

April 2022 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

Dear friends of CCRL,

Happy spring! April brings a mix of rain, snow, ice, and sun, but it is beautiful. The returning birds and budding plants bring a spirit of rejuvenation to many of us. For many Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Humanists, and Baha'is, this April and May bring many celebrations and observances. As a team from various religious and non-religious backgrounds, we join you in this time of celebration and renewal!

The end of March marked new endings and beginnings for our organization too.

1. We launched our [free Anti-Racism Toolkit](#) with project partner the Victoria Multifaith Society, and recorded the first session as a train-the-trainer resource.
2. [CBC Sudbury's Up North show](#) featured [our project in Temiskaming Shores, ON](#).
3. We launched our [Building Bridges competition](#) for youth 8-17 years old in Quebec with project partners from the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal.
4. [We became a charity!](#)

Each item took months to prepare, but are marking new beginnings for internal growth and our ability to support you in your own organizations and communities.

As challenges nationally and globally are ceaseless, especially today, these reminders of joy, life, and opportunity are important. It keeps us going and looking forward. Our newsletters always try to share the good stories alongside the challenging ones. We hope you see this reflected in this issue and continue to look positively ahead with us.

If you would like to [support](#), [collaborate](#), or [connect with us](#) as partners in our new work, please reach out at any time. It would be a pleasure to partner with you!



Sincerely,

[Alice](#)

CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

The Pulse



Described as “arguably the most famous living Yukoner right now,” Pandher explains that “(bhangra) has become a part of the Punjabi culture of Sikh people, but it’s not associated with Sikhism as a religion.” More in the article below: [Gurdeep Pandher celebrates Sikh Heritage Month with bhangra dancers from across Canada](#)

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:

- [Anglican Church of Canada blunders stoke calls for general secretary to resign](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Gurdeep Pandher celebrates Sikh Heritage Month with bhangra dancers from across Canada](#) *CBC Arts*
- [Papal apology to residential school survivors receives mixed reaction](#) *Toronto Star*

Territories:

- [Catholic Church to help bring accused priest to justice, Obed says](#) *Nunatsiaq News*
- [KINSELLA: Restoring faith in Catholic Church one apology at a time](#) *Toronto Sun*
- [Yellowknife's Muslim community observe what may be the final Ramadan without Islamic Centre](#) *CBC North*

British Columbia:

- [Decolonizing media: Eden Fineday in conversation with Kelsie Kilawna](#) *IndigiNews*
- [Douglas Todd: Where have all the popular spiritual leaders gone? And what's filling the void?](#) *Vancouver Sun*
- [Surrey Archives to highlight Sikh Heritage Month](#) *Surrey Now-Leader*

Alberta:

- [Calgary Ahmadiyya Muslim women gather items for Ukrainian refugees during Ramadan](#) *CBC Calgary*
- [Pope apologizes; more work to be done](#) *St. Albert Today*
- [The Power of the Drum a spiritual dance celebration of Afro-Cuban resilience](#) *Edmonton Journal*

Prairies:

- [Islamic Association of Sask. aims to build new mosque in Saskatoon as current centre overflows](#) *CTV News Saskatoon*
- ['Islamophobia in Manitoba is real': New report outlines experiences of Muslim community](#) *CBC Manitoba*
- [Quilters in southern Manitoba offer warm welcome to Ukrainian refugees](#) *CBC Manitoba*

Ontario:

- [A pillar of Toronto's Jewish community, Julia Koschitzky leaves behind legacy of saying yes](#) *CBC Toronto*
- [Faith Matters: What does it mean to be free?: A Passover message](#) *St. Catherines Standard*
- [Indigenous, religious groups in northwestern Ontario look for steps forward after papal apology](#) *CBC Thunder Bay*

Quebec:

- [Le quart des adultes LGBTQI2+ québécois aurait fait l'objet d'une tentative de conversion](#) *Le Soleil*
- [McGill gives students' society ultimatum on its Palestine Solidarity Policy](#) *Montreal Gazette*
- [Opinion : La loi sur la laïcité de l'état marque un progrès pour la société](#) *Le Devoir*

Atlantic Provinces:

- [Meet Quakers in rural Nova Scotia who find wisdom in silent worship](#) *Saltwire Atlantic Canada*
- [Papal apology for residential school abuses draws strong reaction from Mi'kmaw leaders](#) *CBC Nova Scotia*
- [P.E.I. Muslim community returning to in-person Ramadan celebrations with COVID measures lifting](#) *Saltwire Atlantic Canada*

International:

- [From the cushion to the couch: Buddhism's powerful influence on psychotherapy](#) *Religion News Service*
 - [Nigerian atheist jailed for blasphemy over Facebook posts](#) *Al Jazeera*
 - [Skateboarding, mental health, and spiritual maintenance](#) *Surfer Today*
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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. Bryan Hillis](#) discusses:



*Border of five rosary prayer beads hanging down on black background with copy space
(iStockphoto)*

What do Christians in Canada believe?

