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Our Canada

*A practical guide to
bridging faith with
Canadian identity,
human rights,
belonging and values*



Contemporary Readings

A Handbook of Interfaith and Belonging: A Civic Education and Engagement Initiative

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Version: March 2014

Interfaith and Belonging: a civic education and engagement initiative

From 2011 to 2014, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's Interfaith and Belonging project team travelled across Canada to generate dialogue and civic engagement among and between faith-based communities. Our goals were to enhance civic participation and engagement, and explore the themes of identity, human rights, belonging and Canadian values.

This Handbook is an important outcome of that work.

It is part of a resource toolkit intended to provide a common framework to support the work of faith-based and ethnocultural groups as they connect with their constituencies on topics of interfaith, identity and civic participation.

This Handbook also serves as a useful resource for anyone with an interest in Canada's growing diversity, and serves as a foundation for building a deeper understanding of Canadian multiculturalism, inclusion, belonging and integration.

The Foundation's vision is the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and the promotion of Canadian identity, belonging and the mutuality of citizenship rights and responsibilities, leading to a more harmonious Canada.

We believe you will find the Interfaith and Belonging Toolkit a positive step along the way.



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Acknowledgements

a community of contributors

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation has worked closely with faith-based and ethnocultural communities to construct a national framework for understanding Canadian diversity, democratic values and traditions. Community leaders and members committed to contributing to a stronger democratic and harmonious Canadian society participated in a Leadership Circle, dedicated to exchanging ideas and best practices.

Consultations with field experts and community leaders were held to identify the issues, challenges and opportunities confronting interfaith and ethnocultural communities in their quest for cooperation, and the strengthening of Canadian identity and citizenship.

Our thanks go out to the many people who contributed their expertise, ideas and vision for Canada. The Interfaith and Belonging Toolkit and this Handbook are a tribute to their dedication.

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The Interfaith and Belonging Toolkit is dedicated to assisting communities in understanding their rights and responsibilities as residents and citizens of Canada, and exploring how best to encourage a sense of citizenship, pride and belonging for all Canadians.



Using the Toolkit facilitating important conversations

This Handbook is a part of the Interfaith and Belonging Toolkit, which is an outcome of initiatives undertaken by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to promote dialogue and civic engagement of diaspora and faith communities.

Read on its own, the Handbook provides an overview of Canadian history, faith and spirituality, and includes chapters on identity, human rights, Canadian values, belonging, and civic engagement.

Start a conversation

It is our hope that this Handbook provides the framework for community conversations about Canada and what it means to be Canadian, and that the Toolkit will support efforts to facilitate this

important conversation in communities across Canada.

Toolkit components

The full Toolkit can be accessed online and includes the following resources:

- Digital version of this Handbook
- Questions worth considering for each chapter
- Further readings and resources
- A guide to holding conversations related to this topic

The Toolkit will be updated on an ongoing basis.

By request, we will provide a DVD with the full set of resources.

Contact info@crrf-fcrr.ca

Chapter Guide

how this handbook is organized

The Introduction provides an overview of the history of Canada, multiculturalism, interculturalism and pluralism.

Chapter One provides an overview of faith and spirituality in Canada.

Chapter Two develops an overarching framework on issues related to identity, with suggestions on measures to create greater social harmony and peace-building in our lives.

Chapter Three outlines human rights issues in Canada, the development of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, competing human rights

and interests, discrimination and landmark cases.

Chapter Four discusses Canadian values.

Chapter Five provides insights into our sense of belonging, either as a member of a group or otherwise, and how such belonging shapes our multicultural society and the inevitable challenges that go with it.

Chapter Six encourages Canadians to consider a participatory role in active citizenry.

Access the full toolkit: www.crrf-fcrr.ca





This land called Canada living in harmony with the natural world

Pre-confederation

Canada, a land rich with culture, language and history, was first inhabited by Aboriginal Peoples – comprised of a multitude of distinct Indigenous Nations which today are known under three general groupings: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The Aboriginal Peoples of Canada occupied the lands of North America long before the arrival of Europeans, with explorers from Scandinavia, Iceland and Greenland on the eastern shores as early as the 11th century. Economic realities and International Treaties between Aboriginal Peoples and Europeans resulted in inter-marriages and convergence of culture which eventually gave birth to an entirely unique cultural and linguistic group that became known as the Métis.

Much more than simple hunter gathers, First Nations were ingenious stewards of their Sovereign Territories, developing sophisticated ways of cultivating natural resources according to Natural Law, resulting in more abundance for future generations. Regardless of the region in which they lived or the Nation to which they belonged, First Nations people believed that the traditions and values they cherished came from the Creator, and that human beings should live in harmony with the natural world.

Things began to change at the beginning of the 15th century, with French and English explorations bring-

ing settlements to eastern Canada, developing trade and establishing colonies. French interests in the New World began in 1524 and before long, French fishing vessels travelled across the Atlantic and along the St. Lawrence River to trade and make alliances with First Nations.

By the beginning of the next century in 1608, Quebec City would become the first permanent settlement and the capital of New France, with the primary bases being in Acadia and the St. Lawrence Valley.

In 1583, the English claimed St. John's, Newfoundland as the first North American English colony. By the early 1600's the British had established several colonies and began settlement on a more expansive scale.

During the Seven Years War, which ended in 1763, Britain made key military alliances with Aboriginal Peoples, allowing them to defeat France and forcing France to cede a large number of its North American colonies to Britain. This military reliance on Aboriginal Peoples led to King George of Britain issuing the Royal Proclamation of 1763, assuring his Aboriginal allies that their ownership of land would be respected, and setting the direction for Treaty-making that cast the Constitutional foundations upon which Canada would be built.



Lake Laberge, Yukon Territories

National multiculturalism policy an integral part of our national identity

In order for Britain's North American colonies to survive, their relations with the First Nations needed to remain stable and mutually beneficial. Therefore, the Indian Department, which became the primary point of contact between the First Nations and the colonies, was established. Only the Crown could purchase land from a First Nation. All other land purchases were dismissed as invalid.

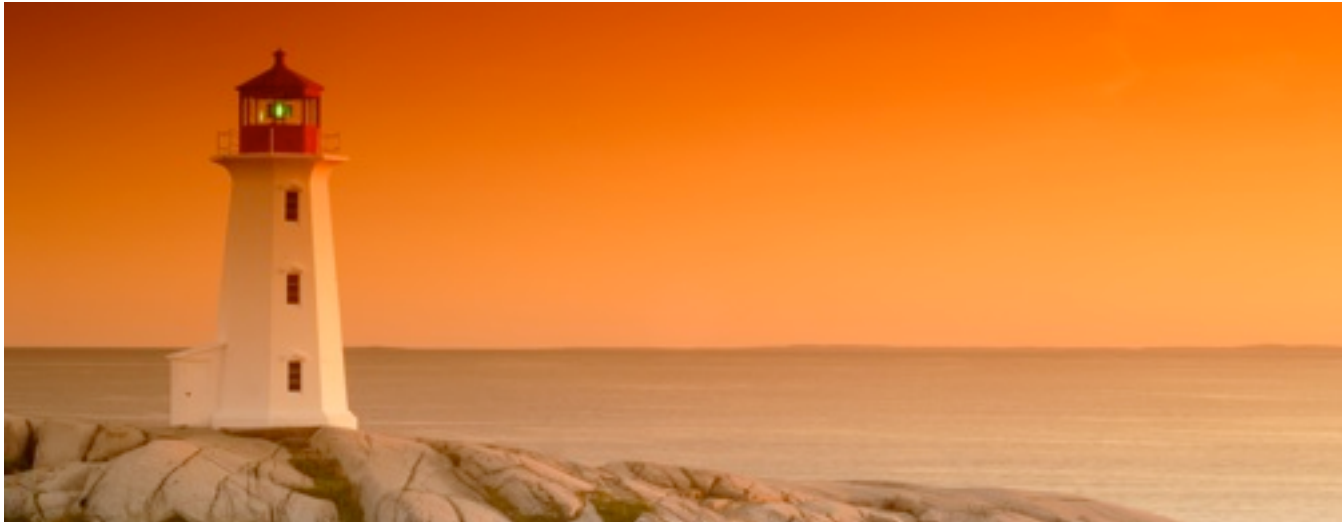
The new British rulers retained much of the social, cultural and property rights of the French-speaking inhabitants, guaranteeing the Catholic faith and French civil law. The number of English settlers rose dramatically after the American Revolution and the arrival of the Loyalists. Treaties were formed to legitimize settler co-existence in First Nations territories. These Treaties were sacred international bonds made with the Great Spirit as witness to orient the relationship as one of brotherhood. The First Nations fought alongside the British colonists against the American invasion.

On July 1, 1867, the Dominion, which indicated Canada's status as a self-governing colony of the British Empire, was formed and a federation in its own right was born.

Immigration

Throughout its early years, Canada favoured immigration from British, Anglo-American and western European sources. In the first half of the 20th century, European immigrants came to Canada from such countries as Poland, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, Ireland and Portugal, and helped build the country and the economy. During the mid-half of the century and on, Canada attracted immigrants from diverse regions of the world such as the Caribbean, Middle East, South America, Africa and Asia. In the early 1960s, many Canadians grew increasingly dissatisfied with the predominantly Anglo-centric character of their political, economic and social institutions. Although much of the discontent emanated from Québec, the First Nations and various ethnic groups were also requesting changes.

In response, the Federal government, in 1963, appointed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, whose mandate was to recommend steps to develop the Canadian Federation between the English and the French. The Commission's report reaffirmed Canada's bilingual and bicultural reality. One of the most important recommendations was to make Canada an officially bilingual nation, achieved through the introduction of the *Official Languages Act*, and the encouragement of students across the country to learn both official languages.



Pluralism in Canada

unity and strength through diversity

In 1971, the Federal government, under the leadership of then Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, took a direction different than the Commission's recommendations and pursued a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework". Hence, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a national multiculturalism policy.

The policy was an attempt to reconcile two competing visions of Canada: the dualistic view, that, in addition to the Aboriginal Peoples, Canada is comprised of two principal founding groups; and the pluralistic view, which sees Canada as comprised of a wide variety of cultural groups. The policy encouraged all Canadians to accept cultural pluralism and to participate fully and equally in Canadian society. Multiculturalism remains an integral part of our national identity and, as such, Canada has been unique among western democracies in its commitment to this ideal.

By 1981, as Canada's racial diversity was beginning to grow, more attention was being devoted to racial discrimination, and race relations. In 1982, with the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, multicultural policies were firmly entrenched in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guaranteeing, among others, equal protection and benefit of the law, and freedom from discrimination on the basis of, for example, gender, religion, racial and ethnic origin.

As such, multiculturalism was recognized in Section 27 of the *Canadian Charter* in 1982. An objective of Canada's multiculturalism policy was to foster a more just society, with early multicultural programs emphasizing cultural pluralism. Over time, the shift in focus to equity and anti-discrimination measures widened the meaning of multiculturalism to include issues relating to anti-racism. These programs, strengthened by policy initiatives, have been effective in bringing about advancements in opportunities for minority groups.

In 1988, Bill C-93, the *Multiculturalism Act*, was passed and became the first formal legislative vehicle for Canada's multicultural policy. *The Multiculturalism Act* affirms the policy of the government to ensure that every Canadian receives equal treatment by the government which respects and celebrates diversity.

The *Act* went beyond simply guaranteeing equal opportunity for all Canadians, regardless of origin. It emphasized the right of Canada's ethnic, racial and religious minorities to preserve and share their unique cultural heritage, and underlined the need to address race relations and eliminate systemic inequalities.

Provincial legislation

Each of Canada's provinces has a recognized multicultural policy in place. Saskatchewan was the first Canadian province to adopt legislation on multiculturalism, which was called The *Saskatchewan Multiculturalism Act of 1974*, which has since been replaced by a new, revised *Multiculturalism Act* (1997). Ontario followed in 1977 by putting in place a policy that promoted cultural activity, which became an Act in 1990, and the final province being Newfoundland and Labrador in 2008.

Quebec differs from the other nine provinces in that its policy focuses on "interculturalism" rather than multiculturalism, wherein diversity is strongly encouraged, but subsumed under the notion that it is within the framework that establishes French as the public language.

Quebec's policy of interculturalism, which was developed in reaction to the federal multiculturalism policy, recognizes the reality of the province's identity as a distinct Francophone community, where the French language and culture hold paramount importance. For example, immigrant children must attend French language schools and most signage must be in French.

In 1990, Quebec released *Let's Build Quebec Together: A Policy Statement on Integration and Immigration*, which reinforced the notions of Quebec as a French-speaking society; Quebec as a democratic society wherein each person is expected to contribute to public life, and Quebec as a pluralistic society which respects the diversity of cultures within a democratic framework. In 2005, Quebec developed the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities with the primary function being to foster closer cultural relations among the people of Quebec, and to support cultural communities in their quest to participate fully in Quebec society.

Pluralism in Canada

Pluralism in Canada is based on the recognition that there can be unity and strength through diversity, and that each individual is equal and has a right to participate as a full member of society. Throughout Canada's history, the accommodation of regional, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity has, over time, become a priority, and values such as freedom, democracy and human rights have been addressed through an ongoing dialogue among different communities. Most recently, Citizenship and Immigration's Multiculturalism Program focuses on building an integrated, socially cohesive society and making institutions more responsive to the needs of Canada's diverse populations. These aims are consistent with addressing broader social inclusionary processes that influence inequities, and impact on nation-building as a whole.

Church and State

The subsequent chapter will elaborate in greater detail on a broad spectrum of religions in Canada, but it is important to underscore the notion of Church and State and why a separation between the two is necessary in a multicultural democracy.

Today, Canada has no official church, and the federal government formally supports religious pluralism. Although Canada's official ties to religion are few, there is a recognition of the existence of God, and even the supremacy of God, given the preamble to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Nevertheless, the rise of immigration from non-Christian nations has led to a greater separation of state and religion.

When a secular government is religiously neutral, it is therefore possible to guarantee freedom of religion for everyone, and not just for one group over another. Canada is becoming increasingly diverse with respect to religion, and perhaps more so in large urban centres across the country than anywhere else, because it is there that minority groups and new immigrants reside and congregate. The place of religion and religious expression in the public sphere has become a more active topic of debate, especially in Quebec.



Reference to Aboriginal spirituality through ceremonies are part of Canadian political and public life.

CHAPTER ONE

The following short summaries represent very brief introductions.

Vancouver Island,
British Columbia.



Religion, Faith and Spirituality reflecting the mosaic

In learning about the diversity of religion, faith and spirituality in Canada, it is helpful to recognize some common features. There is usually a tradition, or set of stories and practices, transmitted orally or in writing. Some attribute to a specific founder or set of founders, the initial transmission of these traditions. Such founding figures are considered great spiritual teachers, prophets or messengers who declare themselves emissaries of a divine power. In some cases, founding figures come to be seen as divine themselves. In cultures with written texts, the practices and principles, traditions and core values are believed to be contained in some authoritative set of sacred writings, either originated by or first systematized in a new way by the founding figures.

ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

THE BAHAI' FAITH

BUDDHISM

CHRISTIANITY

HINDUISM

ISLAM

JUDAISM

THE SIKH FAITH

There seems to be one common principle that is shared by all, the “Golden Rule”, which enjoins believers to treat others as they wish to be treated themselves.

Belief in God or the Divine is commonly upheld, although some seek to preserve ethical values and ritual practices without linking them to the Divine. The will of God in religions that uphold this belief is often represented in the words and deeds of their founders, or key ancient figures, and those words and deeds reflect the central teachings which are, in turn, given expression in sacred or holy writings. Holy days are associated with history, traditions and accepted ritual practices, as well as a community place of worship, such as a temple, mosque, synagogue, gudwara, church or centre.

Traditional Aboriginal spirituality has its own distinctive character rooted in the cultures of Aboriginal nations and influenced by the unique features and relationships found in individual Aboriginal communities. Some Elders declare their spirituality not to be religious, but rather a celebration of life and an honouring of natural law. Respect and honouring the gift of life found in everyone unites Aboriginal ways of knowing with the similar teachings found in many religions.

The major world religions have communities of believers from diverse ethnic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds, but with a religious identity that provides a sense of allegiance beyond particular national, cultural or linguistic identities. At the same time, distinct cultural traditions and the geographical origins of believers can reflect a diversity of particular practices that is otherwise global in character. Such diversity generates the multiple identities of many Canadians, about whom stereotypes and summaries are invariably mistaken. Nevertheless, there are groups that try to avoid significant contact with other Canadians. This remains a question to examine in the context of belonging and participation.

Despite periods of discrimination in Canada’s history, a respect for minorities and relatively open immigration policy has led to increased diversity in religion, faith and spirituality in Canada – especially over the past few decades. While there is a decline in membership and attendance at places of worship, and though many Canadians have only individual spiritual beliefs and commitments – or none at all – there are vibrant communities across Canada that reflect religion, faith and spirituality throughout the world.

Many of the teachings, practices and institutions of religions remain stable over centuries, but religions also change and evolve over time. Such change, and the diversity of religion, faith and spirituality, make any easy summary difficult, if not misleading. The following short summaries represent very brief, but hopefully helpful, introductions to faith and spirituality in Canada.

A family of diverse traditions, the practices and beliefs of Aboriginal Spirituality respect all reality as sacred. Nature or the earth provide compelling lessons about what the sacred means and requires of human beings.

The Medicine Wheel, Circle of Life, the Four Powers or Directions, pipe ceremonies, respect for Elders, prayer and fasting, ceremonial dances, “sweats”, pow-wows, honour songs, and the use of the eagle staff, sweet grass, tobacco or other sacred objects play significant roles in Aboriginal spirituality.

ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

Aboriginal spiritual traditions have been transferred through oral instructions and personal experience for millennia. With the arrival of others to the land occupied by Aboriginal Peoples, attitudes of superiority were behind laws which proscribed Aboriginal spirituality, prevented the holding of sacred ceremonies, and established patterns of cultural dominance that aimed to replace Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices. Despite such oppression, Aboriginal spirituality was safeguarded, often in the wisdom, example and oral tradition of Elders.

