

CCRL The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy

CLRC Le centre de litt ratie religieuse civique

August 2020 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

Our work is intersectional. Many people see “religious literacy” and assume that it pertains to reading and writing about religion. We are always happy to explain that [religious literacy](#) actually includes the understanding of religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities, and the intersections with other aspects of identity. So, race, gender, sexual orientation, among others, are all aspects of identity that we do and have engaged with.

For the past year, [our work with the Canadian Race Relations Foundations](#) discussed race and religion. This July and August, we continued this in webinars and dialogues on COVID, racism, and religious discrimination with the [North Shore Restorative Justice Society](#) and [Words Without Borders](#). In the coming months, we will do so again during [Peace Days Montreal](#) and [Peace Days Winnipeg](#). In rural Canada, we are working with the [Alberta Rural Development Network](#) to engage various community-based leaders to see how we can support the social and economic well-being of communities too.

Our conversations across Canada point out the importance and timeliness of our work because there is an awakening of sorts today, reflected in many headlines below. The awakening brings out the tension, fears, and ignorance in people, as [experienced by a Sikh man in Edmonton](#). But, the awakening is also [restoring people’s “faith in humanity,”](#) described by Ontarians and Saskatchewanians in a near-death experience visiting the North Okanagan region of BC. For others, it is a time of [spiritual and religious comfort and awakening](#) too. Specifically, Prof. Bird describes this time as a moral awakening, as we reflect on [Canada’s role on the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#) and learn its impact on the people of D l n  in N.W.T.

This awakening reflects the change in Canada today. The change is resisted by some, welcomed by others, and a gradual process for many. Through all this, religious literacy helps us see the influence of religious, spiritual, and non-religious aspects in individual and societal life through the process of change. It also helps us see each individual and society beyond a single identity factor, such as race. By recognizing the intersection of identities, and [intersectionality](#) within them, our work is helping us engage with the whole individual and more holistic parts of society too.

This isn’t easy work, but we are optimistic. We look forward to the months to come and hope we can engage in this work with you. If you would like to learn more about our

projects, especially our work with the [Alberta Rural Development Network](#), we invite you to complete the Expression of Interest [here](#) or in the EOI image below. As a non-profit, we appreciate [your financial support](#) as well.

EOI for a project on understanding the local religious, spiritual and non-religious identities and communities in rural areas



ARDN, in partnership with the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy (CCRL), is seeking communities interested in the collaborative development of a customized program to support the economic and social well-being of municipalities in light of changing religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities and communities.

EOI form

The Expression of Interest for our work with the Alberta Rural Development Network

Sincerely,

[Alice](#)

CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

The Pulse



These current headlines reflect how religious, spiritual, non-religious perspectives remain part of our daily lives and society. They show the struggles, virtues, and influence of Canadians in local and global communities during the ongoing pandemics – that based on COVID-19 and anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

Follow our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts for headlines on a regular basis.

Note, these headlines do not indicate endorsement but are shared for the purpose of awareness.

Canada:

- [Canadian Museum for Human Rights leadership apologizes after report on systemic racism](#) *Globe and Mail*

- Canadian Polish-language newspaper blames COVID-19 on Jews in anti-Semitic tirade *National Post*
- Canadian pastor sentenced to 3 months for defying Myanmar coronavirus law *CBC News*
- Iserdeo Jainarain's legacy makes Canada stronger, more generous and more diverse *Globe and Mail* – A reminder of the everyday Canadians who are sometimes not acknowledged as publicly.

Territories:

- Chosen and Frozen: The Jews of Nunavut *World Israel News*
- Gwich'in Tribal Council announces candidates for its fall election *The Voice of Denendeh*
- Legacy of Canada's role in atomic bomb is felt by northern Indigenous community *The Conversation Canada*

British Columbia:

- Surrey family's quest for life-saving drug for their baby captures attention of Bollywood star *Vancouver Sun*
- North Okanagan restores faith in humanity for houseboat fire victims *Kelowna Capital News*
- Vancouver Queer Film Fest: Trans teens push to play their way in new documentary *Vancouver Sun*

Alberta:

- Commission rules in favour of 2 Muslim students who wanted prayer at private school *CBC Calgary*
- Man goes on racist rant in Canadian liquor store after refusing to wear a mask *DH Vancouver*
- Alberta Muslim group collects donations for victims of Beirut explosion *CBC Calgary*

Prairies:

- COVID-19 pandemic sees people seeking out religious content from across the globe *CBC Saskatchewan*
- A town grieves: Young couple killed in tornado strike an 'unimaginable loss' *Winnipeg Free Press*
- Poundmaker Cree Nation scholar wins \$105K to rethink the education system *Global News*

Ontario:

- Do religious face coverings count as masks? *CBC Health*
- Private Christian university says no sex outside heterosexual marriage. LGBTQ alumni say that discriminates *CBC News*
- Mississauga council elects to hold off on decision to allow Hindu temples to broadcast hymns for limited period of time *Insauga.com*

Quebec:

- Fierté Montréal : des amoureux « two spirits » comme ambassadeurs *La Presse*
- L'Oratoire Saint-Joseph privé d'importants revenus en raison de la COVID-19 *Le Soleil*
- Mask versus niqab: how are those impacted by Bill 21 affected during the pandemic? *660News*

- [A brief history of masks from the 17th-century plague to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic](#) *The Conversation*
- [Orthodox Jews Fight Proposed Niqab Ban in Quebec](#) *Forward*

Atlantic Provinces:

- [Award-Winning Moncton, NB's Folk-Rocker RYAN HILLIER Offers No Excuses In New Album](#) *Cashbox Magazine Canada*
- [Special Olympics Canada names Spirit of Newfoundland director champion of inclusion](#) *CBC Newfoundland and Labrador*
- [ALEX SMITH: Canada must step up its game on active play among children](#) *The Chronicle Herald*

International:

- [Pope appoints six women to top roles on Vatican council in progressive step](#) *The Guardian*
- [Eid celebration in Croke Park a 'powerful symbol of unity'](#) *RTE*
- [Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, Groundbreaking Talmud Translator, Dies at 83](#) *Haaretz*
- [Scaled-down hajj begins in coronavirus era](#) *The Guardian*



Religious Literacy Thought Corner

This list focuses on responses and resources in relation to religious literacy.

- [Project 1907](#), includes various resources about spirituality and religious groups, and the intersection with other aspects of identity
- [Religious diversity in the classroom](#). This free professional development resource prepares teachers for addressing religious diversity in their classrooms. Helpful for teachers preparing to address issues of difference as students re-enter the classroom.
- ['Why We Dance' Series: Isabelle Bailey](#) *Anishinabek News*. A series to learn about the spiritual ceremony of dance among some First Nations peoples.
- ['Christianity Will Have Power'](#) *New York Times*. A detailed perspective of Trump supporters who are white Evangelical Christians.
- [The Islamic Liberation Reading List](#), *LA Review of Books*. A list of books to understand various aspects of Islam from Muslim and non-Muslim authors and scholars. And, don't forget our [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts! We are continuously updating threads and posts to analyze COVID-19 through religious literacy too.

Cultural/Holy days (August & September 2020)

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.



As the world fluctuates between public and private commemorations of each day, our team wishes you a rejuvenating time of contemplation and community support this August and September.

August 2020

- Aug 11 – **Krishna Janmashtami** (Hindus)
- Aug 15 – **Assumption of Mary** (various Christians), **Obon** (Japanese Buddhists)
- Aug 20 – **Islamic New Year** (Muslims)
- Aug 22 – **Ganesh Chaturthi** (Hindus), **Onam** begins and ends on Sept 2 (Hindus)
- Aug 30 – **Day of Ashura** (Muslims)

September 2020

- Sept 14 – **Holy Cross Day/Feast of the Cross** (various Christians)
- Sept 16 – **Vishwakarma Puja** (Hindus)
- Sept 19 – **Rosh Hashana** begins, ends Sept 20 (Jewish people)
- Sept 22 – **Autumn Equinox** (Pagans and Wiccans)
- Sept 27 – **Yom Kippur** begins, ends Sept 28 (Jewish people)

Photo sources:

<https://unsplash.com/photos/NP3KdAQc6c4>,
<https://unsplash.com/photos/9efNheFwCZU>