



26 February 2013

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
Langevin Block 80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3
Canada

Fax: 613 941 6900

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

Congratulations on the establishment of the Office of Religious Freedom and the appointment of Dr. Andrew Bennett as Ambassador.

The Canadian Council of Churches welcomes and looks forward to cooperating with the Office of Religious Freedom in its stated mandate to protect and advocate on behalf of religious minorities under threat, opposing religious hatred and intolerance, and promoting pluralism abroad.

We represent 25 member churches from Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Historic Protestant, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christian traditions. Together, these churches work for greater unity and a more faithful and just Canada. The Canadian Council of Churches has been promoting and exercising freedom of religion and conscience for nearly 70 years now.

The Canadian Council of Churches works closely with representative bodies of other faith communities in Canada. This includes cooperation through the *Canadian Interfaith Conversation*, whose charter vision is to be an advocate for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life, promoting harmony and spiritual insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthening our society's moral foundations, and working for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.



We believe that our depth, breadth and expertise make us a very important component of future consultations and announcements regarding the Office of Religious Freedom.

Please be assured of our continued prayers as you work for the common good and justice for all in Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Hamilton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton
General Secretary