



January 2022

## **In January, on the 24th is International Day of Education**

Greetings!

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 marked the first-ever International Day of Education. The United Nations General Assembly declared this special day to empower all countries to increase their political commitment to education so that all children and youth may receive the benefits of a full education.

Today:

- 262 million children and youth still do not attend school.
- 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math.
- Less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school.
- Some four million children and youth refugees are out of school.

In her statement about International Day of Education, UNESCO Director General, Audrey Azoulay said: "Education is the most powerful force in our hands to ensure significant improvements in health, to stimulate economic growth, to unlock the potential and innovation we need to build more resilient and sustainable societies. We will not succeed in breaking the cycle of poverty, mitigating climate change, adapting to the technological revolution, let alone achieve gender equality, without ambitious political commitment to universal education."

To read more on the goals and plans for International Day of Education, [Click](#)

[Here.](#)

Enjoy this edition of News,

Jag Parmar,  
Administrator

## Profile of the Month



### Introducing our Profile of the Month: Wei Djao

I was born in Shanghai, China, and grew up in Hong Kong as a Roman Catholic, attending Catholic schools. But by the time I came to Canada in the 1960s, I was an atheist. At that time, there were few, if any, organizations for atheists, agnostics, skeptics, humanists, or freethinkers.

I received my Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Toronto and taught in higher education institutions in Canada, the United States, and one year in Hong Kong.

While I learned humanist values from Western civilization and education, I also reached into my Chinese heritage for humanist ideals and practices. For thousands of years, Chinese civilization has been essentially secular as philosophy influences behavior in China the way religion does in other cultures. The teachings of the two major schools of thought, established by Confucius and Lao Zi, were part of my upbringing. We can argue about the specific assertions in these two traditions but there were no supernatural beings or dogmas ascribed to divine origins as in religions. It is possible to live without religion but with humanist values. This is the main thesis of my latest book *A Humanist Path: Ancient Chinese Wisdom for Curious Walkers 2021*, available in both paperback and Kindle eBook.

In my retirement, I have joined humanist and similar organizations, including Humanist Canada. I think acting collectively gives us strength so that the values of seeking truth, honesty, compassion, justice, reason and learning from each other, and so on, could be put into practice in Canada and elsewhere.

**If you'd like to share your story with us, please contact [Jag Parmar](#) so you can be the next Member Profile of the Month!**

## Course: Culture, Conflict, and Democracy

**Course:**



# Culture, Conflict, and Democracy

With Ashok Panikkar

This course, offered in collaboration with MetaCulture, addresses the following questions: how do we make sense of our constantly changing world? What are the key moving parts of the political, cultural, and economic aspects of the world and how do they relate to each other? How do we engage with urgent and vital issues around us while still maintaining our sanity? How do we connect to other humans whose experiences are different and accommodate them within our neighborhoods and nations? Most importantly, what are the prospects for liberal, secular, and humanistic societies at a time when the world is becoming more insular, xenophobic, and illiberal?

To learn more, [CLICK HERE.](#)

**The course will run for 12 weeks, on Mondays from 5.00 to 6.30 pm EST, beginning January 24, 2022.**

## **Course Fees:**

\$150 for Humanist Canada student members

\$250 for Humanist Canada members

\$300 for non-members

[Click Here to Register](#)

## Webinar Series 2022: Histories of Indian Residential Schools in an Era of Truth and Reconciliation



### Webinar: Histories Of Indian Residential Schools in an Era of Truth and Reconciliation

with Crystal Gail Fraser, Ph.D.

In May of 2021, the remains of 215 children were found in an unmarked mass grave next to the former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. In June, 751 human remains were uncovered next to the former Marieval residential school in Saskatchewan. Other sites have been investigated since these appalling discoveries.

The history of residential schools became widely known in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2007–2015). In its report, the [TRC estimated](#) that "of the approximately 150,000 children who attended residential schools, at least 3,200 never returned home. Since then, the figure has been revised significantly upwards; it is believed that at least 6,000 children died in the residential schools."

In this presentation, Dr. Crystal Gail Fraser will share the history of Indian Residential Schools, discuss the tragedy of the thousands of unmarked graves

of Indigenous children who were institutionalized, and how we need to continue focusing on these hard truths during this era of reconciliation.