Important to Aboriginal spirituality is respect for all of creation, both animate and what is perceived as inanimate. The understanding that humans are inextricably part of the web of life – and what we do to that web we do to ourselves – is also fundamental to most Aboriginal ways of knowing.

Specific responsibilities and beliefs are associated with specific clans or bands (or tribes), and vary in their details. Concepts like salvation, preaching or proselytizing are absent in such traditions. Though there is no clergy or priestly class, some individuals become known as gifted in a spiritual sense, and their dreams and visions inspire others. Elders are accorded respect, and oral history identifies some spiritual teachers in some Aboriginal traditions.

In Canada, among many Aboriginal traditions, tobacco is used as a sacred item, sometimes burned, as are other sacred herbs such as sage, sweet grass or cedar, depending on the region. The circle is given importance as a way of meeting without placing anyone above another, and can be found in the medicine wheel used in many traditions. Sometimes a “spirit lodge” or other structure or places of heightened sacred power reflect a respect for sacred space, with the four directions, or four winds, also given respect and significant symbolic meaning.

Ceremonies are important, sometimes understood in ways similar to how other religious traditions understand prayer. Fasting, a feature common to all the great religions, sometimes features in ceremonies or rituals. Ceremonial life varies across Aboriginal nations, but is traditionally related to the cycle of the year and changes in nature, to hunting and harvesting, to offering thanks to the spirit world, to the spirits of animals, fish and plants, sacrificed for the benefit of people. Rich and complex creation myths are other features of Aboriginal spiritual traditions, as are dreams and visions. Following a spiritual quest at the time of adolescence, guardian spirits, referred to sometimes as relatives, are often adopted by individuals with a spiritual attachment to a particular set of skills, whether hunting, healing or leading others.

Across different Aboriginal groups, there are several common practices. The Spirit Lodge (sometimes known as the “Sweat Lodge”) involves particular rituals that can last several days, and the Sacred Pipe ceremony and powwows involve specific dress and dances with spiritual significance.

In the past thirty to forty years, there has been a renaissance in Aboriginal spirituality. This has included the re-emergence of such practices or rituals as the Dream Dance drum, the shaking tent ritual among the descendants of the peoples who spoke Algonkian dialects, or the Anishinaabek (Algonquin, Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatami) of the central-western Great Lakes, as well as the revival of the Midéwiwin religious movement. However, examples of spiritual oppression still occur in a variety of circumstances. In some cases, intolerance, directed at Aboriginal youth, has even surfaced in the school systems by people in authority.

Among the Haudenosaunee (Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca and Tuscarora), the Great Law of Peace is the oral constitution that serves as the spiritual, political, social and cultural framework. It is linked closely with the powerful role of women in their societies, and is based on matrilineal kinship. The roles of the various clans are directed by clan mothers. Spiritual ceremonies are celebrated through the “thanksgiving cycle” expressed at designated times through the year.

The Niitsitapi religion of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Siksika (Blackfeet), Kainai (Blood), and Piikani (Peigan), are Algonkian-speaking peoples who live on the western Prairies, and whose spirituality involves traditionally-held one or more large gatherings. One example is the summer Okan (known popularly as the “Sun Dance”), which brings together many tribes in ritual dances involving fasting and other ceremonies lasting as long as four days and nights. The Sun Dance, or Okan, was banned by government law through much of the 20th century but has re-emerged, adjusting to modern life.

On the north-western coast of Canada, Kwakwaka’wakw spiritual practices are similar to other coastal Aboriginal traditions. These Aboriginal Peoples, with rich, natural endowments of food and moderate climate, developed a vivid ceremonial culture that included degrees of hierarchy unknown in other Aboriginal communities. The potlatch (from the Chinook word for giving, “patshat!”) involves feasting, dances, singing, masks, costumes, drums, and practices that involve giving away one’s wealth. The spiritual practices of the west coast Aboriginal Peoples have re-emerged more recently than the Niitsitapi and Asnishinaabek practices, and long after the early 19th century adaptations associated with the Longhouse Tradition of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations).

Much of the vitality of Aboriginal spirituality is today related to concerns about the first responsibility to the Creator, that is to protect the capacity of Mother Earth to host all forms of life. Younger Aboriginal Canadians, and the development of study programs in schools and at universities, as well as a recovery of the rich Elder traditions, have helped to make Aboriginal spirituality an important factor in Canadian religious life. Reference to Aboriginal spirituality through prayer or ceremonies are part of Canadian political and public life.

Central teachings are the oneness of God, the oneness and unity of the human family, equality of women and men, harmony of science and religion, importance of eliminating prejudice of all kinds, establishing justice and supporting universal education.

Personal laws include daily obligatory prayer, a 19-day fasting period, March 2 to 20, prohibition against alcohol and intoxicants, backbiting and gambling.

There are no Baha'i clergy. The community is administered by democratically elected local, national and international councils or Spiritual Assemblies.

THE BAHA'I FAITH

“Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth ... The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”

– from “Tablets of Baha'u'llah”

The Baha'i Faith is considered by Baha'is to be the fourth of the Abrahamic, monotheistic religions after Judaism, Christianity and Islam, each of whose founders, Moses, Christ and Muhammad, are considered by Baha'is to be messengers or “manifestations” of God. Krishna, Buddha, and Zoroaster are likewise considered to be manifestations of God. The series of messengers of God, represented by these universal educators of humanity, are understood by Baha'is to be an historical process known as the “progressive revelation” of God's will and purpose to humanity. Each of the world's religions is a part of what is essentially one religion of God and humankind.

The Baha'i Faith now numbers about five million followers worldwide, with communities in virtually every country of the world.

Emerging in Iran, or Persia as it was then called, in the mid 1900s, the Baha'i Faith had two Founders, both considered prophets or messengers of God: the Bab (meaning the Gate) and Baha'u'llah (meaning the Glory of God).

The Bab, 1819-1850, announced that humanity was entering a new era in history, one that will be characterized by the unity of humankind. He also heralded the imminent appearance of a second manifestation of God, Baha'u'llah, 1817-1892.

After announcing his mission in 1844, the Bab was imprisoned and executed in Tabriz in 1850. Historians estimate that as many as 20,000 followers of the Bab were executed in the years before and after his execution. Baha'u'llah, whose given name was Mirza Husayn-'Ali, was a member of a noble family, his father serving in the court of the Persian Shah. Choosing a life devoted to God, rather than accepting a position at the court, he became a follower of the Bab.

While imprisoned in Tehran in 1852, Baha'is believe God revealed Himself to Baha'u'llah as the most recent of God's manifestations. Baha'u'llah and his family were exiled to the Ottoman Empire, first in 1853 to Baghdad in what is now known as Iraq, then in 1863 to Istanbul and Adrianople, and finally he was incarcerated in the prison-city of Akka (Acre) in the Holy Land, in what is now northern Israel. Baha'u'llah died in 1892, still under house arrest. The spiritual and administrative centre of the Baha'i Faith is located in the twin cities of Akka and Haifa, Israel.

Baha'u'llah's son, 'Abdu'l-Baha, was named the authorized interpreter of the Baha'i Faith. The writings of all three central figures of the Baha'i Faith – the Bab, Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha – are considered authoritative for Baha'is. Baha'is do not have rituals, nor are there Baha'i clergy. There is a local community gathering, the "Feast", every 19 days. The Baha'i calendar year is divided into 19 months of 19 days each (361 days in total), with the four remaining days considered as Intercalary Days (or Ayyam-i-Ha), set aside for visits with friends, the sick and gift-giving.

There are nine Holy Days on which work is suspended should employers agree: March 21, the Baha'i New Year (at the time of the vernal equinox, and known as Naw-Ruz); April 21, 29 and May 2, three Holy Days in the 12-day period known as Ridvan marking the anniversary of Baha'u'llah's public announcement of his mission; May 23, the Declaration of the Bab, marking the anniversary of the Bab's announcement of his mission; May 29, the Ascension of Baha'u'llah; July 9, the Martyrdom of the Bab (the day

the Bab was executed); October 20, the Birth of the Bab, and November 12, the Birth of Baha'u'llah.

In addition to those Holy Days, there is a Fast, during which there is no eating or drinking between sunrise and sunset. This takes place on the last month of the Baha'i calendar year. The Fast and the daily obligatory prayer(s) are considered the most important Baha'i laws, and are compared by Baha'u'llah to the sun and the moon of the Baha'i Revelation. A Baha'i chooses to say either one short obligatory prayer or a long obligatory prayer each day, or else a medium prayer, said three times each day. Other laws consist of restrictions on alcohol and illegal drugs, the importance of avoiding backbiting and gossip, gambling, promiscuity and lying, while doing one's best to uphold the virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, courage, compassion and a host of other virtues. Baha'i marriage requires the consent of the couple, a man and a woman, and the consent of their parents.

While service to humanity is prized by all Baha'is, other principles include the equality of women and men, the harmony of science and religion, the importance of obedience to government, and the need for universal education and the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty. Science and religion are both considered systems of knowledge that should not contradict each other, and that if a religious view contradicts science it should be set aside as superstition. Human beings have an eternal soul, and the reality of this life consists of both material and spiritual dimensions - both of which should be respected as human beings learn how to advance materially as well as spiritually towards a global civilization that is peaceful, prosperous, just and united.

The Baha'i Community of Canada began in 1898, with a small Baha'i community established in Montreal in 1902. 'Abdu'l-Baha visited Montreal in 1912, and would later write, "The future of Canada, whether from a material or spiritual standpoint, is very great."

In 1948, the first National Spiritual Assembly of Canada was elected in the same manner that Local Baha'i Assemblies are elected, and in 1949 the National Spiritual Assembly was incorporated by a special Act of Parliament. Today, more than 30,000 Baha'is live in Canada in over 1,200 localities.

Founded by Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, in the sixth century BCE in Nepal to the north of India.

Centred on the “Three Jewels” of Buddhism (Buddha, the ideal model; Dharma, the overall way of life, and Sangha, the community of Buddhist monks and nuns), teachings involve an understanding of the “Four Noble Truths”, that: (1) all life involves suffering, (2) caused by desire, but (3) desire can be overcome through (4) following the “Noble Eight-fold Path”.

BUDDHISM

“Bhikkhus, the middle way, as taught by the Buddha, after avoiding the two extremes, gives knowledge and wisdom and leads to calm higher knowledge, enlightenment, nirvana.”

– from the Pali Canon

Born around 563 BC in southern Nepal, close to the border with India, Sidhartha Gautama became known as the Buddha, or “the Enlightened One”. Legend tells of his miraculous birth, how he lived a comfortable life in a noble family, protected by his father from seeing any suffering in the world. Eventually he saw the four sights of illness, old age, death and a holy man. This prompted him to leave his life of luxury and seek understanding of life, eventually overcoming suffering by achieving enlightenment, or nirvana, meditating under the Boddhi tree in the north of Bihar State in India.

The Buddha taught for forty-five years and a community of followers, called the Sangha, preserved his teachings. Buddhism eventually spread from Northern India to the rest of India, and to Sri Lanka, China and beyond, including Korea, and Japan, which today has an active Buddhist community. The Buddha’s discourses are known collectively as the Sutra. Buddha’s first sermon, called “Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma”, outlines the Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold Path, the foundation of Buddhist teachings known as the Dharma, written down 400 years after the Buddha’s death.

The Four Noble Truths are that suffering is universal, craving and desire cause suffering, suffering can be relieved, and following the Eight-fold Path will relieve suffering. The Eight-fold Path includes right knowledge, right intention, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. One may become enlightened by following the Buddha's teachings and realizing the illusory nature of the world.

There are two schools of Buddhism, one called the Theravada School (sometimes called the Hinayana School), the oldest form of Buddhism, a form that stresses the renunciation of the world and the life of asceticism. It is not common in Canada. The second is the Mahayana School, relatively common in Canada. Meditation and devotional practice is central in Buddhist worship, and service to others, avoidance of killing, lying and stealing are, likewise, fundamental teachings.

Among Buddhist Holy Days or Festivals are St. Shinran Memorial Day (specific to the Shin form of Mahayana Buddhism) on January 18, Nirvana Day on February 15, Vaisakha (or Wesak, sometime called Buddha Day), a full-moon festival in April or early May which commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Guatama Buddha, Obon service (or ancestors day) on July 12 (or August 16-17 for the Zen form of Mahayana Buddhism).

Buddhism was brought to Canada in the 19th century by Chinese and Japanese immigrant workers, arriving first in British Columbia. Many of the children and grandchildren of these new Canadians moved across the country, and other Buddhists arrived from East, Southeast and Central Asia so that today there are Buddhist Temples across Canada. Some Buddhists call themselves Confucians or Daoists. More than 350,000 Buddhists were counted in the 2011 Canadian census.

In recent decades, Buddhists in Canada have come not just from Japan and China, but from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, South Africa, the Caribbean, Korea, Thailand and Sri Lanka, as well as India, many with greater knowledge of the moral values and traditions but less precise knowledge of the religion of Buddhism itself. Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist congregations have emerged, creating a diversity of Buddhist communities. Temples, meditation rooms, shrine rooms, and a variety of celebrations, meditation classes, chanting, learning forest traditions, and other activities are found throughout Canada, often each with different features of Buddhism emphasized.

About 50% of the Buddhists in Canada are of Chinese background with temples built in the pagoda style, with considerable attention to beautiful architecture, landscaping, altars, silk paintings and ornate carvings. There is less attention to distinctions between the Tiantai, Huayan, Chan and Pure Land schools and greater emphasis on community, vegetarian practices and charity, than any exclusive attention given chanting and meditation.

There is a challenge in describing the many diverse groups and communities, the different national and ethnic backgrounds of Buddhists, the mix of Asian and non-Asian adherents, the difference between refugee communities, like Tibetan Buddhists, and immigrant communities, and changes in second-generation children of Buddhists towards mixing Zen-like practices or other meditation approaches. This makes for a varied and complex character to the overall Buddhist community of Canada. In recent years Tibetan Buddhism, though not a large community in Canada, has been profiled more in the media because of the Dalai Lama, while Buddhism generally has become a fascination for many non-Asians, through Hollywood films and popular books, as well as notable international personalities like Aung San Suu Kyi.

Founded by the followers of Jesus two thousand years ago. The sacred book is the Bible, including the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Monotheistic, but Trinitarian in its conception of God as the Father, Christ the Son or incarnation of God, and the Holy Spirit. Beliefs centre around the virgin birth of Christ, that his death was a sacrifice for the salvation of our souls, and that Christ rose from the dead, appeared to his disciples and ascended to heaven.

Central practices of most Christians include baptism - a symbolic cleansing from sin and entry into the Christian church, confirmation of baptism on entering adult life and full church membership, and communion - the ceremonial sharing of bread and wine (in some denominations) in memory of Jesus' Last Supper - and, for Catholics, partaking in the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body of Christ.

CHRISTIANITY

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

- from the Gospel according to John in the New Testament

Christianity is the world's largest and most widely spread religion. Originating in Galilee in what was called Judea around the time of his birth, Jesus of Nazareth's life and words were the inspiration for its development. Considered the “Son of God” by Christians, his life, death, resurrection and teachings are recounted in the New Testament of the Bible. Christians believe God was incarnated in the person of Jesus; he was given the title Christos or “messiah” in Greek, who was crucified and then rose from the dead. Christians understand that the sacrifice of his life was meant to save human beings from their sins, and provide a way for eternal salvation.

The life of Jesus is told in the New Testament. Christians believe his mother, Mary, was a virgin, and celebrate his birth as Christmas. He began preaching around the age of 30 in the Galilee, eventually traveling to Jerusalem where, after a “Last Supper” with his disciples, an event later symbolized in the church ceremony as “taking of communion”, he was arrested and crucified on the cross. Now understood by his followers as “the Christ”, his death is commemorated as Good Friday, and his resurrection as Easter, which follows 40 days of Lent - a period of penance, sometimes fasting, and prayer.

Roman Catholic Christianity

In modern times, the holding of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII (23rd) was a signal event marking a greater openness to the world, though conservative tendencies remained alive, and Pope John Paul II (2nd), originating from Poland, expressed both an activist role in modern politics as well as adherence to certain conservative elements of Roman Catholicism.

The Canadian Catholic community today represents the largest proportion of Canadian Christians, though that wasn't always the case. The granting of freedom of worship to Catholics in the *Quebec Act* of 1774 was an unusual step at the time, but one which the British felt would assure loyalty against the possibility of an American attack. It was a more positive measure of religious tolerance than the deportation a decade or two earlier, of Roman Catholic Acadians from Nova Scotia. In 1792 England passed the *Canadian Constitution Act*, dividing British North America into Protestant Upper Canada and Catholic Lower Canada.

French Canadians in Quebec were not the only Catholics in Canada. In the 19th century, many Irish Catholics settled in Newfoundland, a population that spread to other Atlantic provinces and to Lower and Upper Canada. Later, Catholics from Scotland, Germany, the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Italy and Portugal immigrated to Canada. Ukrainian Catholics, in union with Rome, settled across the Prairies and established a thriving community of 200,000 by the end of the 20th century, with a smaller number, members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, established in 1918. Some 150,000 Italian Catholics lived in Canada by the outset of World War I, and in the years following the Second World War, another 500,000 Italian Catholics came to Canada, many settling in Toronto. Today there are well over a million Italian Catholics in Canada. Portuguese Catholic immigration, much from the Azores, brought that particular population to more than 140,000, the majority in Toronto and Montreal. Latin American, African and Asian Catholics (especially Filipino, Chinese and Tamil) have added even greater diversity to the pluralistic character of Roman Catholicism in Canada.

The retreat of Catholic institutional life in Quebec during the 1960's "Revolution Tranquille" (the Quiet

Revolution) echoed dramatic changes in Catholicism around the world - much of the spirit of the times articulated in the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65. A less hierarchical structure of the church, greater ecumenical and interfaith relations, more local control, some greater openness to women in the lay church, manifestations of pentecostal Catholicism, but also tensions fueled by the sexual revolution, stories of child and sexual abuse among priests, demands for even more dramatic changes, all have characterized the last few decades of Roman Catholic life in Canada.

