

## **Bill #6**

# **The Religious Literacy Act**

**WHEREAS** Over 32 million Canadians identify as being a part of 105 distinctive religious groups<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** “Somewhere in the primeval foundations of all the world’s religions we find, basically, the same moral imperatives”<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** “There remains a widespread illiteracy about religion that spans the globe. There are many consequences of this illiteracy, but the most urgent is that it fuels conflict and antagonisms and hinders cooperative endeavors in all arenas of human experience.”<sup>3</sup>

### **THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, BY AND WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF MANITOBA, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

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- 1** As of January 1, 2015 The Government of Canada will establish the Faith Acceptance Institute for Theological Harmony [**FAITH**] to administer programs and advise the government on matters of inter-faith relations and tolerance
  - (1) **FAITH** will hire teachers based on their involvement in their respective faith communities and demonstration of religious tolerance.
    - (a) **FAITH** teachers do not have to hold degrees in religious studies or education, nor do they have to be the designated leaders of ceremonies within their respective communities.
    - (b) **FAITH** teachers will teach students the modules on their respective faith.
  - (2) **FAITH**’s governing board will be publicly elected every four years and consist of:
    - (a) One **FAITH** teacher from each province and territory.
      - I. This member will remain religiously impartial.
    - (b) One member from each religious community comprising more than 0.5% of the Canadian population.
      - I. These members will be elected internally within their respective communities.
      - II. Communities may choose to be jointly represented by one member.

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, 2001. Cited in Heater, Derek, *World Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Thinking and Its Opponents*, 2002. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Harvard Divinity School, *Religious Literacy Project*. 2014. <<http://hds.harvard.edu/faculty-research/programs-and-centers/religious-literacy-project>>

- 2 All schools in Canada are mandated to offer mandatory religious tolerance classes from kindergarten until grade 12.
  - (1) Modules would include, but are not limited to:
    - (a) Overviews of major systems of belief and their respective sects, including, but not limited to:
      - I. Christianity
      - II. Judaism
      - III. Islam
      - IV. Hinduism
      - V. Buddhism
      - VI. Sikhism
      - VII. Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto
      - VIII. Indigenous beliefs in Canada and around the world and
      - IX. Atheism and Agnosticism
    - (b) Comparative analysis of world religions.
    - (c) Critical analysis of religious perspectives and values.
    - (d) Reading of and critical engagement with major religious texts and oral teachings.
  
- 3 All adults over 18 must attend a **FAITH** sponsored course once every five years.
  - (1) This would include similar modules to those listed above.
  - (2) Special provisions would be made to **FAITH** teachers, religious leaders, and scholars of theology and religion.