Dr. Crystal Gail Fraser is Gwichyà Gwich'in, an Assistant Professor at the University of Alberta, an intergenerational Indian Residential School Survivor. Her work is dedicated to better understanding colonial histories in northern Canada and the complexities of residential schooling histories through oral histories and working with survivors. Crystal co-authored 150 Acts of Reconciliation for the Last 150 Days of Canada's 150, which has been foundational to advancing reconciliation among Canadians. To learn more, [Click Here.](#)

**Date: Sunday, January 30, 2022**

**Time: 3 pm EST**

[Click Here to Register](#)

## The Canadian Armed Forces sign a Memorandum of Understanding



Humanist Canada is pleased to announce the signing of a two-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy and the Canadian Armed Forces as of 10 November 2021. In line with the launch of the Humanist Canada Chaplain Accreditation Program in September 2021, this MOU enables the consideration of humanist chaplains for service in the Canadian Armed Forces. Please join us in celebrating this tremendous milestone in Canadian humanist history!

For more information on how you can become a humanist military chaplain please check out our website <https://www.humanistcanada.ca> or contact: [hccc@humanistcanada.ca](mailto:hccc@humanistcanada.ca).

## Call for Submissions



**Special Issue on the theme,  
"Apostasy and other forms of  
leaving religion".**

Religions is an international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access journal on religions and theology, published monthly online by [MDPI](#).

Religions is creating a Special Issue on the theme: "Apostasy and Other Forms

of Leaving Religion". Manuscripts should be submitted online at [mdpi.com](https://mdpi.com) by **January 31st, 2022**.

For any inquiry, please contact the Special Issue Editor, Julia Martínez-Ariño at [j.martinez.arino@rug.nl](mailto:j.martinez.arino@rug.nl)

[Read more about the Call for Papers](#)

## Visit Our Web Store



### Here is What's New On Our Web Store!

Don't forget to visit our online store! We're a small shop right now, but we have big plans! Check-in regularly to find new HC logo items like our masks,

mugs, and pins. We also have a number of books, written by our HC family of authors.

If you have any ideas about what we should offer, send them our way!

[Visit our online store](#)

## December Polling Results:

### Do Doctors have the right to not be vaccinated against Covid 19?

There are other doctors and healthcare providers who are refusing to get vaccinated, even at the risk of losing their jobs. If it is a doctor's job to save lives, do they have the right to choose to not be vaccinated?

**Here is how you responded to our poll:**

**16.3% of you said Yes**

**83.8% of you said No**

## Poll For This Month

### The deportation Decision for the trucker who caused the Humboldt Broncos Bus Crash

A lawyer for Jaskirat Singh Sidhu had sent a voluminous amount of paperwork to the Canada Border Services Agency earlier this year arguing why he should be allowed to stay in Canada once his sentence has been served.

Sidhu, who was given very poor and minimal training as a truck driver, was sentenced to eight years after pleading guilty to dangerous driving causing death and bodily harm in the April 2018 collision that killed 16 people and injured 13.

Four hundred and fifteen pages worth of letters were sent to the federal agency. Letters are from Sidhu's family, the public, and three Broncos families, including Scott Thomas whose 18-year-old son, Evan, died in the crash.



"I know for a fact that (Sidhu) will never drive a semi again. I know for a fact that if he could take back what happened that day he would in a heartbeat. He would trade places with any one of those boys," Thomas said earlier this year.

But there are parents like Chris Joseph, whose son, Jaxon, also died in the crash, is one of several Broncos families who have written letters asking for Sidhu to be deported. He said it's the law and laws are there for a reason. "If he's deported, I could maybe even toy with the idea of considering forgiveness. But if he's not deported, then we're going to be even more hurt and I don't think I'll ever get to that place."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/deportation-decision-delayed-humboldt-broncos-bus-crash-1.6275565>

Should Jaskirat Singh Sidhu be deported or allowed to stay in Canada?

**Deported**

Select

**Stay**

Select



**Tell us what you'd like to see in the Newsletter.**

To ensure the newsletter is relevant we invite your response to a few short questions. Having feedback from across the country is our goal. [Click here!](#)

### *Why membership in Humanist Canada is important!*

We simply can't do it without you. We are entirely funded through memberships and donations. Your involvement is incredibly significant and goes a long way to support lasting change for a better society and a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail.

Humanist Canada has just launched a new member system that will allow you to update your own information. Click on the button below, and you will be prompted to set up your login information.

**Already a member**

**Join Humanist Canada**

If you have any questions about renewing, please contact the National Office at [members@humanistcanada.ca](mailto:members@humanistcanada.ca) or 1-877-486-2671.