Protestant Christianity

Protestant Christianity began with the Reformation in the 16th century though, for some Protestant religious communities, their beginnings go back to earlier times. Common to the Protestant churches was a criticism of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, an insistence on the Bible as central to worship, and the principles "by grace alone, by faith alone and by scripture alone". Up until the last decade or two, Protestants outnumbered Catholics in Canada, represented by many different Protestant denominations, each varying in the time of their historical emergence as well as in specific features of church doctrine.

The emphasis on individual believers and the lay community explains the diversification and multiplicity of churches considered to be Protestant. Generally, Protestant churches adopted church services that were less elaborate, wherein the liturgical sacrament with bread and wine in the Catholic Church and other Catholic rituals became less important, and church music and hymns, more important. Another consequence was the emergence of many lay organizations loosely associated with the church, and in which political, social and economic pursuits could be understood as religious vocations - daily life itself now understood as a religious calling. Related to these historical developments has been the influence of Protestantism on the emergence of modern secularism, and a public sphere from which religion has been largely exiled to the private sphere.

Following the early Protestant settlements in Canada made up of Anglicans and French Huguenots, settlers from a wide number of Protestant churches (the Church of Wales, Danish Lutherans, Church of Scotland, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Quakers,

Lutherans from Germany, Calvinists, Moravians in Labrador, Baptists, Methodists and German Mennonites) came to Canada.

Unlike the pattern in Britain, where the Church of England dominated, the Anglican Church in Canada did not dominate in a climate of religious freedom that saw the establishment of many Protestant communities. Protestant immigration to Canada continued into the 20th century with Lutherans from Scandinavia, Pentecostals, Disciples of Christ, Salvation Army, Christian Reform and Free Christian Reformed from the Netherlands; and after 1967, Chinese Independents, Korean Presbyterians, Japanese Anglicans, Christians from India, Presbyterians from Ghana and Pentecostals from Haiti and Latin America.

Aboriginal conversions were part of the colonial mechanism, originally with the right to own a firearm, property, or to conduct business, granted only with conversion to Christianity. Today many Aboriginal people are members of various Christian churches, with Anglicans and Roman Catholics numbering the most, and then Moravians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and the United Church in the 20th century. With the government, many of these churches, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, established residential schools separating Aboriginal children from their families and cultures in order to assimilate them into the dominant culture and specific religious identifications. That attempt at cultural assimilation, along with thousands of cases of physical and sexual abuse, represented the worst consequence of this Christianization of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, leading to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the early part of the second decade of the 21st century.

While there was a proliferation of denominations within the main churches of Protestant Christianity, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Congregationalists and Mennonites gradually unified their churches to a large extent in the late 19th and early 20th century. The United Church of Canada represented an even more ambitious union, bringing together Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Local Union Churches in 1925 to become the largest Protestant Church in Canada.

By the end of the 20th century, the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada represented the cooperative and ecumenical sentiments of the many divisions within Protestant Christianity, though there may be as many as 500 separate Christian churches in Canada today.

The Christian denominations in Canada became distinct from their European counterparts, and many organizations and associations grew out of these churches and came to dominate Canadian society in the middle years of the 20th century. They had, before that, established schools, colleges and universities though, in the latter decades of the 20th century, almost all of these educational initiatives became public schools, colleges and universities, no longer associated (except in name sometimes) with their religious origins. Meanwhile Protestants played central roles in the social, economic and political life of English-speaking Canada, but that religious identification became less and less prominent in public life towards the end of the 20th century, as Canadian pluralism emerged as an international model of ethnic as well as religious accommodation.

Other Denominations

Offshoots of Protestant Christianity include the Mormon, Unitarian and other movements.

The Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity never considered themselves part of the Roman Catholic Church, though some of the forms of worship in the Eastern Orthodox churches of Greece, Serbia, Ukraine, Russia and Oriental Orthodox churches of Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Syria, Armenia, Persia and India, are confused with Catholicism despite their origins going back to the early centuries of Christianity. Their numbers are also increasing in Canada.



In learning about the diversity of faith and spirituality in Canada, it is helpful to recognize some common features.

Hinduism is the third largest religion after Christianity and Islam. The word "Hindu" was used to identify people who elected to settle on the banks of "Sindhu" river, and formed what historians started calling the Indus valley civilization. Hinduism is therefore the way of life.

Unlike other religions in the world, Hinduism does not claim to have any one Prophet, it does not worship any one God, it does not believe in any one philosophic concept, it does not follow any particular act of religious rites or performances. It is neither "structured" nor "organized" in the truest sense and is therefore individualistic to a great extent, albeit, there is a commonality of beliefs and acceptable, time-consistent code of behavior in the society.

HINDUISM

" ... Hinduism is not just a faith. It is the union of Reason and Intuition that cannot be defined, but is only to be experienced."

– Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Hindus believe that there is an underlying principle of divinity or spirit and the entire Universe is 'superimposed' on it. This is Brahman. It lives in the body of every living being as Atman (the Soul), which provides energy for its activities – an abstract concept not easily understood. As Hinduism evolved over several thousands of years, people created deities made of metals, stone, wood, etc. and by invoking Brahman in them, they could focus and pray to the Divine Power (Brahman) in these multi-form man-made deities. They resort to various types and forms of rituals for praying. The three most important representations of Brahman are Brahma - the creator of the universe, Vishnu - the preserver of the universe, and Shiva - the destroyer of the universe. This Trinity provides the 'administration' required for running this world on behalf of Brahman.

Hindus believe in a continuous cycle of reincarnation and rebirth of the soul after death, that the conditions of one's present life are due to good or bad deeds (Karma) of this life and in past lives. The soul will achieve Moksha or freedom from the cycle of births and death and eventually merge with Brahman. This is, they say, the ultimate objective for every human being.

In order to achieve Moksha (Nirvana or Salvation), the Hindu scriptures (the oldest being the four Vedas, followed by the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita) have provided guidance as to different ways to follow and the roads to salvation -- the Margas (paths) or Yogas.

There are four main paths one can follow:

- Karma Marga or KarmaYog – performing social obligations and offering selfless service.
- Jnana Marga or JnanaYog – studying and cultivating an intellectual understanding of one's identity with Brahman.
- Bhakti Marga – devotion to one's personal god (Deity with the invocation of Vishnu, Mahesh (Shiva), Ganesha or any other God or Goddess form of one's choice).
- Dhyana Marga – not as widely recognized as the three above, this path uses meditation to gain insight into the Atman that resides within one's self.

All the guidelines to follow these paths have been written in Sanskrit, one of the oldest languages of the world, and are difficult to understand for a lay person. However, since Bhakti Marga entails devotion to one's personal god, it is considered to be the simplest and therefore easier to follow. While following the Bhakti Marg, people started performing rituals specific to their choice of the deity as a part of their praying for mercy and help from the Almighty. As such, one sees thousands of rituals, collectively grouped under the banner of Hinduism, which are also dependent on the various regions, communities, languages and traditions of India.

There are multiple sects, schools of thought and beliefs in Hinduism, and there are many books or doctrines. It is an inclusive religious group (believes in Monism, i.e., only one God for the entire universe and humanity), allowing for much diversity. The Hindu philosophy is primarily based on the triad of sacred scriptures. The first among them are Vedas containing sacred verses and hymns. There is no known author of the Vedas, and Hindus believe these to be God's creation for mankind. Rig Veda was the first of the four Vedas. The Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda followed later. The other two scriptures are the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Upanishads are the philosophical thoughts on Vedas by the great sages of the past and noted

down by their disciples. As Upanishads came after Vedas, they are also called Vedant. The best known Hindu text to non-Hindus, the Bhagavad Gita is a philosophical song of Lord Krishna's teachings to his warrior disciple Arjuna on the principles of KarmaYog, and describes many fundamental Hindu beliefs including those concerning the soul, and how release from the cycle of reincarnation is possible through knowledge, good actions and devotion to a god or goddess. The teaching is on the backdrop of the story of one of the two prominent epics of India, the Mahabharat, the longest epic in the world; the other being the Ramayana. The latter entails the life story of King Rama, an ideal king, with philosophical teachings.

Hinduism guided the then Indian society to divide into four major divisions called Varnas, primarily to perform the four important functions needed by a society, namely: (1) that of the priests and teachers by the Brahmins; (2) that of the warriors and defenders to provide protection from the invaders by the Kshatriyas; (3) that of the farmers and those involved in commerce by the Vaishyas; and (4) that of laborers, artisans and other servants by the Shudras. No single Varna was considered to be of lower class, and people of all classes carried out their prescribed duties loyally. The intent was to provide development and organization of the society as a whole from all aspects. Never intended to be restrictive, this Varna system nevertheless developed over the past thousands of years into a hereditary 'caste' system, which is still prevalent to a certain extent in India, although the 'practice' of it is forbidden by Indian Constitution. Each caste has its own set of values, rules, dietary beliefs, etc. Many do not marry outside their castes.

Pilgrimages and festivals are common in Hinduism. The major festivals are Diwali (between mid-October and mid-November) and Holi (in February or early March). Holi, the Festival of Colors, marks the arrival of spring each year, recalling the pranks of Lord Krishna. It is a happy, fun-loving celebration of bonfires and tricks where coloured water is often thrown on people indiscriminately.

Diwali celebrates the return of King Rama, his rescue of his wife Sita from the evil demon Ravana, and is like the New Year's celebration, entailing features such as gift exchanges, buying new clothes, lighting of ceremonial lamps and cooking and eating sweet meats.

Of the many deities, Shiva and Vishnu have been among the most popular, and over the centuries many local temples were constructed in India dedicated to them. Many became places of pilgrimage, often with specific rituals associated with each temple according to geographical area and language, with different associations with the many gods, including Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva, or Parvati, the universal female. Krishna and Rama are among the several incarnations of Vishnu, and Hanuman, the monkey-god, figures in Ramayana, in Rama's efforts to rescue his wife, Sita.

With the arrival of Islam in the 12th century and then Christianity in the 17th Century in India, different methods were followed by the new religions to take over the Indian populace. However, various Saints and philosophical preachers emerged in most of the regions of India, to guide and re-emphasize the Hindu values among the people. The Bhakti Marg preached by these Saints proved to be the strongest influence that helped Hinduism survive in its pure form.

Hindu immigration to Canada started in the early 20th century, and in the mid-1960s included many people from the Caribbean, who had come from India in earlier decades as indentured labourers. Two and three decades later, thousands of Tamil Sri Lankans emigrated to Canada and make up the largest Hindu population group in Canada, with as many as two-thirds of this group living in Ontario, and centred in Toronto.

The Canadian context encouraged Hindus to develop ways of organizing Hindu communities and Societies, to reflect a religious community. It also inspired the Hindus to construct Hindu temples of various deities, to make decisions about what styles of worship to perform, and most importantly, to inculcate and teach Hindu values of 'universal brotherhood' to their children born and raised in Canada. This was focused primarily on the second- and third-generation of Hindu-Canadian youth. Although the Canadian Hindu population is now close to half a million according to the 2011 census, a single Hindu organization or voice does not formally exist at the national level; however, efforts are being made to fill this void.

An aerial view of autumn harvest time in the Annapolis Valley in rural Nova Scotia.



There are vibrant communities across Canada that reflect religion, faith and spirituality throughout the world.

Islam is premised on “five pillars”, which guide the life of believers:

- 1) The profession of faith recited daily (“There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger”, known as the “shahada” or “witness”)
- 2) Daily obligatory prayer facing the Qiblah, or Mecca, (recited five times daily at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and after dark, involving ritual purification or washing and prescribed postures of standing, sitting, bowing and prostrating)
- 3) “Zakat” or alms giving
- 4) Fasting between sunrise and sunset during the Muslim-lunar month of Ramadan
- 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca, known as a “hajj”

ISLAM

“Recite, in the name of your Lord ... Recite by the Most Bountiful One your Lord, who by use of the pen taught man that which he did not know.”

– from the Qur’an, Sura 96.1

Muslims believe that Islam is a continuation of Judaism and Christianity, and that the Prophet Muhammad (570-632) is the Messenger of God. The primary source in Islam is the Qur’an (or Koran), believed by Muslims to be the word of God, and ultimate authority concerning all facets of Muslims’ life. Additional sources include the Hadith, Sunnah and consensus of the Muslim community. Each Friday, the Muslim holy day, Muslims face Mecca, the birth place of Islam, to worship and strengthen communal solidarity. Led by an Imam (religious leader), the Friday sermon (khutba) addresses issues of the day, urges Muslims to live by the word of God, and be responsible members of society. There are several main and sub branches of Islam, including Sunni Islam (more than 80% of Muslims), and Shi’i Islam. Sub-branches include, among others, the Ismailis and Ahmadiyya.

Islam is the second largest religion in the world, with more than 1.5 billion believers. There are now more than a million Muslims in Canada according to the 2011 Canadian census. There were only a few dozen Muslims in Canada in the 19th century, but immigration since the Second World War has led to a large and diverse Muslim community in Canada.

Muslims believe that God (Allah), through Archangel Gabriel, revealed the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. Although Muslims are expected to read and understand the Qur'an as revealed in Arabic, the Quran is translated into most world languages. The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters, or sura, of varying lengths. Each sura was revealed to the Prophet during different periods in his prophecy, and addresses all aspects of human life such as worship, personal conduct, the relationship between believers and God, and civil matters. The Qur'an, and the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad himself, provide the authoritative guidance for Muslim living. An additional source of authority for Muslims is the Hadith, the collection of the "authoritative" sayings of Muhammad.

The word "Islam" means "submission" or "engaged surrender" to God. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is a monotheistic religion. After revealing Islam to the community in Mecca, calling for the destruction of their "idols" and worshipping the one God (Allah), Muhammad was attacked and forced to flee persecution, with his wife Khadijah, his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and other early believers, to Medina in 622 AD. The journey to Medina, known in Islamic history as the hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar and the formation of the first Islamic state, where a small community emerged around the mosque (masjid), and governed by Islamic teachings.

Following the Prophet's death in 632, Muslims debated his succession. Community elders announced the death of the Prophet, and sought to arrange succession to the community's leadership. A minority of followers believed that Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (599-661), was the proper leader. A majority, however, felt that the leader should be elected through consensus of the community. Community elders selected Abu Bakr (573-634), one of Muhammad's companions, as the first successor or caliph (khalifa), a position of military and political leadership. After his passing and that of his successor, Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Ali became the third caliph. However, power struggle emerged, leading to a civil war and the assassination of Ali in 661. Over the years, theological differences emerged and the Muslim community became divided into Sunni and Shi'i sects.

Following Ali's assassination, and with the expansion of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula to neighboring regions in the Middle East and North Africa, the Umayyads, established their capital in Damascus, extended their rule to the north of India and as far as the Iberian Peninsula (present-day Spain and Portugal). Succeeded by the Abbasid caliphs (750-1258), who established their capital in Baghdad. Under the two caliphates, Muslims lived in what is described as the golden age, where Islamic law, arts, philosophy and science flourished.

With regard to religious doctrine, there are six main areas of belief: the transcendent reality of God; that God has revealed his will through a line of prophets, with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad being the most important - Muhammad being the final prophet (any claim that an individual following Muhammad has prophetic status is strongly rejected by mainstream Islam); that there are spiritual beings, including archangels, between the visible and invisible worlds; that the Torah, the Psalms of David and the Gospel of Jesus are early revelations of God; and, in some interpretations, that on the Day of Resurrection, God will judge the living and the dead, with the good entering paradise and the bad, hell. The sixth main area of belief concerns divine destiny, which means that nothing happens beyond God's will.

Today, more than 80% of Muslims belong to the Sunni tradition, within which various schools of interpretation have arisen over time, giving different emphases to various aspects of the tradition. More than 15% belong to the Shi'i tradition, which emphasizes the role of imams as the key religious leaders of their groups. Historically, and within Shi'i Islam, there are different sub-groups and interpretations concerning which Imam in line of descent from Hussein, the son of Ali, have received the original authority to lead the community. The largest of these groups is the Twelvers, who believe that authority lies in the Twelfth Imam following Hussein. Other Shi'i groups includes the Zaidi (Fivers), and the Ismaili (Seveners). Within each of these groups, there are further subgroupings. A number of other offshoots include the Alawis (who are located in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey), and the Ahmadiyya, which emerged in the late 19th century in the Indian sub-continent.

The emergence of different sects and schools of thought in Islam is the outcome of a number of factors including theological and political differences. The historical schism within the community was accompanied by religious wars in some Muslim countries. Religious fanaticism fueled the exclusion of religious minorities from main-stream Islam, and enabled the persecution of these minorities. These tensions affected relations among members of the Muslim community in the Diaspora, some of whom ostracize “the other” for not being a “genuine” Muslim. In recent decades, more extremist groups emerged calling for jihad (holy war) against what they have described as “heretical” Muslims and the non-Muslims--all those who disagreed with their fanatical beliefs. Muslim leaders in Muslim countries and the Diaspora have denounced these fanatical and terrorist groups, because they do not represent the teachings and values of Islam.

Although Muslims share a core of common beliefs, Muslim practices vary from community to community, depending on local influences. Generally, all Muslims follow the practice of burying the deceased as quickly as possible after death. Most communities hold the Friday sermon, while differences between the place of women and men in worship varies between more progressive communities and more conservative communities. In addition to the holy festivals of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, Muslims celebrate the birth of Muhammad on Mawlid al-Nabi and have many other observances depending on the particular community. Shi'is, for example, commemorate Ashura, the tenth day of the first month Muharram, when Hussein, the son of Ali, was killed, thus ending what Shi'is believe was the rightful line of succession to the Prophet Muhammad.

Muslims' personal and community life is guided by the shari'a, which is a collection of legal and ethical principles. The shari'a prescribes what is “halal” (permitted or allowed), and what is “haram” (forbidden). Although there is agreement among scholars on the main issues, jurists provided different interpretations on various matters related to Muslim life. The compilation of the different interpretations are expressed through six schools of Islamic Jurisprudence stemming from the two main traditions of Sunni and Shi'i Islam. In the Sunni tradition, we find the schools

of Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Zahiri. In the Shi'i tradition, there are the Ja'fari and Batini schools.

