals with abundant opportunities to influence elections, start referendums and promote their own legislative agendas. Whereas the Canadian system, similar to that of the UK, has close and concentrated power with very limited opportunities allowing for evangelical lobbying. More recently, evangelicals in Canada have strengthened ties with the Conservative Party due largely to the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2005. Generally Canadian evangelicals were very active on the left. Current developments suggest that institutional factors alone are inadequate in explaining evangelical activism in Canada (Malloy, 2011). A flexible dual structure of state-church was established in Canada, structured around mainly Protestant and Catholic lines. To this day, denominations of state-church still exist, for example in some provinces Catholic schools are state-funded whereas in some provinces they are not. Anglicanism dominates the

English-speaking parts of Canada and Catholicism dominates in Quebec, which is French speaking. An important factor that makes Canada closer to a European model than an American model of society and religion is the dominance of established denominations in Canada. Denominational distinctions and religiosity gradually decreased in the mid-twentieth century similar to what occurred in Europe. Religious dominance in Quebec was followed by rapid secularization; there was no provincial ministry of education until 1964 since the Catholic Church had great influence especially over educational institutes. Quebecers declared their economic and political rights as a minority group in Canada during the Quiet Revolution with very prominent signs of Catholicism. Low religious participation with high continuing identity made for a more European model (Malloy, 2011).

Evangelical Christianity has many different categories and definitions but it has been an important part of Canadian Christian tradition. Malloy argues that American evangelical culture has created a consumerist mentality that spread to Canada through mega churches and cultural products. There are differences between how Canadian and American evangelicals view economic issues as well as what the role of the state should be. Canadian evangelicals are more cooperative and conciliatory as compared to Americans evangelicals, Malloy suggests. The lack of Canadian evangelical nationalism is particularly interesting when compared to the United States. In the United States religion and politics are very closely connected, for example during the religiously inspired American civil rights movement (Malloy, 2011). In conclusion, Canada's institutional factors and political opportunities are of great importance to the link between religion and

politics. To fully comprehend the issues Malloy is arguing, we need to look at broader subjects of how religiousness remains significant in Canada and how it's revival continue to aid politics and religion to evolve. Jonathan Malloy (2011): *Between America and Europe: Religion, Politics and Evangelicals in Canada, Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 12: 3, 317-333