

CCRL The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy

CLRC Le centre de litt ratie religieuse civique

October 2020 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

The world is a crazy place. There have always been groups living comfortably while others struggle immensely. [COVID-19 has made the differences more pronounced and obvious](#). Sadly, this was very apparent in [the recent death of Joyce Eschaquan](#), recognized worldwide for its inhumanity. In such times, our headlines and “thought corner” below show that everyone, regardless of belief, is seeking ways to care for their spirit, soul, and the world. Some through [nature](#), [socially-distant healing](#), [writing](#), and [volunteering](#). Others through their [faith-based institutional work](#).

We hear and see what is happening in Canada and globally and seek ways to engage in systemic long-term change. With international networks, we are thankful for the opportunity to have contributed to the [G20 Interfaith Forum Education Working Group](#), focusing on [Education and Religious Literacy](#), to share [recommendations for the G20 leaders](#). With leaders on religious literacy work, we are thankful to be part of the [Aspen Institute’s Powering Pluralism Network](#) to discuss how our religious literacy insights can contribute to one another’s needed work.



The poster from Dr. Hicham Tiflati’s panel on tackling hate.

Locally, we are thankful to our team members [Dr. Hicham Tiflati](#) and [Dr. Sabrina Jafralie](#) for, respectively, leading webinars on [tackling hate](#) and [creating Black spaces](#) from a religious literacy lens. These talks initiate and contribute to urgent work for long-term change. To learn more about the beginnings of other engagements, including work at McGill University and the University of Toronto, please check our engagements page [here](#).

To expand our capacity to promote greater understanding, we are excited to have [Dr. Sivane Hirsch](#) join our team! She joins us as a specialist in the intersection of ethno-cultural, religious, and linguistic identities. As a Professor of Sociology at the UQTR, her passion for equity and understanding is strong and clear.

Together, we know that recognizing, understanding, and responding to one’s spiritual well-being (religious or not) is ever important today. This spirituality expresses how one connects to the world and sees their place in the world. We know this aligns with one’s bio-psycho-social well-being too so we are developing new projects to tackle racism via

the intersection of race and religion, and [socio-economic well-being in rural Canada with the Alberta Rural Development Network](#). If you are interested in collaborating on these initiatives, or others, please reach out at any time.

There is much work to be done. We are happy to lead it and collaborate with you too.

Committed for the long run,
Alice

CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

The Pulse



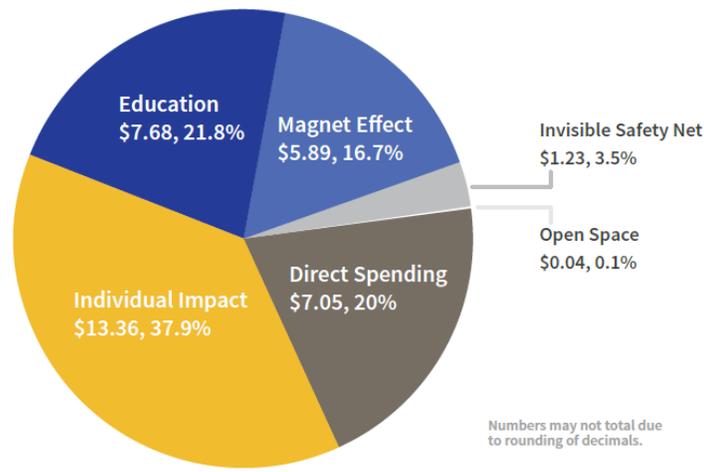
How does belief (religious or not) inform life and society in Canada today? Here are some headlines that show how religious, spiritual, and non-religious perspectives remain part of our daily lives and society. They show the struggles, virtues, and influence of Canadians in local and global communities. Some are one-on-one interactions while others are systemic, good and bad.

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 Forces push-back against Proud Boys and far right needs action, not tweets, critics say](#) *North Bay Nugget*
- [Dozens of human rights, faith groups call on Trudeau to dismantle white supremacist organizations](#) *CityNews*
- [Experiences of discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) *Statistics Canada*
- [The Hidden Economy: How Faith Helps Fuel Canada's GDP](#) *Cardus* and the *Religious Freedom & Business Foundation*

Chart 1. Religious Congregations' Value to Canadian Society
(\$35.24 billion annually)



Data from The Hidden Economy report, by the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation and Cardus.

Territories:

- [First Indigenous-led biosphere reserve in the world featured in new Canadian TV series](#) *Yorkton This Week*
- ['Where's my equality?': Netser says premier acted too quickly after abortion-related comments](#) *Nunavut News*
- [News/North editorial: The truth is out, time to reconcile](#) *NWT News/North*

British Columbia:

- [Seven B.C. fall escapes for those feeling the urge to get out of town](#) *The Georgia Straight*
- ['No mandate' from B.C. government for new protected areas: FOI docs](#) *The Narwhal*
- [B.C. mom delivers north Island's first home birth baby in 30 years](#) *Victoria News*
- [Memories of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls live on](#) *CPKG Today*

Alberta:

- [Streets Alive Mission celebrates 30 years in Lethbridge with flag raising ceremony](#) *Lethbridge News Now*
- ['Ignorant and disrespectful': Blackfoot medicine wheel vandalized at Nose Hill Park](#) *Calgary Herald*
- [Elise Stolte: Women, Black and Indigenous firefighters face a rough ride at Edmonton fire department](#) *Edmonton Journal*

Prairies:

- [Province Announces Opening of New Addictions Therapy Program at Women's Correctional Centre](#) *Province of Manitoba*

