

February 2019 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

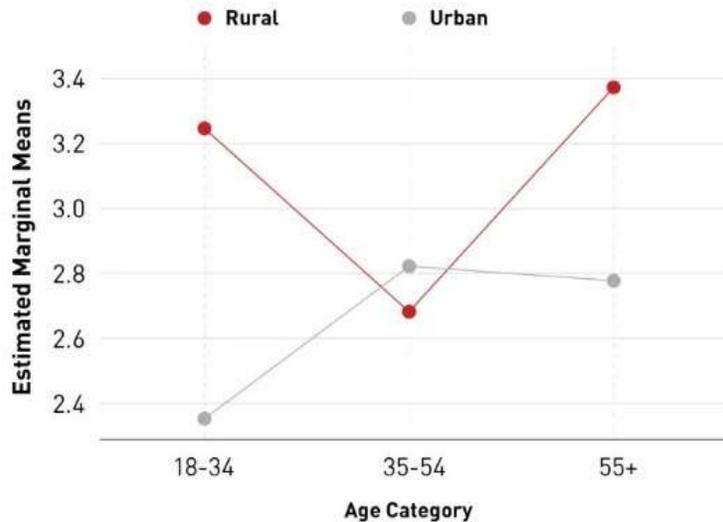
Many changes are happening across the world and Canada. As an organization, we have begun many initiatives in response to the recent headlines.

February 1 to 7 marked [World Interfaith Harmony Week](#). The UN proposed it in 2010. This year, the [Pope held a mass in the UAE](#) for the first time. In Canada, headlines showed a variety of perspectives and changes related to promoting and rejecting interfaith and the respect of different beliefs.

- In [Alberta](#) and [Newfoundland](#) yellow vest protesters rally against oil pipelines, carbon tax, and immigration, including specific concerns related to religion, depending on the individual and group.
- In Halifax, Buddhist Rankaduwa studies neuro-ethics education— a mix of science, social science, religion and philosophical perspectives into ethics education. In [Meditations on music, religion, and neuroscience](#), he shares how his personal background led him naturally to this field.
- In Quebec, Premier Francois Legault asks Montreal school boards if they can offer [data on teachers who wear religious symbols](#).
- In Saskatchewan, recent reporting showed the [flux of religious believers](#) across ages and rural and urban spaces.

Rural vs Urban:

which age groups were more likely to agree religion was important



SOURCE: CBC and the University of Saskatchewan Social Science Research Lab

These headlines and more are noted below in this bi-monthly newsletter.

We are approaching groups and organizations across the country to promote civic religious literacy in various capacities. We hope to share some with you in our next newsletter. In the meantime, our upcoming presentations and publications from our team, including our Board of Directors and Advisors, are updated [online](#) consistently.

The Pulse



News, reports, and research headlines (Canada and global) related to religious literacy. Follow our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts for headlines on a regular basis.

Canada:

- [The next frontier in the 'right to die': advance requests, minors and the mentally ill](#) CBC News
- [Fear and faith in Canada](#) Canadian Immigrant
- [A man 'cannot do that to a woman': Why polygamy in Canadian Muslim community could be another #MeToo moment](#) CBC News
- [A Canadian Preacher Who Doesn't Believe in God](#) New York Times

British Columbia:

- [Informational update on Wet'suwet'en defence of their lands and waters](#) Sierra Club BC
- [Corporations don't seem to understand Indigenous jurisdiction](#) The Conversation Canada
- [Don't Tangle With The World's Top Big Game Hunter](#) Forbes

Alberta:

- [Kainai students take the lead on mental health through Headstrong program](#) Calgary Herald

- [Hate crime unit monitoring anti-Islamic group after confrontation at Al Rashid Mosque](#) Calgary Herald
- [Education minister asks public religious schools for employment agreements](#) Calgary Herald
- [Charles Weaselhead elected 14th chancellor of the University of Lethbridge](#) Lethbridge News Now
- [Alberta yellow vest protests lack violence seen in Paris, but anti-immigration anger simmers](#) CBC News
- [Religious lifestyles for Catholic school teachers necessary 'or there's no reason for us to exist,' says trustee rep](#) Edmonton Journal

Ontario:

- [How an acknowledgment of 'unceded Algonquin territory' became ubiquitous](#) Ottawa Citizen
- [Not exactly kosher: Any attempt to interfere with an employment relationship for religious reasons must be done with the utmost caution](#) HR Reporter
- [Islamic Party of Ontario: the latest extremist "threat" singled out by Canada's right has PC party connection](#) Now