In February 2022, the trucker convoy, referred to as “Freedom Convoy” by organizers, grabbed the attention of the media in Canada and beyond. It was comprised of truckers and people from various groups who gathered in Ottawa to protest government mandates regarding covid protection and pandemic related restrictions. Some convoy members [explicitly self-identified as “Christians”](#) as evidenced by biblical references displayed on vehicles, public participation by [several pastors of Christian congregations](#) and a regular morning ‘[march around Jericho](#)’ (the Parliament buildings).

Simultaneously in Christian churches across the country thousands of people, also self-identifying as “Christian”, worshipped, sang, participated in sacraments, and listened to readings and sermons based on the Christian gospel including the instruction from the book of Luke in the Bible, “[If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also](#)”. Most of these parishioners followed government mandates for vaccines and mask-wearing; some congregations even went beyond government mandates. (For example, in Saskatchewan, the government did not order Proof of Vaccination mandates for churches but some churches there required proof of vaccination during the worst of the waves. Similarly when the government mandates requiring the use of masks in indoor gatherings ended on February 28, 2022, member congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (Saskatchewan synod) both encouraged and required masks into March, at the time of writing.)

Two groups of Christians?

Both groups call themselves Christian yet it’s hard to imagine groups further apart in terms of their action, motivations and objectives. On the one hand, “[hold the line](#)” was the clarion call of the Ottawa protesters while in churches where the words of Luke were being pondered, the context was one of selflessness and care for the other. If an alien were to land on earth, how much of this could we explain? Certainly the term ‘Christian’ would be difficult given the actions and evidence provided by these two different populations, not to mention some of the [antagonistic commentary](#) between the groups.

Religious literacy can help us understand Christianity in Canada

[Religious literacy](#) plays at least a two-fold role here. Much of the self-identity of Christian groups is bound up, not only with belief systems, but with the history of the people involved, how they understand their position in society, what socio-economic factors have brought them to this place, and what they view as their future. Religious literacy is a way to unpack that great diversity of what it is to be Christian in Canada, even as we discuss whether a protest and occupation in the nation's capital was a good idea.

Also, religious literacy can help the participants, both the Christians among the protestors and those in the churches, understand the viewpoint of the other and talk with one another about their goals and aspirations. Such conversation is so badly needed among and between all religious groups in our world today.

Moving beyond a single story

It is clear that it is not possible to understand any group by only one set of characteristics, as doing so ignores the complexity in each one. In some ways this makes the pursuit of religious literacy an extremely difficult, yet even more important task for every person identifying with a religious (or non-religious) tradition; all traditions come with their own set of past development, present circumstances, and future aspirations. But following the threads of the traditions, their histories, the social, cultural and economic factors that contribute to these groups, whether they be in the Ottawa convoy or in the main-stream church down the road, gives us a richer understanding of our world and the neighbors who populate that world with us. It may also help us understand ourselves that much better too!



[Dr. Bryan Hillis](#), CCRL Board Member

To read other ways to use religious literacy, check out other Thought Corner contributions here: <https://ccrl-clrc.ca/religious-literacy-resources/thought-corner/>

Cultural/Holy days (April & May 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 April & May.



A photo from the article [P.E.I. Muslim community returning to in-person Ramadan celebrations with COVID measures lifting](#) above (Logan MacLean/Saltwire)

April 2022

- APR 2 – [Ramadan](#) begins at sunset (Muslims, until May 3)
- APR 10 – [Rama Navami](#) (Hindus)
- APR 14 – [Maundy Thursday](#) (various Christian groups), [Vaisakhi/Baisakhi](#) (Sikhs, Hindus),
- APR 15 – [Passover](#) begins at sunset (Jews, until Apr 23), [Good Friday](#) (Protestant and Catholic Christians)
- APR 16 – [Theravada New Year](#) (Theravada Buddhists), [Hanuman Jayanti](#) (Hindus)
- APR 17 – [Easter Sunday](#) (Protestant and Catholic Christians)
- APR 18 – [Birthday of Guru Anga Dev](#) (Sikhs)
- APR 20 – [First Day of Ridvan](#) (until April 21 Baha'i)
- APR 22 – [Good Friday](#) (Orthodox Christians), [Earth Day](#) (Humanists and various other groups)
- APR 24 – [Easter Sunday](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- APR 25 – [St. George's Day](#) (Christians in Newfoundland and Labrador)
- APR 28 – [Laylat-al-Qadr](#) (various Muslim groups)

May 2022

- MAY 1 – [Beltane](#) (Wiccans)
- MAY 8 – [St. Mark's Feast](#) (Coptic Christians)
- MAY 16 – [Vesak](#) or [Buddha Purnima](#) (Mahayana, Theravadan, and Riwoche Tibet Buddhism)
- MAY 24 – [Declaration of the Bab](#) (until May 23, Baha'i)
- MAY 29 – [Ascension of Bahá u' lláh](#) (until May 28, Baha'i)