The Muslim community in Canada traces its presence to the 19th century, with Lebanese and Syrian immigrants among the first, settling in Edmonton, Alberta, and establishing the first mosque in 1938. By 1962, a larger number of Muslim immigrants and refugees settled in other parts of Canada, particularly Quebec and Ontario. In the recent decades, Muslim immigration to Canada originated mostly from the Middle East, North Africa, Western Asia (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) and, in the 1990's from Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and the Sudan), some from the Caribbean countries of Trinidad and Guyana, and others from Turkey and the Balkans. Among Muslim Canadians, the Ismaili community is one of the most successful immigrant communities in the country. Community members came from East Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and have adapted themselves well to all aspects of Canadian life.

Over the past twenty years, individual Muslim Canadians have been elected to federal and provincial legislatures, appointed to the Senate, elected as mayor of one of Canada's largest cities, received the Order of Canada, play NHL hockey, and have become actively involved throughout Canadian society. Some have adopted more Western ways of living, while others give more importance to the maintenance of tradition and shari'a.



There also seems to be one common principle that is shared by all, the so-called “Golden Rule”, which enjoins believers to treat others as they wish to be treated themselves.

The oldest of monotheistic religions, Judaism evolved from the ancient religion of the Hebrews, whose major figures include Abraham – the founder of the covenant with God - and Moses, who led the Jews out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments, it is estimated, some time between 1450 and 1290 BCE.

The sacred book is the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh consisting of the first five books of Moses, eight books of the Prophets and eleven books of Writings. Another source of authority is the Talmud -a collection of rabbinical commentary and direction on the law, tales and exemplary stories. The law is of great importance in traditional Judaism, and includes, among other things, dietary restrictions for devout Jews and prescriptions concerning prayer and worship, as well as rites of passage (such as male circumcision and, at 13 years, the coming-of-age ceremony known as “bar mitzvah” for boys and, in some branches, “bat mitzvah” for girls).

JUDAISM

“Love thy neighbour as thyself.”

– Leviticus 19:18

“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.”

– from the Tanakh

Judaism is based on the Hebrew Bible (known by Christians as the “Old Testament”). The Tanakh tells the story of God’s purpose for humanity and the Jewish people, revealing the nature of God’s relationship to the people of Israel through God’s Covenant.

Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew Bible, begins with the story of creation. On the seventh day, God rested, and this led to one of the reasons given for the significance in Judaism of the Sabbath, the day of rest. Rosh Hashanah, one of the most important Jewish Holy Days, commemorates creation and, as marking a new year, an opportunity to repent and reform just before Yom Kippur, the holiest day, when all are judged by God and their fate determined. The history of the Jewish people, beginning more than 3,000 years ago, is recounted in the Book of Genesis.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are found at the beginning of that history, and are the three fathers or patriarchs of the Jewish tradition. In the Hebrew Bible, Isaac is the son of Abraham's elderly wife Sarah – a son whom Abraham believed God wanted him to sacrifice. Because of his willingness to obey, Isaac was spared, and Jews believe God then established a covenant – an agreement, promise or contract – that if the Jewish people were obedient to God, they would be protected. Circumcision of all male children, eight days after birth, is the sign of this covenant.

When enslaved in Egypt, a leader named Moses emerged, inspired by God's revelation to him, and with God's help he guided the Israelites to freedom. The festival of Passover, during which Jews refrain from eating leavened bread, marks the story of the exodus or liberation from Egypt. Jewish families gather to remember, during special meals, this momentous, historical event and to celebrate their freedom. The story continues with the journey, which passed by Mount Sinai where Moses received the revelation of the Torah from God. Shavuot is the holy day commemorating that event. In the Fall, Jews are called upon to build "huts" and have their meals in them, in memory of the forty years they wandered in the desert before reaching their Promised Land.

The law is included in the Tanakh, which recounts the history of the Jewish people, first detailing leaders known as the Judges, and then eventually the Kings, including King David of Jerusalem. David's son, Solomon, built a temple in Jerusalem that became the ritual centre of Jewish life. The temple was destroyed in the 6th century BCE and the Jews were exiled to Babylonia. After about 70 years, the exiles returned and built the Second Temple in Jerusalem. This became a source of controversy with the Samaritans, who claimed that Mount Gerizim in Samaria was the real holy place. Over time, the priests of the Second Temple were influenced by the culture of their Greek conquerors and introduced Greek practices many saw as sacrilegious. A dispute followed and the Seleucid Greek king, Antiochus intervened, banning Jewish practices and ordering the worship of Greek gods in the Temple. Matathias, priest from Modi'in, led an uprising against both Greek foreign rule and the impure Greek practices. His family, the Maccabees, succeeded in their revolt against great odds

in 164 BCE, and rededicated the Second Temple. The holiday Chanukah celebrates that victory and the miracle of the oil, when a small amount of oil destined to last for a day, burned for 8 days instead, until a new supply could be found to keep the sacred Menorah burning.

Herod the Great, descended from an Edomite convert to Judaism, was placed on the throne as King of Judea, a territory covering all of today's Israel and Palestinian territories, as well as parts of other surrounding countries. Herod rebuilt and refurbished the temple to make himself more acceptable to the people of Judea, but he never completely succeeded. After his death in 4 BCE, various rebellious and revolutionary movements arose, including a strong belief that a Messiah would come, liberate the land from Roman rule and bring about the end of times. A number of apocalyptic visionaries and popular leaders, as well as armed groups, troubled the Roman peace, and Rome harshly suppressed any movement that seemed to be gathering followers.

The harsh rule continued after the death of Jesus and John the Baptist and other leadership figures until an all-out revolt broke out in 66 CE. This was a challenge to Roman power the Emperor could not brook, and he ordered his general, Vespasian, to mount a campaign. By 70 CE, the country had been conquered except for Jerusalem and Masada. Vespasian left his son, Titus in charge while he returned to Rome to solidify his claim to imperial rule.

After a terrible siege, the walls of Jerusalem were breached and Herod's Temple, just recently completed, was destroyed by Titus in 70 CE. This destruction and the former one are commemorated by a fast on the Hebrew date 9th of Av. Jews were banned from living in Jerusalem, and the Jewish religion was declared illegal in that city. Thus began a dispersion of the Jews and also the development of the life of Jewish diaspora communities around the synagogue, with its reliance on prayer and study. During this period of Jewish history, the "Mishnah", known as the oral Torah, was collected around 200 CE from the debates of rabbis on the laws and practices of the Temple, and then later, in the 4th century, the Palestinian Talmud was created out of debates on the Mishna, the collection of laws and commentaries as well as legends and tales.

The more extensive Babylonian Talmud was completed in the 6th century. The dispersal of Jews throughout the Roman Empire and then Europe, after the emergence of Christianity, was fraught with peril, frequent periods of persecution, often banishment from one country or another, and only sometimes tolerance under difficult circumstances. This also occurred under Muslim rule, although the relative periods of peace as an 'inferior minority' lasted longer in Muslim lands, and there were fewer murderous attacks such as occurred in Christian countries at the times of the Crusades, after the Black Death, or during the expulsions from Spain culminating in the mass Exodus of Jews from that country in 1492.

Following the 15th century, some Jewish thinkers turned to a form of mysticism that became known as the "Kabbalah". In 18th century Poland, following large-scale murder and violence against Jews, a movement of piety developed that came to be known as "Hasidism". At its inception, it was a revolutionary spiritual movement, promoting the mystical mission of the Jewish people in the world, as well as music, song and dance as ways of worshiping God. It emphasized the close connection of the Hasidic leader or 'rebbe' with the Divine, and thus focused on the passing on of this divine closeness through the family of the leader or through his close disciples. Over time, a number of groups arose, each following their own rebbe, and so today, Hasidic groups can have very different views on issues such as outreach to other Jews, contacts with the non-Jewish world and so on. These movements and their leaders were nevertheless brought back into the ambit of traditional Judaism during the 19th century, and now put as much emphasis on Torah learning as other orthodox groups connected to the Yeshivah movement for the traditional study of Jewish law.

Hasidim and their other non-Hasidic counterparts are the fastest growing segment of the Jewish population. It is estimated that they could constitute the majority within the next fifty years. They are collectively viewed by other Jews as socially conservative, but some are wary of the state, including Israel.

Enlightened thinking beyond the 18th century gradually led to greater acceptance of Jews in western European countries, though antisemitism remained alive. At the same time, European (Ashkenazi) Judaism and Jewish people evolved into a number of

modern branches that enjoy various degrees of interaction with the non-Jewish world: Modern Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Secular. Modern Orthodox Judaism is the most conservative in its approach to the conduct of services, and the observance of the law, yet still promotes participation of its members in modern life. While all of these movements are generally egalitarian with regard to the education of girls and boys in secular affairs, the Orthodox have not been as open to the equal participation of women in services or to their ordination as rabbis or cantors. Of the other movements, Reform and Reconstructionist movements are less tied to traditional precedent than Conservative Judaism, and Secularists who wish to be part of a Jewish community tend to link themselves to cultural and linguistic expressions of Jewishness, rather than to rituals. However, these distinctions are fluid, and it is often a matter of degree from one congregation or group to another. Individuals will often refuse to identify with these labels and prefer to be identified as "Jewish".

For instance, Jews from Arab and Eastern lands often did not identify with these labels, which originated first among European Jews and their descendants. Many today identify themselves with their specific community with a very different history from the Jews of Europe. There are significant numbers of such Jews – Sephardim from around the Mediterranean, Jews from India, Jews from Iraq and Iran - in Canada.

According to the 2011 census, there are about 350,000 Jews in Canada, with over two centuries of history, first established in the 18th century; the second non-Aboriginal religion to arrive after Christianity. By 1871, there were more than one thousand Jews in Canada, founding synagogues and associations, and eventually establishing communities in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. Between the 1880s and the First World War, another 100,000 or more Jews came to Canada in the waves of immigration occurring in those years.

Through the decades, however, antisemitism was prevalent. The failure of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's government to open the doors to Jews fleeing Nazi Germany was one sign of this antisemitism - a character of Canadian life that faded only gradually after the Second World War.

During these years, many Jews were excluded from being hired in many businesses, were limited in access to higher education by quotas, and were discriminated against socially. They founded Jewish clubs, started their own businesses, especially in clothing and other crafts they had learned in their home countries. They ventured into many risky areas such as entertainment and broadcasting, which more established groups often avoided. The children and grandchildren of these earlier immigrants were encouraged to enter professions, which depended on higher education, which gave greater flexibility for Jewish observance, and where the mode was primarily self-employment and thus, less subject to discrimination by others. Doctors, lawyers, pharmacists and dentists became very common professions among Jews, as well as start-up businesses in these and other areas such as real estate. In fact, Jews for many years had the highest rate of self-employment of any ethnic or religious group in Canada. Jews, like the visible minorities that arrived in the sixties and seventies, were primarily urban and were among the first non-Christians to serve in Parliament, to be elected as mayors, and to serve on the Supreme Court. Jews served the country in large numbers in

both World Wars, and have long been an essential thread in the fabric of Canadian life, receiving countless honours for their endeavours.

Since the 1960s, community organizations and institutions of the Canadian Jewish community have been vital to the interconnectedness of Jewish life in Canada. Traditional Orthodox, a variety of Hasidic groups, Modern Orthodox, the various Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist congregations, each following their own approach; Sephardic, Moroccan, Iraqi, Iranian, Indian, groups; and secular associations promoting Yiddish or Jewish culture and literature: all of these reflect a wide diversity of Canadian Jewish life that is inclusive of people from different cultures, races and origins. In any of these groups one can find people who share a family seder at Passover, attend synagogue during the High Holy Days, celebrate Hanukkah with the lighting of candles, and hold bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah events for their sons and daughters to sanctify their coming of age. On Yom Hashoah, Jews around the world commemorate the destruction of one-third of their people during the Holocaust.

Founded by Guru Nanak in the late 15th/early 16th century in Punjab. The sacred text is the “Guru Granth Sahib” (Collection of Sacred Wisdom).

Monotheistic, Sikhs believe in the oneness of God and service to humanity as a way of serving God, and the complete equality of all humanity.

They place importance on the search for eternal truth, belief in reincarnation, and four principal ceremonies (naming, initiation, marriage and death), as well as daily observances: morning bath, meditation on the Name of God, recitation of hymns and prayers three times each day.

THE SIKH FAITH

“Though in calm silence I sit I cannot end my search.
No mound of earthly pleasures can satisfy my longing
for God.”

– The Guru Granth Sahib

One of the youngest of the world’s religions, the Sikh faith was founded by Guru Nanak in the Punjab in the late 15th and early 16th centuries as an independent religion following mystical experiences in 1499. Guru Nanak’s life and teachings are the foundation for the religion of the Sikhs (literally meaning “learners”). The Sikh faith was further developed by nine human gurus, or leaders, that followed him. The last guru, Gobind Singh, told the Sikhs to hold the Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, as their eternal Guru. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib is composed of the writings of the Sikh Gurus as well as those of saints and devotees of various backgrounds and castes. This is the guide for Sikh life, and the central feature of any Sikh place of worship, called the Gurdwara (meaning “door of the Guru”). Sikh festivals consist of reading the book in its entirety, lasting two days. Prayers from the Guru Granth Sahib are recited in the home.

Guru Nanak was born to an upper-caste Hindu family in 1469. He travelled from his home in the Punjab as far east as China and as far west as the Middle East, discussing his own religious ideas, returning to the Punjab to establish the village of Kartarpur (“Creator’s Abode”) where he remained as the founder of a new religious community. His teachings, considered divinely inspired, gave expression to a direct relationship to God, involving a daily routine of a threefold discipline: “the divine Name, charity and purity”. It addressed a balanced development of self and society, with fellowship or spiritual fraternity given significance.

Hard work, with agricultural work given high status, service, self-respect, honesty, humility, and taking one's proper share are stressed. Guru Nanak's devotional practices of morning meditations or recitations, and adorations sung in the evening became accepted Sikh practices. Before dying, Guru Nanak appointed Lehna, a devout follower, with a new name Angad, as the second of the ten gurus who led the community, from 1504 to 1708. The fifth guru, Arjan, completed the Sikh scripture, "Adi Granth" ("original book"). Guru Arjan's execution by Mughal authorities in Lahore in 1606 was the beginning of conflict between Sikhs and the Mughals, which was also followed by the execution of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur in 1675 in Delhi.

The founding of the Order of Sikhs in 1699, known as the "Khalsa" ("pure or sovereign"), by Guru Gobind Singh was a major event in Sikh history, and is celebrated annually. To be a Khalsa Sikh involves wearing five Articles of Faith (kakaar) as reminders of their commitment to the tenets of their faith, including justice, charity, morality, humility and equality: uncut hair covered with a turban (kesh), a small wooden comb (kangha), a short sword (kirpan), an iron or steel wrist ring or bracelet (kara), and cotton undergarments (kachhera). The addition of Guru Tegh Bahadur's writings to the Adi Granth completed the Sikh scriptures or "Guru Granth Sahib". This is the authority for the community of Sikhs and is deeply revered. The Sikh code of conduct and daily discipline is called the "Sikh Rahit Maryada" and is published by the "Akal Takht", the highest Sikh authority located in Amritsar, Punjab. The opening verse of the Guru Granth Sahib asserts, "One Universal Creator God. The Name is Truth. Creative Being Personified. No Fear. No Hatred. Image Of The Undying. Beyond Birth. Self-Existent. By Guru's Grace."

Sikhs believe in the concept of karma and the cycle of reincarnation. Sikhs believe that the goal of human life is to become one with God through meditation on naam (God's name). Meditation on naam frees the soul from the bonds of karma and materialism. In Sikh teaching, our self-centredness can prevent us from perceiving the universal manifestation of God in all reality. In Sikh terminology, the word "guru" is used as a term for the voice of God, expressed within the human heart, mind and soul.

Sikh communities prefer consensus along democratic lines in decision-making, but consider all ten official gurus and the scriptures as authoritative. This doctrine upholds discipline in Sikh personal life that has inspired Sikh entrepreneurship around the world, including in Sikh communities in Canada where great respect for everyday labour is a part of spiritual discipline. Sikhs have been in Canada for more than a century, first arriving in 1897 as part of the army regiments travelling through Canada in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Subsequently, some 5,000 Sikh labourers arrived in the 1904-08 period, settling in British Columbia where they contributed to the development of that province. In reaction to those early Sikh immigrants, discriminatory immigration policy and attitudes slowed Sikh immigration until after the Second World War. Despite official discrimination in early years, Sikh Gurdwaras were established by the 1920s, and organized in the Khalsa Diwan Society. Immigration accelerated in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and again in the late 80s and 90s, the result of more liberal policies, and conflicts in India. Today, the 2011 census counts more than 450,000 Sikhs in Canada with a majority living in British Columbia.

Sikh devotional life calls for early morning and evening prayers, singing, meditation and readings – a challenge in Canadian life, resulting in some Sikhs moving to more nominal identification with Sikh practices, some abandoning the practice of not cutting their hair or wearing a kirpan, while others adhering to the stricter Sikh devotions and observances. Most retain their Sikh surnames, Singh (or "lion") for men, Kaur (or "princess") for women. Sunday services at the Gurdwara, unlike the daily services in India, have become the norm due to pressures of contemporary Canadian life. For rites of passage – naming, initiation, marriage and death – the Guru Granth Sahib plays a central role. At death, the body is cremated in a ceremony that can include the reading of the entire Guru Granth Sahib. The ashes are spread in the nearest river or sea, though many Canadian Sikhs will take the ashes to Punjab.

Canadian Sikhs have, over the decades, become an inseparable part of the Canadian fabric, and are very active in Canadian economic, social, military and political life, with Sikh Members of Parliament, a Sikh provincial premier and Sikh federal Cabinet ministers.



Despite periods of discrimination in Canada's history, a respect for minorities and relatively open immigration policy has led to increased diversity in religion, faith and spirituality in Canada.

Washademook at Codys, Cambridge-Narrows, Coles Island, Queens County, New Brunswick.

Every identity factor can be considered a group identity. In other words, there is no identity factor that is not collective.

CHAPTER TWO

Personal identity is made up of many identity factors.

Close-up of Sugar Maple leaf in fall color.



