

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

**June 2022 Newsletter**

**CCRL Updates**

Dear friends of CCRL,

It is always hard to describe “an average” Canadian. We are a diverse bunch with many connections internationally and across the country. This makes the news hard to grapple with at times, especially when we read about events like those in Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan noted in this newsletter. When we read them, we know that these are not just headlines. They are realities for fellow Canadians who have families or friends in those regions. Of course, the domestic headlines speak just as strong for many Canadians as inter-provincial and territorial immigration is even higher in some regions compared to international immigration.

As we enter into another summer under the pandemic, we wish you and your loved ones time to reconnect where possible and a time of rest. May the uplifting headlines below, like that of [Escaping Afghanistan](#), [Lessons from an Alberta couple celebrating 75 years together](#), [The art of the Inuit tattoo](#), among others, remind us all that religion, spirituality, and non-religious identity are also positive influences in people’s lives and society.

In the background, we will continue working on our exciting [projects this year](#). If you would like to [support](#), [collaborate](#), or [connect with us](#) in this new work, please reach out at any time. You are welcome.



Sincerely,

[Alice](#)

CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

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## The Pulse



*Masoomi and some Marefat students play in the snow during their first winter in Saskatoon. (Submitted by Maryam Masoomi). More in the article below: [Escaping Afghanistan](#)*

### ***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:**

- [10 spiritual hikes to rejuvenate your soul](#) *Broadview*
- [Being Two-Spirit and trans in Canada: How colonization shaped the way we view gender diversity](#) *Global News*
- [Canada Indigenous leaders want pope to visit more locations](#) *AP News*
- [Canadian government to introduce anti-Islamophobia representative](#) *CityNews Edmonton*
- [Religion in Canada isn't declining quite the way it's believed to be, Cardus, Angus Reid research finds](#) *The BC Catholic*

#### **Territories:**

- [Planning for papal visit to Canada continue as Pope Francis cancels Africa trip](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*

- [The art of the Inuit tattoo](#) *Nunatsiaq News*
- [Yellowknife City Council signs memo for university on Tin Can Hill](#) *CBC North*

#### British Columbia:

- [Douglas Todd: Secularism surges in Cascadia, for good and ill](#) *Vancouver Sun*
- [National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration returns to Surrey's Holland Park on June 21](#) *Surrey Now-Leader*
- [New podcast spotlights rural B.C.'s Doukhobor community, legacy of sect's leader](#) *CBC British Columbia*
- [North America's oldest Gurdwara offers a peek into the complex history of B.C.'s first Sikh settlers](#) *CBC British Columbia*

#### Alberta:

- [Edmonton tattoo artist who killed seven-year-old girl was avid conspiracy theorist on a 'spiritual awakening': former wife](#) *Edmonton Journal*
- [How a Lutheran and a United church ended up sharing Sunday service](#) *CBC Calgary*
- [Lessons from an Alberta couple celebrating 75 years together](#) *CBC Edmonton*

#### Prairies:

- [Book offers a picture of religious diversity in Manitoba](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*
- [Escaping Afghanistan](#) *CBC Radio Interactives*
- [How a century-old Canadian connection is bringing help, comfort to struggling Ukrainians](#) *CBC Manitoba*
- [Mennonite Central Committee makes important statement](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*

#### Ontario:

- [Former Oakville pastor Bruxy Cavey charged with sexual assault](#) *The Hamilton Spectator*
- [Lacrosse is more medicine than game for these high school students](#) *CBC Ottawa*
- [Toronto's Metropolitan Community Church wants to take its social-justice work to the next level with plan for a human-rights centre](#) *The Globe & Mail*
- [Wisdom: Indigenous Medicine Pouch a spiritual part of tradition shared among all cultures](#) *TB News Watch*

#### Quebec:

- [Bernard Drainville se portera candidat pour la CAQ](#) *Le Devoir*
- [How the CAQ is rebranding Quebec nationalism](#) *CBC News*
- [Une demande d'action collective contre les Frères Maristes pour des agressions sexuelles alléguées](#) *Le Soleil*

## Atlantic Provinces:

- [A renaissance man: Millefiore Clarkes reflects on Gerard Clarkes' life as an artist, philosopher, poet and father](#) *Saltwire*
- [How P.E.I. monks are continuing free food box campaign despite rising inflation](#) *CBC PEI*
- [Selling churches to pay for sins](#) *CBC News*

## International:

- [India: Diplomatic storm over BJP staff insult of Prophet Muhammad](#) *Al Jazeera*
- [Nigeria Owo church attack: Gunmen kill Catholic worshippers in Ondo](#) *BBC News*
- [Russian Orthodox Church sends its second most powerful figure on lower-ranking overseas posting](#) *Reuters*
- [St Kitts and Nevis: Govt invites people to pray for protection of Federation as Hurricane season commences](#) *Writeups24*
- [The danger of finding our meaning at work](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Why young protesters in Sri Lanka are wary of traditional politics](#) *DW*



## 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. Siebren Miedema](#), a CCRL Board Member, discusses:



## **Religious literacy is needed for understanding the past, the present, and with an eye on acting in the future**

### **The past**

Up till the sixties I grew up in a Dutch Reformed subculture and in a completely pillarized, that is segregated setting from the perspective of religion and worldview. During the last years of secondary school, sixteen to eighteen years old and in the midst of the roaring sixties, all Protestant secondary schools had opened their admittance policy for students. It was enough if parents and students respected the particular religious identity of a school. Teachers were allowed to doubt openly in class some of the Christian doctrines and spoke frankly about their membership of non-Christian political parties.