Quebec:

- [Quebec's proposed religious symbol ban prompts concerns from EMSB community](#) Global News
- [Schools surveyed on religious symbols: Who answered, who didn't](#) Montreal Gazette
- [Mosque shooter Bissonnette sentenced to life, eligible for parole at 67](#) Montreal Gazette

Atlantic provinces:

- ['Christianity after religion': How Pictou County churches are dealing with congregational decline](#) Kings County News
- [Meditations on music, religion and neuroscience](#) The Coast
- [La spiritualité, une deuxième chance en prison](#) ICI Radio Canada
- [Anti-immigration protesters take to streets in St. John's](#) The Western Star

Prairies:

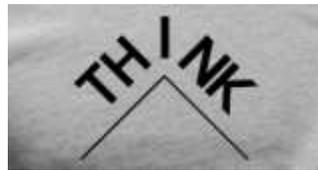
- [Secular courts need unencumbered oaths](#) Winnipeg Free Press (Op-Ed)
- [Police investigating hate crime at River Heights restaurant](#) CTV News
- [Learning to live after a loss of faith: why some may back away from religion](#) CBC News

Territories:

- [Yukon Arctic Ultra race is a 'spiritual' journey, says competitor](#) CBC News
- [For Gwich'in people, Arctic drilling poses a threat to caribou and culture](#) Globe and Mail
- [Yukon's Muslim community grows into its new mosque](#) CBC News

International:

- [President Trump just tweeted support for Bible courses, but it's already legal to teach about the Bible](#) Washington Post
- [After police foil terrorist attack on Islamburg, New York Muslims push for justice](#) Religion News
- [Women visited this sacred temple. Then violent protests broke out. Why?](#) The National Geographic
- [Papal visit: Pope Francis in Abu Dhabi to mark a historic day for inter-faith relations – as it happened](#) The National Arab Emirates



Religious Literacy Thought Corner

- While [Wicca might seem like an ancient religion](#) – and has roots in European fertility cults – it actually wasn't introduced until the 1950's.
- [Christianity is currently the world's largest religion](#). Islam the second and Hinduism the third.
- [Most Icelanders \(80%\) are members of the Lutheran State Church](#). Another 5% are registered in other Christian denominations, including the Free Church of Iceland and the Roman Catholic Church. Almost 5% of people practice ásatrú, the traditional Norse religion
- [China Has Huge Population Of Religiously Unaffiliated](#)
The number of religiously unaffiliated people in China alone is more than twice the United States' total population. About 700 million Chinese residents do not identify with a specific religious group.



Cultural/Holy days (February and March 2019)

This table describes the dates generally commemorated or observed by many individuals within a community. Some individuals from each community may not adhere to the cultural/holy days themselves. It is not a comprehensive list of cultural/holy days worldwide but a list of those most commonly recognized across parts of Canada.

We wish happiness and/or rejuvenating contemplation to all who may commemorate these cultural/holy days in the coming months.

February 2019

- **FEB 2** – [Candlemas](#) – Celebration of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem (February 15 in the Julian calendar); [Imbolc](#) (Wiccan); [Lammas or Lughnasadh](#) (Wiccan)
- **FEB 5** – [Lunar New Year](#) (celebrated by Chinese, Korean, Tibetan, and Vietnamese peoples). It can be spiritual and/or cultural celebration depending on the individual.
- **FEB 15** – [Parinirvana](#), commemorating the day of Buddha's death and his attainment of Nirvana (Mahayana Buddhism); [Lupercalia](#) (Wiccan)
- **FEB 19** – [Magha Puja Day/Sangha Day](#) (Buddhism)

March 2019

- **MAR 5** – [Maha Shivaratri](#), Hindu festival dedicated to the god Shiva
- **MAR 6** – [Ash Wednesday](#), marking the first day of Lent for most Christians
- **MAR 11** – [Clean Monday](#), Beginning of Great Lent in preparation for Easter in Orthodox churches, ending April 19
- **MAR 17** – [St. Patrick's Day](#), celebration of the Irish people
- **MAR 20** – [Spring Equinox /Ostara](#) (Wiccan)
- **MAR 21** – [Holi](#), Hindu spring and colors festival; [Hola Mohalla](#), Sikh festival; [Purim](#), Jewish festival commemorating the deliverance of the Jewish people from the

Persian Empire; [Nowruz](#). Persian and Zoroastrian celebration of the new year in spiritual and/or cultural lens depending on the individual

Photos by [Banter Snaps](#) on [Unsplash](#) and [Mesh](#) on [Unsplash](#).