- [National Catholic Health Care Week spotlight on 'unwavering commitment'](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*
- [Sturgeon Lake First Nation nurse wins award](#) *Prince Albert Now*

Ontario:

- [Ismaili CIVIC hosts collection drive for local shelters](#) *CanIndia News*
- [Ontario and Quebec churches grapple with second wave of COVID-19](#) *Grandin Media*
- [An Ontario City Is Standing Together After Residents Were Attacked For 'Being Muslim'](#) *NarCity*

Quebec:

- [Religion et COVID-19: mauvais mélange?](#) *Le Nouvelliste*
- [La COVID-19 menace une communauté religieuse de Chicoutimi](#) *Le Quotidien*
- [Quebec launches public inquiry into death of Joyce Echaquan in Joliette hospital](#) *CBC Montreal*
- ['It was sheer hatred': The Indigenous woman taunted as she died](#) *Al Jazeera*

Atlantic Provinces:

- [P.E.I. author digs deep into his spiritual experiences](#) *The Guardian*
- [Husband, 83, dies with medical assistance after wife's court bid to stop him fails](#) *CBC Nova Scotia*
- [L'église Christ-Roi de Moncton tente de préserver son patrimoine](#) *Ici Nouveau-Brunswick*

International:

- [China confirms death of Uighur man whose family says was held in Xinjiang camps](#) *The Guardian*
- [Opinion: In death, as in life, Ruth Bader Ginsburg balanced being American and Jewish](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Amy Coney Barrett's religion is important but irrelevant](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Rihanna apologises to Muslims for using Hadith in lingerie show](#) *Middle East Monitor*
- [For Coptic Church, changes, questions after priest ouster](#) *The Associated Press*



Religious Literacy Thought Corner

Starting this issue, this section will focus on one specific aspect of society or identity. Using religious literacy skills and framework, our team will briefly prompt how to identify and perceive the influence of religion, spirituality, and non-religious belief in our lives and world.



This issue will discuss the intersection of belief and climate change.

Though [some people believe that religion conflicts with science, some believe that religious people are all anti-science, and others use religion to explain global events](#), there are several religious, spiritual, and religiously unaffiliated groups in the world addressing climate change *because* of their beliefs.

[Islands of Faith/Semesta](#) is a documentary about 7 different worldviews and their response to climate change – Available on Netflix Canada. Funded by the European Union and the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, it details how and why Hindu, indigenous, Christian, and Muslim groups are responding to climate change across the Indonesian islands. Worldwide, [Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas are preserving biodiversity based on Indigenous culture](#), evident in Canada's [Nááts'jch'oh National Park Reserve](#). Many other belief groups created movements, streams of work, or organizations that focus specifically on climate change too, such as [Jewcology](#) (Jewish), [EcoSikh](#) (Sikh), [Green Muslims](#) (Muslim), [Creation Care](#) (Christian), among others. Individually, there are those who speak up to address climate change, like [Dr. Katherine Hayhoe](#) (Christian) and [Dr. David Suzuki](#) (atheist) – both Canadian.

These contradictions show that, despite [a few loud voices from religious people who ignore climate change](#), there are many working in an organized fashion to address it, *because* of their beliefs and working towards a common goal regardless of one another's belief. This highlights the internal diversity within belief groups, and how belief influences one's action and their understanding of the world – three key understandings in being religiously literate.

Cultural/Holy days (October & November 2020)

This list are 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 commonly recognized across parts of Canada.

As different parts of Canada enter the second wave of the pandemic, and fluctuates between public and private commemorations online, indoors, or outdoors (with the government approved numbers), our team wishes you a rejuvenating time of contemplation and community support this October and November.



October 2020

- Oct 2 – [Sukkot](#), ends Oct 9 (Jewish people)
- Oct 9 – [Shmini Atzeret](#) (Jewish people)
- Oct 11 – [Simchat Torah](#) (Jewish people)
- Oct 17 – [Navaratri](#), ends Oct 25 (Hindus)
- Oct 17 – [Birth of the Báb](#), ends Oct 18 (Bahá'í)
- Oct 18 – [Birth of Bahá'u'lláh](#), ends Oct 19 (Bahá'í)
- Oct 20 – [Birth of Guru Granth](#) (Sikhs)
- Oct 25 – [Vijayadashami/Dussehra/Dashain](#) (Hindus)
- Oct 30 – [Mawlid al Nabi](#), ends Oct 29 (Muslims, Sunni)
- Oct 31 – [Samhain](#) (Wiccans)

November 2020

- Nov 1 – [All Saints' Day](#) (Christians, Catholic)
- Nov 2 – [All Souls' Day](#) (Christians, Catholic)
- Nov 3 – [Mawlid-al-Nabi](#) (Muslims, Shia)
- Nov 14 – [Diwali](#) (Hindus, Sikhs, Jains)
- Nov 24 – [Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib](#) (Sikhism)
- Nov 25 – [Christ the King](#) (Christians, Catholics), [Day of the Covenant](#) (Bahá'í)
- Nov 27 – [Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá](#) (Bahá'í)
- Nov 29 – [First Sunday of Advent](#) (Christians, various)
- Nov 30 – [Guru Nanak Birthday](#) (Sikhism), [St. Andrew's Day](#) (Christians, various)

Photo sources: [The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence](#), [James Wheeler](#) on [Unsplash](#), [The Hidden Economy](#) report, [Markus Spiske](#) on [Unsplash](#), and [Garth Manthe](#) on [Unsplash](#).