Religious and worldview difference and diversity entered into my world. Next to that I became a member of a peace movement and a Third World movement and joined forces there with all kinds of Christians: Mennonites, Lutherans, Remonstrants, and Roman Catholics, but also with humanists, atheists, agnostics, pacifists, and communists.

Then I realized and experienced for the first time in my life that besides being part of our own particular organization, community, or church we also need to cross our borders and join forces in the social and the public domain for a better, that is, a more humane world, on the basis of our different and at some points even conflicting worldviews. However, there was also the question: "Could I take such a broader perspective without alienating gradually from 'my own' group?" This experience and insight have become exemplary for me: being a member of a particular organization, group, or community should strengthen the identity of persons and should support them in making them ready and prepared for living, working, and learning together with these "others" in the social and public domain instead of locking them in. These "others" should no longer be perceived as a threat, but as a colorful enrichment.

### **The present**

As an expert on religion and worldview education, I participate together with my colleague Gerdien Bertram-Troost from my university in an European, so-called

Erasmus+-project on “Peace Education”. This project is organized by the Protestant Church of Germany (EKD) and funded by the European Union. The experts work together with teachers and students from several secondary schools in West-European and East-European countries. (See for information <https://www.gpenreformation.net/networkactivities/peace-education-period/schoolcope/>)

The experts have provided knowledge, insights and skills in dealing with digital media, and on peace education and religious education. With the help also from their teachers the students are developing *Actionbound* trajectories through which they lead students from the other schools along remarkable places in respect to peace and war, and possibly also including religious and worldview perspectives in the Actionbound (see for more on the use of Actionbound <https://en.actionbound.com/stepbystep>).

One of the East-European groups had already chosen a very interesting site related to the Second World War, more specifically focusing on the impact of the Holocaust in their city. Due to the pandemic most of the time of the project we were meeting via ZOOM. My colleague and I reacted very enthusiastically on their work. However, we had only one question: “Were there also religious aspects related to their chosen site?” Complete silence. Thus, we suggested that it might have been the case that clashes between Jewish believers with for example Roman Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox believers could have had influences as well. Of course, next to ethnic, cultural, political and historical aspects.

Understanding at present parts of a particular history, it is of great importance that students (but also adults) are able to develop their [religious literacy](#) and their religious sensitivity in the broad sense. How could we otherwise, for example really understand what at the moment is going on in the war between Russia and Ukraine?

## The future

Based on the astonishing and sometimes even depressing developments which happen on a global scale today (wars, climate changes, pollution, discriminations, genocide, et cetera), there is even more need in the future to teach and learn to live ethnically, culturally, religiously and qua gender peacefully together in the world. This, in my view, is a pedagogical, religious, political, societal and as well as global necessity, and families, schools and societies can play a major and positive role here. Religious literacy needs to be an indispensable link in all these domains.



[Dr. Siebren Miedema](#), Professor Emeritus in Religious Education in the Faculty of Religion and Theology and Professor Emeritus in Educational Foundations in the Faculty of Behavioral and Movement Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and 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/>

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## Cultural/Holy days (June & July 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 June & July.



A photo from [‘We hope this event provides some colour, joy and love for our community’ in Brighton](#) about a Pentecost Pride Worship Celebration in Brighton, Ontario (The Peterborough Examiner)

### June 2022

- JUNE 3 – [Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib](#) (Sikhs)
- JUNE 5 – [Pentecost](#) (some Christians)
- JUNE 6 – [Shavuot](#) (some Jews), [Whit Monday](#) (some Christians)
- JUNE 16 – [Corpus Christi](#) (some Christians)
- JUNE 21 – [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#), [World Humanist Day](#) (Humanists), [Summer Solstice](#) (various groups)
- JUNE 24 – [St. Jean Baptiste](#) (Catholics, predominantly in Quebec)

### July 2022

- JULY 1 – [Rath Yatra](#) (some Hindus)
- JULY 9 – [Martyrdom of the Báb](#) (Baha'is)
- JULY 10 – [Eid-al-Adha](#) (Muslims)
- JULY 13 – [Dharma Day](#) (Theravada Buddhists), [Guru Purinima](#) (some Hindus)
- JULY 24 – [Pioneer Day](#) (Latter Day Saints)
- JULY 29 – [Muharram](#), ends August 28 (some Muslims)