Identity ten key points

Identity is a word that has become common place with the emergence of modernity and the contemporary nation-state. Without a sense of what the “nation” means, there is no ideology of nationalism. This sense of belonging to a “nation” of one sort or another is just one of many kinds of identity that exist among human beings.

Identity is a concept that can be used by a person both in the singular and in the plural. In the singular, one can say “my identity is ...”.

The best way to think of identity in the singular is through our own individual name. In the plural, identities refer to many different kinds of elements, some of which combine to form identity in the singular.

For example, personal identity is made up of many identity factors, such as gender, age, nationality or immigration status, language (especially mother tongue), religion (if any), political ideology, professional status, marital status, size, neighborhood, etc. The list of possible factors for each human being is almost infinite, while those elements that constitute the identity of each person (in the singular) is a subset of that whole set that constitutes all the potential elements of identity, referred to as “identities” (in the plural).

Some of these identities are not chosen. For example, where one is born and in what order, who one’s parents are, what one’s mother tongue is, what one’s skin color is, and so many other aspects that come with one’s DNA. Other elements of identity are personally selected: what profession is practiced, what foods are eaten, where one lives, etc. In many cases, elements of identity are a combination of both. For example, one’s education is partially the result of parental choice and later on, especially at the advanced level, one’s own. This is why it is useful to think of identity as constituting a set of vectors whose identity elements may best be put along a spectrum, with one end being “unchanging” and the other being “constantly changing”. The vector of age, for example, is one which changes every year, in a slow and regular way. The vector of political ideology may be put closer to the “unchanging” end for some people, while it may be closer to the other end for others, especially the younger generation, as revealed in cross-generational studies of long-term political voting patterns. As one more example, the vector of religion (if any) is one which for most people in their life would be placed at the unchanging end of the spectrum, while for others it is best put at the changing end. Then the question emerges: but is this from the person’s perspective or from the religion’s perspective? For example, some religions encourage conversion to their tradition (e.g.: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) and others traditionally forbid it (ex. Zoroastrianism, etc.). Somewhere in the middle of the spectrum there is Judaism: while in general it discourages conversion into it, it still allows it. The question of allowing conversion outside is yet another configuration.

These examples point to the complexity of how different elements of identity function in comparison to

one another, as well as for each person and identity group. In fact, while we speak popularly of “my identity” in the singular, the fact that some elements of that identity are changing means that “my identity” is never completely fixed; it is somewhat fluid over time. One’s sense of stability as a human being comes from those elements of identity that do not change, or rarely do so. One’s sense of potential improvement (or the reverse) as a human being comes from those elements of one’s identity that can be changed. So identity is a combination of fixed, unchanging elements as well as changing ones. The unique person we each become over time is the result of that particular combination which emerges during our lifetime. Each element of our identity is what allows us to interact easily with people who share that same element. This is how human communication becomes possible across a variety of identity groups whose other elements intersect with the main one. For example, as a Canadian, one’s national identity connects a person easily with those who share it, while it creates degrees of distance from people who share other national identities. Yet, as a Canadian, one can share a language with someone from another nationality, therefore creating a link through language identity that reduces the national identity difference. This simple example, of course, needs to be multiplied by the hundreds of other identity factors that constitute who each one of us is.

Every identity factor can be considered a group identity. In other words, there is no identity factor that is not collective. For example, the difference between a personality trait and an identity factor is that the first is the result of something completely personal while the second is the result of a group particularity, or group identity. When I brush my teeth in a particular sequence, it is the result of a personality trait. But when I discover that others do it too, and we become collectively aware of this behavior that binds us into a group, then this behavior can become an identity factor too.

Having briefly presented how identity/ies function(s), it is now possible to turn to the ten key points that constitute identity and power dynamics for human beings around the world.

Ten key points

The first point is that all societies have a hierarchy of identities. In other words, we are born in societies that do not value all identity factors in the same way. For example, in Canada, language is a most important identity factor that constantly weighs in heavily among Canadians, especially during election time. In the United States, “race” is a correspondingly most important identity factor. It does not mean that language is not important in the United States, or that “race” is not important in Canada. It simply means that in each society, the degree of importance of one identity factor or another may be of greater or lesser importance, mostly due to particular histories.

The second point is that most identities seek to reproduce themselves. Indeed, as human beings, we like to pass on to our next generations, the same identities that have proven meaningful and important to us. Sometimes this transmission is done naturally, such as language. At other times, it is done through organized human efforts, called institutions or organizations.

The third point is that most identities exist through institutions. While it is true that parents pass along their mother tongue to their children without any governmental or institutional interventions, the fact that schools exist greatly consolidates the language identity of any child. Similarly, most professional, national or religious identities benefit from strongly organized institutions.

The fourth point is that most identity factors seek to protect and at times maximize their interests. That is the natural conclusion that motivates the above institutions; it is worthwhile to invest time and energy in those institutions because they provide security and meaning to the lives of their members.

The fifth point is that many identities are networked. In order for those institutions to function more effectively in society, they often seek to network with other institutions that they consider either the same or similar, or with whom they happen to find an overlapping interest. This collaboration is done almost naturally, so obvious its benefits are for both or multiple parties. The point explains the existence of numerous bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries or businesses, for example.

The sixth point is that most identities have implicit boundaries of reference. In any casual conversation, the term “we” or “our” can be used to refer to a group of persons that share one identity or another. The “we” may refer to our family, or to our national identity, or to our gender. But this “we” carries often implicit boundaries of reference. For example, if I am saying that I am “French” when speaking in Montreal, it may refer to the implicit boundaries of the majority group of French-speaking people in the province of Quebec, or to the French-Canadians in general, or else to a national identity of origin, that is, France. It is the context of the conversation that provides the necessary clues to know what implicit boundaries of reference are meant by the user. But that is not always the case, and many conflicts in our human communications erupt because of misunderstanding as to those implicit boundaries of reference that provide a coherent meaning to the respective statements of each person or group. If those implicit boundaries are not made explicit, misunderstanding can follow from arguments that make sense within particular implicit boundaries, but not across them. For example, if a French-speaker in Montreal uses “we” to articulate an ideological reason to protect the French language through the voting in of a particular law, the implicit boundary of reference is Canada, in which he or she finds him/herself as the minority group. The “other”, in this case, becomes the “Anglo-Canadian” majority. If, in turn, an Anglo-speaker in Montreal uses “we” to articulate his or her ideological reasons to oppose the Bill, the implicit boundary of reference is Quebec, in which he or she finds him/herself as the minority group. The “other, in this case, becomes the “French-Canadian” majority. So both persons do exactly the same thing: they articulate their arguments, perceptions and feelings from a minority perspective, often perceived as victim (rightly or wrongly). This results in conflict in understanding, as both members of different identity groups put the emphasis exclusively on their ‘minorityness’, and exclude from their argument the fact that they are equally part of majorities too, with obviously different implicit boundaries of reference.

The seventh point is that when we belong to a majority identity (depending on the implicit boundary), this identity becomes normative and *de facto* subconscious. That is why, in the previous example, a person can articulate his/her argument on the exclusive basis of his/her minority identity, being oblivious to the fact that their majority identity (with a different boundary of reference) is equally present and real, especially for those who belong to a minority group from the perspective of that particular boundary of reference.

The eighth point is that normative identities carry privileges. This is where power dynamics come into play. When a group is a majority, especially in more democratic societies, the majority normativity becomes the more or less implicit reference point, and actions are organized around that identity factor in a way that gives its members a privilege. For example, a carnivore in North America finds meat easily in restaurants; by contrast, a vegetarian, until recently, had a much more difficult time finding vegetarian choices on the menus of restaurants, or even vegetarian restaurants per se. When in the United States, the language for all interactions is assumed to be English, even though certain villages of Maine are majority French-speaking still, and many parts of California, for example, are majority Spanish-speaking.

In both points seven and eight, it is always easy to notice when we are part of a minority group; the correlation is that our belonging to a majority group often becomes unconscious, unless a minority group reminds us of that majority status. There is thus an interdependence between those two dimensions of identity dynamic, and the more aware we become of it, the more the relation between minority and majority can become complementary and positive.

The ninth point is that identity similarities tend to attract their respective members, and identity differences tend to divide their respective members, unless there is a history of tolerance and, better still, openness or even attraction to complementarity in these differences. When no such tolerance exists, constant identity tensions exist, transmitted from one generation to another. These tensions can easily turn into conflicts, especially when such identity factors are operationalized by one group or another, often for political and/or economic benefits for a third identity

group (be it, for example, political ideology, economic social class, religious or linguistic identity group). On the other hand, when all persons in a given society and its numerous institutions foster the open recognition that differences are not only a normal reality of our human identity dynamics, but that openness and respect towards them are essential for social harmony and the greater possibilities of social justice too, then and only then can a society become more genuinely harmonious and peaceful. Yet that awareness of openness is not enough; members of a society must also realize the importance of practicing the greatest possible identity inclusion, especially in any decision-making process.

The tenth point is that when identity differences are perceived as dangerous, the divisions follow with different degrees of exclusions. Such exclusions can easily lead to radicalization and violence, whether outer (as in the case of murder), inner (as in the case of suicide), or apathy (a subtle form of violence in that normal participation is suspended, leading to false results, as in the case, for example, of declining numbers of eligible voters, undermining the very nature of democracy and its desired values).

Five practical tools

The understanding of the above ten key points in identity and power dynamics does not require a person to change his or her identity factors. It simply enables a person to begin to reformulate his or her identity in terms of potentially useful complementarity rather than wasteful opposition. This change in perception about oneself in relation to others around us is not enough, though. It requires putting into practice new behaviors.

Here are five practical tools:

The first tool is to emphasize face-to-face encounters; they are essential for human transformation. Indeed, literature in psychology confirms that true long-term understanding and transformation only comes from developing new kinds of friendships, beyond the ones that naturally occur in the environment in which we grow up.

The second tool requires the effort to change the boundaries of reference in our daily activities, so as to realign identity dynamics in more inclusive ways.



St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland.

For example, we can create new spaces of encounters, or new institutions, or new networks. This is happening at great speeds today thanks to the new social networking technologies. There is a growing transnational participation in numerous areas of human life that democratize the processes in ways that are rapidly changing, among other things, national boundaries and the weight of national institutions.

The third tool is to work with people at the intersections of identities. This means that wherever there is an overlapping identity, what is often called in Canada a “hyphenated identity”, it can be celebrated as a means to provide a bridge between two different identities. Such persons often struggle as misunderstood minorities of one kind or another, trying to figure out which of their two identities is most important, or “correct”. This need not be the case; in fact, if both identities are celebrated by all, these individuals can live more meaningful lives with much less unnecessary tensions and conflicts with other people who belong more squarely into one or another majority identity. For example, a person who is a Canadian Muslim may never need to feel as if s/he has to choose between those two identities. The same can be said of children of any kind of mixed marriages: they need to feel that their mixed background is the source of greater richness because they can become bi-cultural/religious/ideological, etc.

The fourth tool is to emphasize common and broader shared goals and ideas between identities, rather than narrower dividing ones. Indeed, the challenge for all human beings is to balance, on the one

hand, those identities we share with others, or are similar to the ones that are important to who we define ourselves to be, so that we can establish a common ground, a ‘middle way’ to foster harmonious human relations in working towards shared objectives.

The fifth tool is to notice tensions that arise from those efforts at balancing similarities and differences in our multiple identity factors, and welcome them as normal sources of dynamic growth in our daily lives. If we do that regularly, we can be stimulated by the synergy that emerges from complementarity in differences, before they turn into conflicts.

Conclusion

By combining greater awareness of identity and power dynamics through the first ten key points presented above, with greater practice in our daily lives of the five practical tools through constant dialogue at all levels of society, there is no doubt that the quality and the equity in all of our human interactions can be improved.

Such improvement in human dynamics will result in more social harmony and greater peace-building over time. By promoting such a pluralistic understanding of identity and power dynamics today, Canadians can play a leading role nationally and transnationally in peace-building.

QUESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING

1. Research indicates that an individual can experience different senses of identity with respect to region, ethnic origin, religion, national origin and citizenship. How can Canada foster a Canadian national identity, which includes loyalties, among immigrants to encourage them to be full, participating members of Canadian society with a strong attachment to Canada?

2. Human societies evolve. It is acknowledged that everyone in Canada is of immigrant origin, except for the Aboriginal Peoples of the land. There appears to exist a kind of evolutionary psychology at work within people which promotes an attachment to a nation in which they were not born, or to which they have no historical attachment. With the degree of rapid change experienced in Canada, how can a Canadian national identity develop? What is the responsibility of the state in fostering this development?

3. National identity contains identifiable components such as language, environment, common history and religion. There are also variables that relate to age and refined culture, such as popular culture that includes food, dress, entertainment preferences; and refined culture, which includes the arts, music, literature – all of which reflect a belief system and attitudes of a people/community. Does this mean that Canadian identity differs from immigrant identity in considering these layers? How can Canada begin to foster an interest in national identity, based on these ingrained differences found in diverse personal and group identities?

4. Inarguably, religion and customs weigh heavily in individual and group identity. With an influx of immigration comes an array of religious practices and symbols that include, for example, the importance of wearing a turban, Kirpan, hijab, and niqab – some of which bear a direct impact on areas of: a) security (full niqab); b) safety (turban on amusement park rides, and the Kirpan viewed as a potential weapon); and c)

equality (some seeing the hijab as a symbol of oppression of women). Religious practices may be seen by some as including female genital mutilation, honour killings, male superiority in marriage and community. How can Canada respect the differences in religious practice, but at the same time, promote human rights for all, and create national harmony in the best interests of all Canadians?

OTHER ISSUES

- ❖ Creating a sense of Canadian identity/nationalism vs. the challenge and pull toward regional, immigrant, religious and other group identity.
- ❖ Societies have a hierarchy of identities, as indicated in this chapter, and we are born in societies that do not value all identity factors in the same way. This is a logical point in preserving the dominant culture of any given society. Yet a drawback indicated in this chapter is that “identity differences are perceived as dangerous ... divisions follow with different degrees of exclusions. Such exclusions can easily lead to radicalization and violence, whether outer (as in the case of murder), inner (as in the case of suicide), or apathy ...”. Such drawbacks are undesired, but must be confronted in a civilized, harmony-seeking Canada which immigrants have sought out as their home for those very reasons. How can such complex human dynamics be effectively confronted in building harmony, peace and belonging?
- ❖ The power of religion oftentimes trumps any other identity. How can we foster a safe place for dialogue to work through potentially divisive and emotional issues?

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CHAPTER THREE

Thanks to the
Charter, Canada
today is a rights-
based society.

Cape St. Mary's
Ecological Bird
Sanctuary,
Newfoundland.



Human Rights Canada is a rights-based society

Canada is a constitutional monarchy based on legal traditions inherited from Aboriginal societies and both France and Great Britain. Canada became a country through the *British North America Act* which came into effect on July 1, 1867, and served as Canada's Constitution (through various amendments) until 1982. During this period, and in the British tradition, rights were defined by what is known in the legal profession as case law (or interpretations of the law that can be cited as precedents), by British Common Law or by specific Acts of Parliament. The final Act of the British Parliament regarding Canada was the *Canada Act*, which patriated¹ all remaining legislative and constitutional powers to Canada, and included the *Constitution Act, 1982* as its schedule.

Part of this constitution was the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, a document outlining democratic, mobility, legal, equality and language rights, as well as fundamental freedoms such as freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, expression, the press, peaceful assembly and association.

As a constitutional provision, the *Charter* stood above all other legislation, meaning that every other law in any Canadian jurisdiction had to be in compliance with its provisions, "subject only to such reasonable limits as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society".²

Thanks to the *Charter*, Canada today is a rights-based society. Human rights guarantees in Canada are about the right to live free from discrimination -- an equality right. The equality rights guarantees of section 15 of the *Charter* elevated human rights laws to the status of quasi-constitutional legislation. Such is the value placed by our society on equality and the protection from discrimination.

A little history

Prior to the Second World War, the concept of general human rights in the form of government legislation did not exist in Canada.

In 1944, the Government of Ontario introduced the *Racial Discrimination Act*, which prohibited the publication, displaying or broadcasting of any materials involving racial or religious discrimination. In 1947, the Government of Saskatchewan passed the *Saskatchewan Bill of Rights Act*, which provided for the protection of civil liberties and prohibited discrimination in a number of areas, including employment, housing, the workplace, land transactions and education.

The signing of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 gave the impetus to making general human rights part of Canadian legislation. In the 1950s, rights legislation was expanded to prohibit discrimination based on additional grounds such as sex and age. Ontario saw the introduction of *The Fair Employment Practices Act* and *The Fair Accommodation Practices Act* which, in 1962, culminated in Ontario having the first human rights code in the country. Ontario also saw the creation of the first human rights commission, an inde-

pendent agency authorized to administer and enforce the *Human Rights Code*.

At the federal level, the *Canadian Bill of Rights* was passed in 1960 but lacked constitutional status, which spurred the inclusion of the *Charter* in the repatriated Constitution in 1982. By 2003, all jurisdictions in Canada (federal, provincial and Territorial) had enacted a human rights code and established a human rights commission.

How the system works

The federal *Canadian Human Rights Act* applies to federal government departments and agencies, Crown corporations, and federally regulated industries, such as banking, transportation and broadcasting. All other areas fall within provincial or Territorial jurisdictions, such as stores, restaurants and bars; hospitals and health services; schools, universities and colleges; public places and their facilities; municipal and provincial government services and programs such as social assistance and benefits, and public transit.

Central to all human rights legislation in Canada is the promotion of equality by prohibiting discriminatory practices based on specific grounds such as race, sex, age, disability or religion. The legislation also specifies "social areas" such as employment, housing, and the receipt of goods and services, where discrimination is prohibited.

At the federal level, the prohibited grounds of discrimination include: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion (includes freedom from religion), age, sex (includes pregnancy and childbearing), sexual orientation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability (includes dependence on alcohol or drugs) and pardoned criminal conviction. These prohibited grounds apply specifically in the social areas of employment and publicly available services.

When a person experiences discrimination in a social area based on a prohibited ground, a complaint can be filed with the human rights commission in the applicable jurisdiction. The commission investigates and determines the legitimacy of the allegation and attempts to mediate a settlement between the complainant and the respondent (the person or entity against whom the complaint is made).

