

Is Canada the most tolerant place in the world because Canadians are more enlightened than others? The answer is no. Accidents of geography and history account for our blessings.

[...] **I do believe that Canada can make an honest claim to being the most open-minded and open-hearted place on earth.** For two decades now, a land once occupied by descendants of European settlers has been importing just under 1 per cent of its population annually – 258,000 in 2012, more than five million in total – with most new arrivals coming from Asia and the Pacific. No other country on earth has done such a thing. No country brings in as many immigrants as we do, on a per capita basis, from as many different places. And we all get along with each other amazingly well.

Many developed countries have a pro-immigration party and an anti-immigration party. In Canada, each of the national parties claims to be more pro-immigrant than the other two. [...] Our tolerance goes beyond race. Not only was Canada among the first countries to legalize gay marriage, Ontario just elected Canada's first lesbian first minister. Far more important, Kathleen Wynne's sexuality wasn't an issue in the election. [...]

So how did we get this way? We lucked out. Canada is bordered by three oceans. We are very, very far away from anywhere except the United States. [...] It's easier to be tolerant when you don't have millions of people next door, desperate to get in, as the United States and Europe do.

We are as lucky in our cultural geography as we are in our physical. Canada was originally a union of French and English [...]. Multiculturalism is the greatest of our Constitution.

John Ibbitson

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