

CCRL The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy
CLRC Le centre de litt ratie religieuse civique

February 2022 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

Dear friends of CCRL,

Through my studies, I have learned that it is possible to [learn from religions](#) without being part of those religions. When we learn *from* religions, teachings can become words of wisdom.

For example, global religious leaders [Thich Naht Hanh](#) and [Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#) said:

“For things to reveal themselves to us, we need to be ready to abandon our views about them,” Thich Naht Hanh in [Being Peace](#).

“We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God’s family.” – [Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#)

As we mourn the Buddhist and Christian leaders’ recent passing, these quotes speak to me. They remind me to listen more with my heart, have personal reflection, and patience. This is particularly difficult as the convoy in Ottawa may be encouraging [anti-Semitism among youth in Toronto](#) and friends and family of mine face increasingly demanding work in healthcare.

The headlines in this newsletter are a brief capture of the complex and deeply ingrained issues in Canada and the world today. But, opportunities like this to learn *from* religion can carry us through the interpersonal tensions we may be facing and the social issues that persist. They are surely carrying me through and helping us as we persist in our [projects this year](#). I share these quotes in hopes that they offer support for you too.



If you would like to learn more about religious literacy, check out our page [here](#). To [support](#), [collaborate](#), or [connect with us](#) in our work, please reach out at any time. You are welcome.

Sincerely, [Alice](#), CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

The Pulse



Minority religions in Canada are increasing at an unprecedented rate and could more than double in size by 2036.

More here – [Islam, Sikhism and why immigration drives religion in Canada: 'It's the curriculum of our life'](#) *Global News*

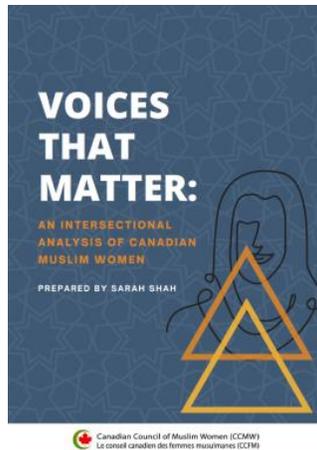
How does belief (religious or not) inform life and society in Canada today?

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 and understanding.

Canada:

- *Global News'* 3-part series on "Religion in Canada":
 - Part 1: ['Gone by 2040': Why some religions are declining in Canada faster than ever](#) *Global News*
 - Part 2: [Islam, Sikhism and why immigration drives religion in Canada: 'It's the curriculum of our life'](#) *Global News*
 - Part 3: [How COVID could change religion in Canada forever: 'There is no going back'](#) *Global News*
- [How welcoming Lunar New Year with bánh tét can connect us to our Vietnamese roots](#) *CBC News*
- [Opinion: Swastikas and other symbols of hate displayed at Ottawa protest aren't just offensive—they're dangerous, says Andrea Freedman, CEO of Ottawa's Jewish Federation](#) *The Canadian Jewish News*
- [Why are anti-vaccine Canadian truckers converging on Ottawa?](#) *Al Jazeera*
- [Voices that Matter: An Intersectional Analysis of Canadian Muslim Women](#) *A report by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)*



Territories:

- [‘It’s a beautiful thing’: Indigenous healing camp gets lifeline extension in N.W.T.](#) *APTN News*
- [Luna-Belle’s final farewell: How we honour pets who have passed on, and why it matters](#) *CBC North*
- [Misinformation blamed for Igloolik’s COVID-19 spread](#) *Nunatsiaq News*

British Columbia:

- [First Nation sues Royal B.C. Museum over failure to return treasured totem pole](#) *Vancouver Sun*
- [New superintendent vows to tackle systemic racism in Prince George schools](#) *CBC British Columbia*
- [B.C. patients can now get a prescription for a Parks Canada Discovery Pass](#) *Vancouver Island Press Daily*

Alberta:

- [Al Rashid Mosque develops Halal opportunity to enter Edmonton’s housing market](#) *Global News*
- [Edmonton police arrest and charge man in alleged attack against Muslim woman and her children](#) *Edmonton Journal*
- [Exposure’s emerging photographer offers introspection, spirituality and growth with exhibit exploring religious upbringing in Calgary](#) *Calgary Herald*

Prairies:

- [Mashkode-bizhiki | Plains bison herd successfully re-established to Key First Nation in Saskatchewan](#) *Mirage News*
- [Residential school survivor calls for national braid day after licence photo experience](#) *APTN News*
- [Winnipeg mayor vows to commit \\$20K to legal fight against Quebec’s anti-religious-symbols bill](#) *CBC Manitoba*

Ontario:

- [Investigations underway after antisemitic incidents reported at North York middle school](#) *Global News*
- [One of the oldest active Black churches in Canada is right here in Windsor](#) *CBC Windsor*
- [U of T apologizes after giving 'hell money' to students for Lunar New Year](#) *Toronto Star*
- [University of Ottawa students union calls for pause of in-person classes due to convoy protest](#) *Ottawa Citizen*

Quebec:

- [La loi 21 modifiée: un gouvernement de QS permettrait le port de signes religieux pour enseigner](#) *Le Journal de Québec*
- [Opinion: La place des intervenants en soins spirituels](#) *Le Devoir*
- [Opinion: The 'new' face of environmental racism in Quebec](#) *The Narwhal*
- ['We are their voices': New Holocaust museum to open on Main](#) *Montreal Gazette*