A settlement can take a number of forms, such as financial compensation to the complainant, or an apology or re-instatement in a job. If mediation fails, the commission may decide to refer the complaint to the human rights tribunal, thereby providing the complainant with legal support, where available, until a ruling is made.³

Once the tribunal arrives at a decision, either party (complainant or respondent) has the right to appeal to a divisional court and potentially all the way up to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In addition to processing complaints, human rights commissions are also mandated to formulate human rights policies and provide public education.

Understanding discrimination

The Canadian Human Rights Commission describes discrimination as treating people differently, negatively or adversely because of a prohibited ground of discrimination. Human rights stress that individuals must be able to live and work with dignity, enjoy a climate of respect and mutual understanding, to fully participate in society and have equal access to opportunities, without discrimination.

Discrimination is a practice or behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that has a negative effect on a person or a group of people who belong to a prohibited ground. Discrimination can be systemic, as in part of a system of decision-making, practices and policies or the culture of an organization that favours certain groups or creates barriers before others (most often unintentionally). Examples of systemic discrimination include barriers in recruitment and hiring, restricted access to high level jobs, and the exclusion of qualified women from traditionally male-dominated fields of work.

Discrimination can also take the form of harassment, which occurs when an unwelcome comment or conduct occurs (usually more than once) and the person responsible should have known that it is not welcome. For example, repeated sexual innuendos in the workplace may be considered sexual harassment.

Overt discrimination is easy to spot: a job advertisement or a public notice says "women need not apply", or "only people under 40 will be considered". Similarly, if people are called insulting names because

of the colour of their skin or because of some physical or mental disability, that is an overt act of discrimination.

But discrimination can be much more subtle, such as when someone does not get the service he/she wants or the job he/she deserves due to discriminatory practices. It is often hard to be sure of, or prove the existence of such discrimination, making complaints of this nature often reliant on trends or corroborative evidence to establish discrimination.

Human rights codes also talk about a "duty to accommodate" as a responsibility of employers, service providers and the like. Accommodation means making special arrangements for a certain group of people so they can have the same access or opportunities as everyone else. For example, flexible working hours can provide opportunity for employment to a single parent, or a wheelchair ramp can provide access to a building where a service is delivered.

Accommodation is required by human rights legislation "to the point of undue hardship", meaning an employer or service provider has to prove that prohibitive cost, or a legitimate matter of health and safety, or a resulting fundamental change to the nature of the enterprise, prevents it from providing accommodation.

By accommodating such groups, a discriminatory condition or barrier gets lifted, allowing these groups equal access to opportunities that otherwise would not be available to them.

Competing rights

The last case study (Freedom of expression vs hate speech) on the page "Landmark Human Rights Cases in Canada", demonstrates a situation where two rights compete: the right to free speech versus the right to live free from discrimination based on religion.

A competing rights situation involves a party (individual or group) whose exercise of a certain right would interfere with another party's rights or freedoms. The law recognizes that rights have limits in situations where they substantially interfere with the rights of others.

Competing rights situations are not uncommon. Situations of conflict often involve religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. Examples:⁵

- A civil marriage commissioner objects to performing a marriage ceremony for a same-sex couple, claiming that it violates his religious beliefs (sexual orientation vs. religion)
- A college professor's guide dog is affecting one of her students who has a severe allergy to dogs (one type of disability vs. another)
- A conservative male Muslim barber refuses to provide service to a female customer (religion vs. sex)
- An ultra orthodox Muslim woman wearing a niqab (face cover) refuses to show her face while testifying in court as a witness (religion vs right to a fair trial)

Central to resolving situations involving competing rights are two principles:

1. No rights are absolute; each right is inherently limited by the rights and freedoms of others⁶
2. There is no hierarchy of rights; all rights are equally deserving⁷

In reconciling competing rights, each party needs to show dignity and respect for the other party and recognize mutual interests, obligations and legitimacy.

Lastly, there are situations in which rights, interests and values may compete. In such situations, *Charter* rights, human rights and other legally codified rights will normally hold a higher status than interests and values.

In 2012, the Ontario Human Rights Commission issued a policy⁸ on competing human rights to help individuals, organizations, courts and tribunals deal with these types of conflicts.

Collective rights

Collective rights are rights that Canadians have because they belong to specific groups of peoples. In fact, these groups are the founding peoples of the Canadian state, including Aboriginal Peoples (First

Nations, Inuit and Metis), francophones and anglophones.

Collective rights are born out of mutual respect among peoples and, for example, influenced the French and 39 First Nations in establishing the Great Peace of Montreal in 1701.

Collective rights are protected by the Canadian Constitution and are unique when compared to other modern democracies such as the United States.

Aboriginal rights

Aboriginal rights flow from the fact that Aboriginal Peoples were self-governing before the arrival of the French and British. After contact, colonial powers understood the need for respectful relationships that formed the principles of colonial law. These principles shaped the relationship between the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, their lands, laws and existing political structures with the British Crown.

In addition, the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* put limits on colonial growth, and was motivated, at least in part, by interdependency and the principles associated with a nation-to-nation relationship with the Indigenous Peoples. At Confederation, the legal history was used to inform Canadian common law, often cited in cases involving Aboriginal Peoples.

The Association for Canadian Studies has conducted several surveys measuring levels of respect for various marginalized peoples in Canada. Aboriginal Peoples have consistently ranked near the bottom. Aboriginal Peoples, especially women and youth, are disproportionately incarcerated, suffer from the lowest health standards and from a high level of discrimination in Canadian society.

Efforts to assimilate Aboriginal Peoples into a Euro-contemporary model or melting pot, and to ignore the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures, only serve to limit our collective potential as a nation.

International treaties, such as those that emerged from the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992, recognize the importance of indigenous traditional knowledge to the collective survival of future generations.

As with any other legislation, it is often left to tribunals or courts to interpret human rights codes. Below are some examples⁴ of key Canadian court decisions on human rights cases.

Inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground

Captain Birch had a successful career in the Canadian Armed Forces until he declared his homosexuality. As a result of his revelation, his commanding officer advised him that the Armed Forces policy was to make him ineligible for promotions, postings, or further military career training strictly because of his homosexuality. Captain Birch, feeling humiliated and stigmatized, decided he could no longer bring himself to work under those conditions. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* at the time did not include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Birch and others asked the courts to find the absence of a declaration forbidding sexual orientation as a ground of discrimination to be a violation of the equality rights guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In 1992, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled in the Captain's favor. Sexual orientation was to be "read into" the *Canadian Human Rights Act* as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination. It was eventually formally added to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* in 1996.

Inclusion of same-sex couples in the definition of "spouse"

In 1996, two women – known only as M and H – ended their spousal relationship. M depended on H for financial support. So when the couple split, M made a claim for support under the

Family Law Act. The application was refused as section 29 of the Act stated that a "spouse" had to be a member of the opposite sex. The case went to court and the Ontario Court of Appeal judged the application for support valid. It said excluding same-sex couples from the definition of "spouse" in section 29 of the *Family Law Act* violated the equality guarantees of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as it discriminated against a group – homosexuals – on the basis of their sexual orientation. The case was appealed, but the Supreme Court of Canada agreed that the section was discriminatory.

Interpretation of religious accommodation

Complainant O'Malley alleged discrimination on the basis of creed against her employer, a retailer, because she was periodically required to work Friday evenings and Saturdays as a condition of her employment. The complainant's religion, Seventh Day Adventist, required strict observance of the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Given this conflict, O'Malley accepted part time work because a full time position, not involving work on Saturday, was not available to a person with her qualifications. Both the Divisional Court and the Court of Appeal upheld a Board of Inquiry's decision to dismiss the complaint. In 1985, however, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in her favour, recognizing what it called adverse effect discrimination.

Setting a high standard for undue hardship

The Meiorin case v. British Columbia. This case dealt with a grievance by a female forest firefighter, Tawney Meiorin, who was dismissed from her job because she failed one aspect of a minimum fitness standard established by the Government of British Columbia for all firefighters. After Ms. Meiorin had been performing the duties of a firefighter for three years, the respondent adopted a new series of fitness tests, including a running test designed to

measure aerobic fitness. After failing the test and losing her job, Ms. Meiorin complained that the aerobic standard discriminated against women in contravention of the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*, as women generally have lower aerobic capacity, and she had sufficiently demonstrated she could perform the duties of her job safely and effectively. The Government of British Columbia argued that this aerobic standard was a *bona fide occupational requirement* for the firefighter position. On appeal, the Supreme Court determined in 1999 that the aerobic standard was not a valid operational requirement, and set a standard for employers to demonstrate that it is impossible to accommodate individual employees without imposing undue hardship on the employer.

Freedom of expression vs hate speech

In 1984, James Keegstra, a high school teacher in Alberta, was charged with unlawfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group under s.319(2) of the *Criminal Code* that defines and limits hate speech. The charges stemmed from Keegstra's antisemitic (anti-Jewish) statements to his students. He advised students that they were to accept his views as true unless they were able to contradict them. Students who echoed his views generally received better grades than those who didn't. He made the statements in public, in his capacity as a teacher, and solely to attack Jewish people, and not in any effort to generate discussion for public benefit. Keegstra held that s.319(2) of the *Criminal Code* violated his right to freedom of expression guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Supreme Court ruled that Section 319(2) of the *Criminal Code* constitutes a reasonable limit upon freedom of expression under Section 1 of the *Charter* for, among other reasons, its harmful effects don't outweigh the advantage gained from limiting freedom of expression.

The *Canadian Constitution Act of 1982* provides protection to the aboriginal and treaty rights of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. This section of the Constitution does not define what those rights are, and so Aboriginal Peoples must define those rights through either treaty negotiations or through the courts.

Aboriginal rights or indigenous rights have been strengthened through the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Article 43 defines these indigenous rights in terms of their critical importance – the rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Canadian human rights failures

Despite its many successes and the leadership role this country has played in advancing human rights, both locally and internationally, Canada has also had failures and violations of its own. Among them:

- The internment of Ukrainian Canadians during World War I and of Japanese Canadians during World War II
- The Chinese Head Tax and *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1923
- The Residential schools system for Aboriginal Peoples
- Language laws in Quebec that discriminate against the use of English
- The racial profiling of certain groups by police and national security agencies

Acknowledging rights

Canadian governments over time have come to acknowledge, apologize and at times offer compensation for such failures:

In 1988, the Canadian government apologized to the Japanese Canadian community for the wrongs committed during World War II, and provided compensation to the families who were affected by the racist policy. Part of this historic *Agreement* created the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

In 2006, the Prime Minister gave a formal apology to the Chinese Canadian community for the use of

a head tax and the exclusion of Chinese immigrants to Canada.

In 2008 the Canadian government apologized to former students of the "Indian residential schools", created a compensation plan for victims, and established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the impact the residential schools have left on their victims. Many steps have been taken, but more remains to be done, particularly as it relates to continuing systemic violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the need to address violence against Aboriginal women.

In addition, in 2008, the Canadian government established the Community Historical Recognition Program, to acknowledge and educate Canadians about the historical experiences of, and wartime discriminatory measures perpetrated against certain ethnocultural communities, such as the Chinese-Canadian, Indo-Canadian, Italian-Canadian and Jewish-Canadian communities.

A culture of rights

Despite real or perceived failures, Canada remains a society with a deeply ingrained culture of rights. This culture is, at its heart, about respect: for differences, each other's dignity, and for freedom. These qualities are critical to our success; a society that is changing and evolving faster than it ever has. As old and new come into conflict, it is our respect for – even enjoyment of – our differences that will ensure we evolve productively and prosperously.

To be sure, legal codes are necessary to keep us honest and provide protections to vulnerable groups and individuals. But when the UN General Assembly proclaimed in Article 1 of its Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights", it was appealing to a vital and fundamental morality that is at the heart of our humanity. Further, being able to participate fully in society – live, work, learn, play – is a precondition for being able to contribute to society, on which hinges our economic well-being and future prosperity.

Human Rights: Section Endnotes

1. Patriation is the act of transferring legislation to the authority of an autonomous country from its previous mother country.
2. This clause from Section 1 of the *Charter* indicates that there can be exceptions to the supremacy of the *Charter*.
3. In Ontario, the human rights system was altered in 2008 to include a Human Rights Legal Support Centre which provides, to the extent possible, legal support to complainants, rather than through the Commission. This allows complainants to go directly to a tribunal and frees up the Commission to focus more on systemic issues by developing policies, providing public education, monitoring, community outreach, and conducting inquiries.
4. Sources: Supreme Court of Canada, Canadian Human Rights Commission
5. Partially sourced from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website www.ohrc.on.ca
6. In its opening clause, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* qualifies rights by stating that it "guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society".
7. There are exceptions. Constitutional guarantees take precedence over *Charter* rights, such as separate schools in three provinces (Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan) which allow minority faiths to have their own school boards.
8. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-competing-human-rights>

QUESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING

1. A rights-based society points to the responsibility of the state to the individual, but what about the responsibility of the individual to the good of the state and of other Canadians? How can this be better addressed in an evolving society like Canada?
2. Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter* refers to those who are “disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability”. The influx of immigrants into Canada over the last few decades has created a new Canadian landscape in terms of demographics, so that in some areas, those who would have been once identified in the *Charter* as “disadvantaged” (minority) groups, are no longer disadvantaged, or even in the minority, in some instances. Yet the current application of the *Charter* does not reflect these significant changes of national growth. Should the application of the *Charter* be revamped periodically to reflect such changes?
3. Human rights legislation in Canada also incorporates “social areas” like employment, housing, and the receipt of goods and services in which discrimination is prohibited. At the time such legislation, and the corresponding human rights commissions were created, it was not foreseen that Canada would evolve into a nation in which “ethnic enclaves” would be growing, and where segregation would be seen as a threat to national cohesion, or where accusations of “reverse discrimination” would be heard. Two recent cases have led to accusations of abuse of process and improper use of the rights system. Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn were brought before human rights commissions for hate speech against Muslims. The perceived attempt to limit free speech and the vagueness of Section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* led to calls for its elimination. How do we create a more unified Canada in

which the rights of one do not infringe upon others? Is this the only recourse – to litigate and let the courts decide? Is there any mechanism to ensure that the questions of societal good and the rights of the majority become reflected in rights issues or court decisions?

4. It is an admired vision that each party in a competing rights situation would “show dignity and respect for the other party and recognize mutual interests, obligations and legitimacy”, as stated in this chapter. But the very nature of competing rights (and competing interests) indicates that this is not always the case. How can we cultivate mutual dignity and respect, which is at the root of the United Declaration of Human Rights, Canada’s *Charter*, the *Multiculturalism Act*, and required for a harmonious Canada?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- ❖ Legal codes are essential for providing protections to vulnerable groups and individuals. How does one define a ‘vulnerable group’ in current day Canada?
- ❖ The media is instrumental in swaying Canada’s voting public and is oftentimes prone to sensationalism and giving most coverage to extremes. How do harmony and belonging advocates seeking to reduce confrontations by fostering peace and mediation to the benefit of all citizens, “outshout” the extremes?

CHAPTER FOUR

What are the objective facts that can be used to define a Canadian society?

Prairie farm in Saskatchewan.



Canadian Values it is up to us to consistently review our values

What are values? At the level of the individual, the Oxford English Reference Dictionary of 1996 defines values as “one’s principles or standards; one’s judgment of what is valuable or important in life.” When one seeks to apply the term “values” to larger groupings and organizations of individuals, the importance of the framework being used becomes obvious. “Values” for a business or a public institution, for a society or for a culture will be linked to what is valuable or important in and to those entities; however, defining what constitutes a “society” or “culture” can run into the difficulty of demonstrating objectively what such a large collection of people is, who it includes, and who it does not.

Personal attitudes and beliefs as a basis for national values

Canada is a democracy and, as such, one could see national values as being represented by the views of the majority of its citizens. But not all topics elicit a clear majority response, and most have significant minority responses even when the majority perspective is widely shared. Furthermore, personal attitudes and beliefs change over time, and may fluctuate with external factors such as foreign threats, economic prosperity, social change and pragmatic needs.

Relying on “majority views” to establish long-lasting national values becomes problematic. We would be changing our stated national values frequently as social norms evolved.

And ultimately, since unanimity in any collection of humans is not likely, it would be difficult to show that national values applied to all Canadians.

Nevertheless, if the social norm in some areas shifts particularly far over time, there will be calls for adjustment, which will sometimes be made.

Canadian culture or Canadian society?

Can one identify *a priori* a culture or society, which we could label “Canadian”? The concept of culture includes items such as language, music, art, literature, etc., all of which we know are extremely diverse in this country. If Canadian culture is what all Canadians share culturally, we could be left with something meager and, some would say, non-existent.

What are the objective facts that can be used to define a Canadian society? For the purpose of this chapter, it is postulated that these objective facts relate to a shared legal framework, shared federal structures and a shared history and inheritance of what those responsible for establishing Canada as a nation, considered important, based both on their words and actions.

Deriving Canadian values

In carrying out this exercise, the net result will also reveal what one can call “Canadian values”, even if many of these are shared in some way with other nations and other societies. It is hoped, then, to show that it is the particular balance between and among

such values that more clearly demarcates what is “Canadian”.

Finally, our exercise will show that such values may evolve and that there is always the possibility to stay with what was considered important in the past, or to change the views of the majority. We have seen in our time that with enough popular support, the Constitution can be changed, and traditional views of institutions such as marriage can also change. We are ultimately involved in a dynamic process where choices between alternatives will continue to present themselves.

By outlining what seem to be our current values and where they came from, what choices we are constantly making to preserve or change them will be made more explicit.

Pre-History and development

It will emerge, even in an elementary picture of the history of Canada, that in the beginning, there was, in Canada, a collection of individual traditional societies built around: Aboriginal Peoples’ tribal traditions, which themselves differed greatly from one people to another; the colonizing and commercial efforts of the French and their adaptation and development of various traditions in separate colonies, and the colonizing and commercial efforts of the English and their importation and local application of English Common Law, even as separate colonies also developed their own practices.

The allied Aboriginal Nation and British conquest of the French colonies and adjoining territories in 1763 did not ultimately result in the imposition of English traditions for all in a uniform way. Rather, the British rulers tended to take a pragmatic approach to the territories, which were more sparsely settled than the thirteen colonies to the south. It became obvious that it was both politically and militarily essential to retain the loyalty of the various groups in these northern colonies, especially as those to the south moved toward revolution.

From the very beginning, there were various compromises forced on the British authorities, from the recognition of the rights of the French to French and Catholic instruction and Civil Law in Quebec, to recognition of the rights of various Aboriginal Peoples in Treaties begun as early as 1701.

Without such agreements, English rule would have been more difficult, and administration of the land would have been impossible. These compromises were not made on the basis of some global view of human rights, but out of what was perceived as necessity. The treaties and the *Quebec Act* of 1774 can be seen as the first gestures of recognition of diversity in Canada.

But such compromises had already long been made in England itself, including the granting of the Magna Carta by King John, when threatened by a revolt of the Barons. The supremacy of Parliament was long fought for and was established only after civil war and many struggles.

During the British administration of Canada, several initiatives were tried, including the joining together of Upper and Lower Canada. As the American Civil War neared its end, both the British colonies and the British Administration felt some concern that a heavily armed and victorious Union might turn its attention northward, so negotiations were begun to bring a number of these colonies together under one rule.

The birth of Canadian society

The Dominion of Canada was established by the *British North America Act* of 1867, an act of the British Parliament, which contained the result of inter-colonial discussion and negotiation. Each colony involved in the discussion became a province of the Dominion, and established conditions for its adherence to a central government under the British Crown through a federal Parliament modeled on the Parliament in England.

It was established in that *Act*, that previous treaties with Aboriginal Peoples would be respected, that Quebec would have a separate Protestant school system and Ontario have a separate Catholic school system, that Quebec would maintain its system of civil law, and that French and English languages would be used in Parliamentary debates.

Subsequent amendments allowed Canada to define and admit territories and provinces. Those that entered Canada as provinces established their own conditions for entry, which then were incorporated into the Constitution.

For instance, Saskatchewan entered only on condition that it could require every school day in every school to begin with the Lord's Prayer. Newfoundland entered in 1949 only on condition that it could maintain support for three religious school systems.

As in the case of other Dominions and Territories under British rule, it was stated that the purpose of establishing a separate administration in Canada was to promote peace, order and good government.

Main foundational values

The main values inherited through this *Act* and its amendments, as well as the British tradition of common law were:

- Legal rights long established in British Common Law such as habeas corpus, the right to a fair trial, the right of an accused to be considered innocent until proven guilty, the right of an accused to full and complete defense, etc.
- The whole of common law and its associated case law, as well as the capacity to adapt it carefully, with due consideration for precedent, to Canadian contexts
- The establishment of a British Parliamentary system, including both a Senate and a House of Commons
- The supremacy of Parliament and the laws it established through due process
- The relative importance of the Christian religion in various forms and the use of its symbols in the national symbols of Canada and the provinces
- The democratic traditions of Britain in terms of free and fair elections, representative rule, Parliamentary rules of procedure, etc.
- The division of powers between federal and provincial jurisdictions
- The establishment of different levels of courts of law and the use of the courts to settle disputes between individuals, as well as between different jurisdictions
- Differential rights and accommodation of different needs relating to the make-up of the populations in different provinces, most notably, but not only, in Quebec (language, religion, civil law)

- Differential rights relating to the various treaties signed with Aboriginal Peoples
- A common desire to seek protection from the British Crown and not to be drawn into the orbit of an expanding and revolutionary United States
- The recognition of English and French language rights in specific contexts
- The overall purpose of governance being to promote peace, order and good government in the Dominion
- Traditional views on marriage, the role of women, the place of children, etc.
- The view in English Canada that British ways would continue to provide the overarching frame for all to adapt to.

The country and its framework were created, then, not with the purpose of establishing overall ideals of human rights in the face of tyranny, but to respond to local and pragmatic needs of the population so as to ensure the capacity of the government to administer effectively, using mostly British models of jurisprudence, along with some local adaptations and exceptions.

In developing this model, it was understood then that the main necessity and goal was to build and maintain loyalty to the Crown and obedience to the law, regardless of the differences among provinces or groups.

But attitudes to some of these foundational values have changed, some dramatically, and these changes have eventually become the law of the land.

Effects of changing demographics, economics and social mores on values relating to diversity

Confederation to WWI

At the time of Confederation, in 1867, the territory that was to become the Canada of today was largely undeveloped, even in the Eastern portions that had been settled for over two hundred years, but especially in the west and in the north. The population consisted of Aboriginal Peoples, French and English, with a significant influx of English, Scottish, Irish, German and Black populations from the United

States. While there was some resistance to some of these groups, assimilation to the English majority was promoted.

There was relatively little manufacturing industry, and the primary industries of agriculture, fishing and forestry took up significant portions of the work force.

Within fifty years, large movements of population from Europe, and smaller influxes of Japanese, Chinese and South Asian groups had created a much more multicultural society, especially in Western Canada and Northern Ontario. Immigration for the opening of the west and for specific purposes was acceptable and, in some ways, praised as a bulwark against the rapidly expanding power and population of the United States, under conditions where closeness to the British Crown was still a reigning value in English Canada; while among French Canadians, there was a growing preference for independence. Canada's foreign policy was guided by Britain – a growing cause of alienation between English and French Canada, even as the thought of increased openness to the United States was still viewed with suspicion.

Aboriginal Peoples were more and more consigned to reserves to make the land open to settlement. There were restrictions on immigrants based on race, religion and national origin, but as long as the largest concentrations of newcomers were in areas away from cities, there was little immediate anxiety. Nevertheless as industrial activity began to be focused on cities, attracting both immigrants and migrants, the changing composition of Canada's population became more and more a subject of debate.

WWI and its aftermath

The ideologies of eugenics and racial hierarchy began to combine with fear and suspicion of people from abroad, especially those coming from Asia, to the point that immigration became even more restricted.

World War I brought Canada into a European conflict primarily as a British Dominion, and it was only in the fighting of this war, that the notion of an independent and separate Canada took shape in English Canada. French Canada was moving further along this line more rapidly than in the other parts of the country, and this lack of synchronicity became more and more noticeable.

There took place the first major internment of Canadians of Ukrainian origin, being identified as enemy aliens from the Austro-Hungarian Empire with which Canada was at war.

Discriminatory practices in immigration, already present, were expanded. Chinese were excluded by a specific law in 1923. Others were discouraged. Immigration from Asia, Southern Europe and elsewhere was slowed, and the immigration of Jews was reduced to a trickle.

The primary industries of agriculture and fishing took up a shrinking portion of the work force, and a growing proportion of the population was to be found in cities and small towns, linked to manufacturing and resource industries such as mining and forestry.

With the economic collapse of 1929 and the Great Depression, these factors combined to bring out, as a value, emphasis on the native born, an inward turning towards traditional British and French cultures and social mores that tended to exclude those who did not fit these dominant molds. It became more and more socially acceptable to discriminate openly in business, in social activities and in politics.

In French Canada, this movement was further combined with the growing desire for isolation, defensiveness for the preservation of their identity in the face of the growing English majority in Canada, and the perception that immigrants tended to join their fate to that of the majority culture in the country. Canadians continued to be British subjects and British subjects continued to have the same rights in Canada as those born here.

World War II

World War II brought many of these views to a head. During the war, Canada became even more fearful of immigrants and those whose origins were in countries with which Canada was at war. Internment of some from the Italian and German communities was exceeded by the wholesale removal of those of Japanese descent from coastal B.C. and their large-scale internment.

In French Canada, opposition to the War culminated in a Conscription crisis, while nationalist and racist

rhetoric poisoned relations with and among many groups, fearful of being targeted.

At the same time, the growing role of women in the workplace and the growing national awareness of Canada's importance to the war effort (third largest navy in the world by the end of the war) tended to build a sense of pride in being Canadian. There was a growing desire for Canada to go its own way.

Traditional Christian religions continued to play a large role in both private and public life, and Christian religious teaching was found in public schools across the country.

But the building up of industry started to pull more and more people from the countryside and the small towns into larger towns and cities. The process of industrialization and urban concentration, begun in the beginning of the 20th century, was accelerated.

There was a greater emphasis placed on the need to assimilate Aboriginal Peoples into this newly emerging separate Canadian identity, even while French Canada was, for this time, more closed off than before and more suspicious of newcomers.

Post WWII to the Charter

After the Second World War, Canada awoke to a world where it was, for a very brief time, a military power, with a sense of the need to master its own destiny, to seek a path independent of Great Britain and other countries. The *Canadian Citizenship Act* was passed in 1947. British subjects no longer received favoured treatment under the law.

It was a place where many people and politicians became more aware of where racism and disdain for others can lead – to the death camps and labour camps and mass murders, organized by the Nazis and some of their allies. Starting during the War and extending afterward, Canadian awareness of its own acts of exclusion and discrimination grew. More and more Canadians were drawn to examine the past record and to seek ways to prevent discrimination in the future. The vote was extended to all citizens so that certain groups were no longer excluded. The United Nations and its mandate on human rights took on increased importance.

The growth and modernization of Canadian society, the need for people with skills, of which there were insufficient numbers, put pressure on government to find quick solutions to labour shortages and the subsequent opening of immigration and recruitment of workers from various countries. When the number of European and British immigrants slowed, the government took steps to eliminate race, religion and ethnic origin as bases for admitting newcomers. A wide range of workers were recruited from the West Indies and the Philippines, as well as other countries.

Most newcomers flocked first to major cities where they found more economic opportunities, at the same time that Canadians across the country were doing the same.

Some older established communities received an infusion of new energy and more recent connection to their country of origin. With events such as the Hungarian Revolution and the suppression of Eastern Europeans, many sought refuge in Canada. Canada received international recognition for its role in international organizations, and Lester Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.

A new positive sense of Canadian identity was forming, but in French Canada, this modernization and openness was aligned with a stronger identification among French-speaking Québécois of Quebec as the principal homeland of the French Canadian people. Movements among French communities in other provinces also revived positive French identity.

There was a growing sense of urgency to address the place of Quebec and French in Canada. As this movement grew, there also developed a sense among other minorities that they were being left out of this discussion, often framed as if “real” Canadians were of British, French and Aboriginal origins. There was a strong wish from ethnic minorities to have their own contributions and identities be accepted as equally “Canadian” with everyone else.

At the same time, the push for rights to employment opportunities, lodging, and to equal services for individuals, free of discrimination, hastened the development of anti-discrimination laws and human rights codes. There was thus a simultaneous drive to recognize group identities and individual rights, some-

times complementing, and at other times at odds with, each other.

Throughout this period there was also a gradual shift in attitudes towards religion in the public space. Most provinces either stopped teaching aspects of the Christian religion in public schools or left it to local schools to respond to the needs of their community. Exceptions were made for separate school systems in provinces where these existed. Private schools were allowed to take up this role, although, in many provinces, they did receive some forms of support.

By the time of the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982 and the inclusion of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, there were human rights codes and commissions at the federal and provincial levels, official statements of multiculturalism as governmental policy, the explicit recognition of English and French as Official Languages, and the firm commitment in many jurisdictions to not force religious instruction on anyone in any public school, except those provided for in the Constitution in Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland.

Since 1982

No previously existing rights were changed, and the *Charter* in its Preamble kept the values of the Supremacy of God and the rule of law. The first article in the *Charter* reaffirms the primacy of law by noting that the rights described in it are subject to “such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society”.

However, the *Charter* gave the Courts a greater role in interpreting rights through judicial review, and gave individuals and groups the explicit right to challenge existing law based on a contravention of the *Charter*. There was a greater opportunity for litigation.

A system was set up for the constant and principled review of rights, both in and of themselves and in relation to other rights.

Lost from view in the early days of the *Charter* was the implied system of values and responsibilities in a text formulated as “rights” and “freedoms”. Thus the right to freedom of expression for all Canadians implied a duty to respect freedom of expression, but such responsibilities were never made explicit.

This was in part due to the fact that the *Charter* covers the laws and regulations governments can pass, and how these are applied. Individual businesses, institutions and organizations must be challenged under either federal or provincial human rights codes. The limits of duties and rights were left to the Courts to decide, based on individual cases.

The *Charter* furthermore clearly identifies certain rights in its own formulation and has introduced new ones, where none previously existed. For instance, the rights of women to equal treatment are maintained in two places, one implicitly in Article 15 but also more explicitly in Section 28. New rights were created under Article 15 of the *Charter*, as disadvantaged groups identified at a point in time may have rights to employment that others do not, and it permits discrimination against those who are not members of such a group, in particular cases.

The *Charter's* interaction with previously existing rights sets up potential conflicts. Some of these involve differential treatment of religions, and conflict between stated religious beliefs and other rights, such as the right to live in peace and security, and the right to a full and effective defense in a criminal trial. These cases and others continue to be contentious.

To date, the Supreme Court of Canada has consistently taken an approach of carefully balancing competing rights and has tried to define circumscribed limits on one right only when it comes into conflict with another. It has also exercised caution in imposing financial obligations on governments.

Rapid urbanization, with higher concentrations of minorities near large urban centres, has led to different understandings of values between smaller towns on the one hand, and cities on the other.

Rapid change in social mores has led to changes in what is acceptable in the definition of marriage and what is taught in schools. There is a widespread emphasis on neutrality of the public space. Both Quebec and Newfoundland have asked for and received constitutional amendments that permit them to fund solely secular schools not based on any religious tradition.

Current values

- An ongoing emphasis on legal rights and the rule of law
- Canada as a Parliamentary democracy
- Canada as a Constitutional Monarchy
- A new openness to diversity along with a growth of feeling of the need for reasonable limits (includes attitudes to various provinces as well as to religious and ethnocultural communities)
- An ongoing wish for Canada to develop and keep to its own path, independent of any foreign power
- Importance of Courts and limits on Courts
- Limits on the role of religion in the public sphere
- Bringing diverse groups together to participate in a common civic polity while recognizing their right to be attached to many of their separate traditions and beliefs
- The importance of rights and the need for balance between competing rights and interests, including a desire to strike a balance between individual rights and the public good
- An attachment to traditional symbols, without imposing these traditions in everyday life (e.g. God, the cross and Christian religion)
- A recognition of the importance of French and English, but with various views on how this importance should be implemented in different provinces
- A desire for peace.

Values in the future

As noted above, even what was once considered a fundamental value (e.g. separate school in Quebec, traditional marriage) can change. It is up to us to consistently review our values to be aware of what we wish to preserve, what might be changed, and what effects such changes will have. The principles we think should guide our actions as citizens surely merit this type of consideration and discussion.

QUESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING

1. What are “Canadian Values”? Are all values equal? For example, social norms are shifting and, in Canada, the definition of marriage has changed. What about polygamy, which is accepted in other cultures?
2. Is it possible to define “Canadian values”? Can we agree to an acceptable standard (e.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)?
3. Is promoting secularism an answer to rights issues over religious disputes? How does one institute the values of a purely secular state? Further, how does a secular state fit with religious rights and freedoms in Canada’s Constitution? Is secularism not a belief and value system in itself?
4. Quebec’s proposed Charter of Values attempted to secularize the province in the hopes of avoiding religious conflict. Would it have been a viable solution, and/or a model for the rest of Canada?
5. Although the Supreme Court of Canada has been careful in its approach to balancing competing rights, by defining limits on one’s rights only when they come into conflict with another, how does this measure of judgment work within the realm of a national identity, when Canada’s demographics continue to change due to the influx of immigration? Is national identity rooted in demographics, or history, or a combination? And in what balance?
6. ‘Reasonable accommodation’ is a term now used to determine limits to openness to diversity, as they relate to the practices of culture and religion of various communities. What is considered “reasonable”, and who defines/should define this term?
7. Does respect for a nation’s history, which provides a foundation for its successes, matter? To what degree?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- ❖ Establishing a measuring rod to balance individual rights with the public good.
- ❖ How do we acknowledge and remember both the positive and negative aspects of our nation’s heritage/history in the face of challenges that Canada is too Eurocentric?
- ❖ In a country where traditional Christian religions and a Judeo-Christian heritage have played a large role in both private and public life, how can an appropriate balance be made between these and the many other faiths and traditions now in the country? How do we ensure preservation of what we value, while allowing for ongoing accommodation and adaptation?

CHAPTER FIVE

Generally, any form of civic engagement supports integration and belonging.

Canada Day,
Parliament Hill,
Ottawa, Ontario.



Belonging becoming a part of a “mosaic” culture

"The whole of the world, the history of the world, is a history of belonging," says Jean Vanier, a prominent philosophical thinker.

Vanier maintains that the desire to belong is a deep psychological drive, that it is part of human nature to need to engage in relationships where we are valued and accepted by others. An individual's sense of “belonging” refers to how someone locates him/herself within a physical space or within human society, and influences how people relationally connect to one another.

The New York University-based Institute for Public Knowledge explains belonging as three interconnected dynamics:

1. A person's feelings of identification with a group (usually connected to a specific physical space)
2. That group's recognition of her or his belonging, and
3. The practices and material conditions that constitute belonging and exclusion

For people who relocate to a new physical space, leaving behind their traditional "group," the question of belonging is critical to their success and ability to integrate into their new society.

Group membership

Jean Vanier expresses that human beings have always drawn lines, and established "groups" as a way of creating different identities and in order to feel a sense of belonging to something.

Author and educator John Dalla Costa concurs:

"Human beings have always drawn lines. We've drawn lines around families, and said, 'I belong to this family' or 'I belong to this community', 'I belong to this tribe', 'I belong to this nation'. That's part of how we create identity and, to a degree, that's necessary, we can't escape it."

Not only does group membership award an individual a sense of belonging, but also a sense of security. From an evolutionary perspective, belonging to a group was always greatly tied to individual survival – hunting together, sharing communal tasks, helping each other, and enjoying safety in numbers.

The ability to develop a sense of belonging is foundational to one's personal development. Infants rely on their parents to provide basic needs, from food and shelter to love and affection. From infancy we learn that belonging feels safe and satisfying and, later in life, continue to seek it by pursuing feelings of belonging through family, friends, work relationships and wider community groups.