Atlantic Provinces:

- ['A national treasure': Human rights advocate, community educator Wanda Robson dies at age 95](#) *Saltwire*
- [MARION PARDY: Let's celebrate both our differences and our shared values](#) *Saltwire*
- [The church will never regain the power it once had, but this minister says that's a good thing](#) *CBC Nfld. & Labrador*

International:

- [Beijing Olympics: China's choice of Uyghur torchbearer causes controversy](#) *Euronews*
 - [After moving out of their comfort zone, atheists in Kenya gain visibility](#) *Religion News Service*
 - [Commentary: How Russia is weaponizing religion against Ukraine](#) *Global News*
 - [Conversion therapy: Man tells of abuse at Warrington church](#) *BBC News*
 - [The Dissenters Trying to Save Evangelicalism From Itself](#) *New York Times*
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Religious Literacy Thought Corner

Every 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. Past Thought Corners are [here](#).

In this issue, [Dr. W. Y. Alice Chan](#) & [Dr. Margie Patrick](#) discuss:



[Seaview African United Baptist Church, Halifax, NS](#)

Race, Religion, and Spirituality – What’s the Connection?

February is Black History Month across Canada and many of us are taking the time to understand, take stock, and act to address anti-Black racism. This month of education, reflection, and action provides Canadians with the opportunity to consider how all aspects of identity, including race, inform Black History in Canada.

It is common to talk about different aspects of identity as if they stand alone. But in reality, people’s identities co-exist in one’s life and one aspect of their identity informs another.

For example, the history of African Nova Scotians is informed by the [history of enslavement in Canada](#), and the anti-slavery movement that was led by many African Nova Scotian leaders like [Richard Preston](#). His movement to address racism and promote community well-being was grounded in his Christian faith. Under his leadership, churches became sites of community gathering. In Ontario, [Sandwich First Baptist Church, constructed in 1851 as part of the Underground Railroad, is one of the oldest active Black churches in Canada](#). Designated a National Historic Site in 2000, the church highlights that Black history in Canada is part of Canadian history. These stories demonstrate how race, religion, citizenship

status, and community well-being are all intertwined when we discuss Black history in Canada. Other examples include the [First Baptist Church in Toronto](#) and the role of [Viola Desmond's Christian community](#) in her stand against racism.

The whole person

Race, religion, and spirituality continue to be interconnected for many people. Singling out one aspect of their identity misses out the richness and complexity of understanding the whole person.

The past shows us that laws and social norms segregated people by race. They informed how Black Canadians were excluded or lacked access to education, jobs, suitable housing, citizenship rights, among other things. In response, many Black religious communities supported the well-being of the Black community.

Today, institutional slavery no longer exists but segregation continues in behaviour and attitude. These behaviours and attitudes maintain anti-Black racism in the larger society (seen in [education](#), [justice system](#), [access to jobs](#), etc.) as well as religious groups (seen in some [Prairie Christian churches](#), some [Montreal Muslim mosques](#), and some [Jewish communities](#)) across Canada.

As Canadians work together to promote equity and eliminate hate and discrimination, we need to understand the complex reality of how race, religion, and spirituality, among many other aspects of identity, are interconnected. When we do so, we are able to fully engage with Black History in Canada.

Cultural/Holy days (February & March 2022)

This list of dates is 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. Our team wishes you a rejuvenating time of contemplation and community support this February and March.



Bánh tét. (Getty Images/Stockphoto)

A photo from the article [How welcoming Lunar New Year with bánh tét can connect us to our Vietnamese roots](#) above

February 2022

FEB 1 – [Imbolc](#) (Wiccans); [Lunar New Year/Chun Jie/Vietnamese Tet/Korean Solnal/Tibetan Losar](#) (Various groups)

FEB 5 – [Vasanta Panchami](#) (Some Hindus)

FEB 15 – [Parinirvana/Nirvana Day](#) (Mahayana Buddhists and other Buddhist groups)

FEB 16– [Magha Puja Day/Sangha Day](#) (Buddhists)

March 2022

MAR 1 – [Carnival/Shrove Tuesday](#) (Various Christians); [Maha Shivaratri](#) (Various Hindus); [Laylat al Mi'raj/Isra/Mi'raj](#) (Many Muslims)

MAR 2 – [Ash Wednesday](#) (Various Christians)

MAR 9 – [Clean Monday/Ash Monday](#) (Orthodox Christians)

MAR 11 – [Farvardegan/Muktad](#) (Zoroastrians)

MAR 16 – [Purim](#), begins, ends Mar 17 (Jewish People)

MAR 17 – [St. Patrick's Day](#) (Irish Catholics)

MAR 18 – [Laylat al Bara'at/Mid-Sha'ban](#), and ends Mar 19 (Many Muslims); [Holi](#) (Hindus and Sikhs), [Hola Mohalla](#), and ends Mar 20 (Sikhs)

MAR 20 – [Spring Equinox](#) (Various Indigenous Peoples); [Nowruz](#) (Baha'is, Zoroastrians, and Persian celebration); [Shunbun-no-hi](#) (Shintos), and ends Apr 4; [Ostara](#) (Wiccans)

MAR 21 – [Higan-e](#) (Mahayana Buddhists and other Buddhist groups);

MAR 26 – [Earth Hour](#) (Humanists and many others)