Group membership is an opportunity for individuals to expand their horizons and learn from other people. Our brains process at a faster pace when we are

stimulated by working with others. When we belong to a group of people, we gain power, insight and emotional support. We gain access to other people's strengths, knowledge and skills, and are rewarded by the pleasures of giving and receiving.

Being part of a group can improve our sense of value and self-esteem, help round out our sense of identity and provide a source of strength and moral support in difficult times.

In today's world, group membership (cultural, religious) is where individuals feel safely allowed to be who they are – without fear of punishment, exclusion or discrimination (in such matters as dress, acts of worship, cultural traditions, for instance).

Social psychologists have been studying the human drive and need to belong for well over a century. In his famous 1943 paper, "A Theory of Human Motivation", Abraham Maslow proposed that the human need to belong was one of the five basic needs required for self-actualization. After physiological (food and sleep) and safety needs, he ranked the need for belonging as the next level up in the human "Hierarchy of Needs" (followed by esteem and self-actualization).

An individual's sense of belonging is also intrinsically tied to the physical space in which she or he is operating. The place (whether that refers to a nation, region, community, etc.) where individuals live is a core part of their identity formation. So, when individuals become a part of a new physical space, not only have they left their "group" behind, but also the familiarity and sense of security of their surroundings and the support systems their environment provided.

Group recognition or exclusion

Belonging to a group requires that the group recognizes someone as being part of it.

The dominant cultures within a society are the ones who typically determine who and what "belongs" to the dominant group, and thus given social advantage. The practices and standards set by the dominant cultures constitute the norm, and become the ones that all other ways of being are judged and assessed.

Individuals who exhibit or observe ways of being in society that are not compatible with the practices of the dominant culture are typically perceived as “the other,” are not always recognized as belonging, and may be excluded.

Exclusion is the antithesis of belonging. It means certain individuals could experience social disadvantage based on the groups of which they are perceived to be a part.

Henry Tajfel, a social psychologist, known for his original work on the cognitive aspects of prejudice and social identity theory¹, proposed that since the groups to which people belonged were an important source of pride and self-esteem, people may attempt to increase their self-image by enhancing the status of the group to which they belong (e.g., “Canada is the best country in the world”). Alternatively, people may choose to increase their self-image by discriminating and holding prejudiced views against another group (e.g., “Americans are rude”).

Through such a process of social categorization (putting people into social groups, also known as stereotyping) we divide the world into “them” and “us”, or an in-group (us) and an out-group (them).

Tajfel further proposed that while stereotyping is based on a normal cognitive process (the tendency to group things together) it often descends into prejudice because of the tendency to exaggerate the differences between groups, as well as the similarities within them, thereby enhancing “them” and “us” divisions.

Canada as a multicultural society

Canada sees itself as a nation that is predicated on its sense of multiculturalism, which recognizes the multiplicity of cultures that constitute our society, and aims to celebrate and promote equal treatment of, and opportunity for, all these cultures. We have come to use the term “multiculturalism” to describe the many different religious traditions and cultural influences that coexist and form our overarching Canadian culture.

Multiculturalism is reflected in the law through the Canadian *Multiculturalism Act* and section 27² of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Enacted in 1988, Canada's *Multiculturalism Act*³ states as policy, to “recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage”. Canada’s multiculturalism policy aims to reduce and redistribute the privileges enjoyed by the dominant cultures by respecting and recognizing the legitimacy of the other cultures, and by so doing, helping avoid, or reduce, their exclusion (or “otherness”) by the dominant cultures.

One key outcome of multiculturalism is the way newcomers to Canada get to join their adopted society. Newcomers to some countries (for example, the United States) are expected to “assimilate” into society through adopting the practices and dominant culture of that country – joining what has become known as a “melting-pot” culture. Canada's policy of multiculturalism, on the other hand, means that individuals are meant to “integrate” into Canadian society while being free to practice their cultures and traditions (provided they are in line with Canadian criminal and human rights laws) – becoming a part of a “mosaic” culture.

Canadian multiculturalism is seen by many as having been a successful social policy, in that it has fostered peaceful coexistence and social harmony. Indicators of its success are thought to include:

- A higher proportion of immigrants who become citizens than in other countries
- A higher proportion of Members of Parliament who are foreign-born than in other countries
- A population that is mainly supportive of immigrants and immigration
- Canadians’ perception of multiculturalism as a key part of their Canadian identity.

While Canadian multiculturalism is looked upon with great admiration outside the country, some argue that official multiculturalism encourages the creation or perpetuation of cultural and geographic ethnic enclaves. Another criticism of multiculturalism is that it allows cultural practices that are not seen to be compatible with traditional Canadian culture.

Challenges of belonging

Regardless of how multicultural and respectful Canadian society is, for a new Canadian it remains a new culture, requiring a process of gradual integration and belonging.

Some of the factors a new Canadian may encounter include language, dialect, colloquialisms, humour, socializing (discussion of hobbies and pastimes such as sports games, golf, home maintenance, cottage life), Christian traditions, democratic practices, rights and freedoms, and potentially unaccustomed-to social values such as gender equality, same-sex relationships, gender identity and expression, among others.

It is normal to feel alienation and a sense of exclusion when attempting to join a group (in this case, society) that has many factors in common, and which an individual may not fully share. Exclusion is heightened when the group does not make deliberate attempts at including, or discriminates against a newcomer because of his/her difference from the dominant culture.

When considering religion, for example, there are many ways that Canada continues to uphold certain Christian values and traditions. Some statutory holidays fall on Christian holy days, and individuals who abide by these traditions are automatically able to observe their traditions. Those from other faiths, however, must request accommodation to observe their faith traditions and holy days – which may underscore their “otherness”. A deliberate attempt at inclusion would have Canadian institutions facilitate the recognition and accommodation of other faiths and traditions.

Similarly, to nurture an inclusive environment, Canadian workplaces and educational institutions could accommodate, where feasible, individuals from non-Christian faiths who need access to appropriate spaces to engage in worship and practices related to their sincerely held beliefs.

At times, a clash of beliefs or values can interfere with one's sense of belonging. As an example, someone whose faith does not sanction same-sex relations might feel disaffected in a society that recognizes same-sex rights.

It is important in such cases to recognize that accepting rights as required by Canadian law, does not infringe on one's own beliefs and values.

Enhancing one's sense of belonging

Although it is society's responsibility to create an inclusive environment where diversity is recognized, respected and valued, individuals must also make an effort to enhance their own sense of belonging within Canada.

Language Proficiency – It is critical to have fluency in one of the country's official languages, not only to improve work prospects, but also to enhance one's ability to fully engage with activities in various sectors of society.

A 2012 report titled “Language Skills and the Social Integration of Canada's Adult Immigrants”, by the Institute for Research on Public Policy concluded, following extensive research, that a “lack of proficiency in an official language combined with inadequate access to cultural knowledge can lead to limited opportunities for immigrants to fully participate in Canadian society”. It also emphasized the need for “opportunities to interact with those who speak English or French”.

Volunteering – The benefits of volunteering include the enhancement of social and human capital, which provides a stepping stone for the integration of immigrants into the host society. It could foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the community in which individuals are residing, help improve language skills, and develop the friendships and networks that are essential to integration.

Civic engagement – Generally, any form of civic engagement⁴ supports integration and belonging, while contributing to the public good. Becoming politically involved and informed contributes a sense of ownership over policy decisions and platforms, while broadening an understanding of the Canadian political process, democratic institutions, and citizens' rights and responsibilities. Civic engagement helps to improve language skills and expand one's community networks.

Children and belonging

While adult newcomers to Canada face challenges of belonging to the new host culture, a child's integration tends to include intra-familial culture clashes. Children tend to adapt to the host culture much sooner and more unreservedly than their parents, resulting in a conflict of loyalty between their families' culture and the new culture. The challenge for parents is to influence and encourage children to find positive ways to experience belonging.

The main issues of conflict between children and parents tend to revolve around matters relating to rights and freedoms, socializing with friends of the opposite sex, making friends from other cultures, and expectations for high academic achievement.

Consistently engaging in open and frank conversations about culture, values, what is important and why, helps parents and children to develop a shared sense of belonging. Conversations can include discussing aspirations, the reasons why the family decided to immigrate, and their dreams for the future – recognizing that compromises will have to be made to reach a common ground. Parents who are able to minimize the risk of conflict with their children stand a better chance of remaining a close and engaged part of their children's lives.

Section Endnotes

1. Social identity is a person's sense of who s/he is based on his/her group membership(s).
2. Section 27 states: This *Charter* shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.
3. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-18.7/page-1.html>
4. An individual or collective action to identify and address issues of public concern

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QUESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING

1. Author and educator, John Dalla Costa, states, “Human beings have always drawn lines. We’ve drawn lines around families, and said, ‘I belong to this family’ or ‘I belong to this community’, ‘I belong to this tribe’, ‘I belong to this nation’. That’s part of how we create identity, and to a degree, that’s necessary, we can’t escape it.” It is human nature to hold to the familiar, hence immigrants seek out their “own” when immigrating abroad, for the sake of belonging. How can proponents of national cohesion/harmony encourage the ‘transfer’ of some of these feelings of belonging and even loyalties, from the group of origin to the ‘new group’ in fostering a national sense of belonging? What are ways that a newcomer can achieve balance between belonging to the new culture and that of the ‘old’ culture?

2. Belonging is a primary human need, but are there other needs that are just as important to consider when immigrating to a new society, a new culture? What are these other needs and how do they interact with the need to belong?

3. How does one maintain and celebrate one’s cultural heritage – as encouraged by the *Multiculturalism Act* – while integrating into a host society? How does one learn what aspects to let go of, and retain, with respect to Western norms and constitutions?

4. Children’s need to integrate into a new culture and be accepted by it sometimes conflicts with parents’ strict religious beliefs. How can this conflict be reduced and managed so as to cause the least confrontation? How do we separate out personal from societal values?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- ❖ Helping parents understand what to expect from their children once they move to a new culture.
- ❖ Many newcomers move into/establish enclaves. How do we foster an understanding in them that they are a part of a new nation, are integral to its growth, and thus encourage them to accept a sense of responsibility and allegiance to their new home ?
- ❖ Would there be a benefit to establishing national policies of expectations on the prospective immigrants, before their being allowed to immigrate to Canada? For example, an agreement of understanding (and adherence to) certain norms enshrined in our Constitution that may not be standard in their country of origin.

CHAPTER SIX

What can you do to foster a greater sense of belonging in your community?

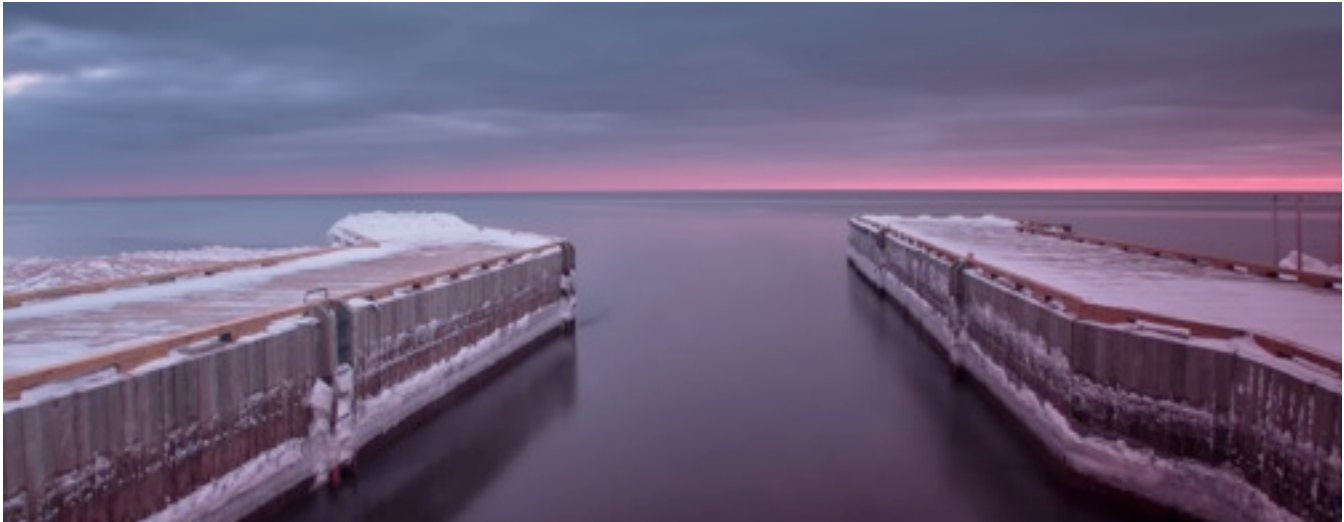
Painters sell their works of art, Quebec City, Quebec.



Civic Engagement the rewards are many

In this chapter, we will discuss the path to civic engagement and how to foster it in a meaningful way. We will examine how citizens can impact public issues by devoting time and energy with their families, communities or on their own, towards initiatives of public interest. By being an engaged citizen, we help our society grow. In the end, when active citizens take a leadership role and contribute their time, energy and goodwill, the rewards are many.

Understandably, the ability to influence societal change is a significant component of living in a democracy. But there is more to democracy than a jaunt to the ballot box every four years.



What can you do? become an active participant

For some, voting remains a symbolic act in our democracy. Our sense of participation should not be limited to marking an X every few years, but to having a more substantial reach in our community.

The community in this discussion can be broadly defined as faith-based, educational, business, or social services and can be local, regional or national. Civic engagement is about the right of the citizen to influence the public good, determine how best to seek that good, and contribute to reforming the institutions that do not serve the public good as well as they should. Our participation can include efforts to directly address an issue, concern or need, and to collaborate with others in our community to realize a goal, problem-solve or interact with institutions. Action begins when individuals feel the sense of personal responsibility to uphold their obligations as part of any community.

What can you do?

What can you do to foster a greater sense of belonging in your community? You might begin by going in search of stakeholders who reflect your interests and values regarding leadership, diversity or problem-solving. Each of these components will guide you as you decide where to become an active participant in your community.

Some initiatives you may consider:

- Become a member of a group or an association that reflects the values you hold in high esteem, your ethnocultural or linguistic background, your skills, expertise, training, education or interests
- Volunteer in your place of worship, food bank, health care centre or community
- Fundraise by walking, running, organizing, supporting causes that speak to you

When it comes to civic engagement on an electoral platform, the first thing that comes to mind for many of us is voting. This form of democratic participation can, however, be extended past the ballot box, as you consider:

- Volunteering for a candidate or a political organization
- Developing a political voice on a municipal, provincial or national level

A free press is the cornerstone of a democracy and one of the most cherished ideals. It is generally believed that free press is essential to foster democratic norms and values, and plays a vital role in raising awareness among people. You can play an active role in your community by sharing ideas, and:

- Contacting the newspaper editor regarding content
- Reflecting on bias and providing alternative or supplementary information



Vermillion Lakes, Banff National Park, Alberta.

How can you be heard? identify, discuss, collaborate, connect

How can you be heard?

Identifying issues that are vital to you and talking about them with people in your community are good starting points.

- What opinions do your networks have?
- By sharing their experiences, does it shed light on a particular situation for you?

Collaborate with your peers, family, colleagues and neighbours to create insights and work towards solutions to those issues.

The subsequent step is to seek out stakeholders who are responsible for those issues and connect with them, perhaps through social media or person-to-person.

Moving from personal reflection to networking and action can be a long road, and one that comes with many challenges and hurdles. When you decide to work towards having a tangible impact on civic life, and making a contribution in a meaningful way, consider the following:

- Attempt to listen to people with differing points of view
- Sticky issues are part of the process, so do not shy away from them
- Goal-setting is vital to keeping you on track

- Go in search of people from different socio-economic backgrounds and have them be part of the discussion
- Seek out practical solutions
- Generate public support for your ideas
- Share the idea in clear, concise language because you would like many people to understand and be part of the solution

The Internet is an effective way to stay connected with like-minded people and causes they care about. Leverage technology's power to encourage, facilitate, and increase citizen-centered dialogue and action around issues.

Create opportunities for large numbers of diverse citizens to engage in public decisions and shape public policies that affect their lives. Collaboration is just as important as deliberation. We learn from acting together. By collaborating, citizens build public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, and intangible ones like traditions and norms.

There tends to be greater involvement in civic initiatives when individuals feel a connection to their communities, and when they can participate and be heard. Citizens, public officials, community groups can all play important roles in fostering a more inclusive society.

Interfaith and Belonging about the initiative

In 2011, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation launched the Interfaith and Belonging Initiative, a three-year project dedicated to civic education and engagement.

The Interfaith and Belonging initiative sparked a national dialogue on interfaith cooperation and communication, facilitated a national framework for dialogue between and among groups of different ethnocultural and faith-based communities, and worked with communities to deepen an understanding of rights and responsibilities, and how best to encourage a deeper sense of belonging.

Who am I?

a Buddhist?

a Hindu?

a Christian?

a Baha'i?

a Muslim?

a Jew?

a Sikh?

Take
another
look...


See **people**
for who they
really are.

I am Canadian!

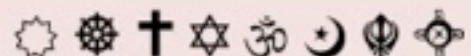
CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION
CRRF  **FCRR**
FONDATION CANADIENNE DES RELATIONS RACIALES

www.crrf-fcrr.ca

INTERFAITH AND BELONGING:
A CIVIC EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

 Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

We acknowledge the financial support of the Inter-Action, the Multiculturalism Grants and Contributions Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in the delivery of this project.





Moving from personal reflection to networking and action can be a long road, and one that comes with many challenges and hurdles.



The Canadian Race Relations Foundation is Canada's leading agency dedicated to the elimination of racism and the promotion of harmonious race relations in the country. Created as part of the historic Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement, the Foundation's governing legislation, the *Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act*, was given Royal Assent on February 1, 1991. The *Act* was proclaimed by the Federal Government on October 28, 1996, and the Foundation opened its doors in 1997.

www.crrf-fcrr.ca



Interfaith and Belonging:

A Civic Education and Engagement Initiative

Access the full toolkit:
www.crrf-fcrr.ca



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Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
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