

*Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ*

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27 November, 2015

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8

Dear Minister Wilson-Raybould and Minister Goodale,

I am writing on behalf of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada to congratulate you both on your party's victory in the federal election as well as on your recent cabinet appointments. I want to assure you of our prayers and extend our best wishes as you begin your responsibilities as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

MCC is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, sharing God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC Canada currently supports programs in 60 countries through the efforts of over 1,000 workers, 14,000 volunteers, and 122,000 members of supporting churches.

For several decades, MCC has engaged in restorative justice initiatives that seek to address root causes of crime, support victims of crime, and ensure public safety is a key part of the offender reintegration process. Our long-standing experience across Canada in programs such as prisoner visitation, victim-offender reconciliation, and Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) has convinced us that community-based justice initiatives are a valuable investment in crime prevention. CoSA, for instance—a program previously supported by the Department of Public Safety—has proven to be very effective in reintegrating high-risk individuals with sexual offending histories into the community after their prison sentences are complete. We strongly believe such programs play an essential role in preventing crime and keeping communities safe.

Given our experience walking with victims and offenders, MCC is pleased to see the mandate for the Minister of Justice include a comprehensive review of recent changes to the criminal justice system and sentencing reforms to ensure they are truly enhancing public safety. Our programmatic expertise has convinced us that our communities are *not* made safer when we focus almost all of our attention on punitive approaches to crime and increased incarceration. To this end, we are greatly encouraged to see your government's commitment to strengthening the use of restorative justice processes and rehabilitative services.

As you work to build a safer and more just Canada, MCC encourages you to strengthen your departments' capacities for responding creatively to crime in Canada by reinforcing rehabilitative correctional programs—both during incarceration and after release—and investing in innovative, community-based approaches that bring genuine justice and healing.

As we have with all Canadian governments over the past five decades, MCC will continue to offer our perspective and expertise—guided by the voices of our partners and the people we serve in Canada and abroad—in order to contribute to policies and programs that are better able to address the profound challenges of our world.

Once again, I wish you both well and assure you of our prayers as you provide leadership to your departments. We look forward to engaging with you in constructive discussions on important public policy issues in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,



Donald G. Peters  
Executive Director  
MCC Canada

CC: Hon. Rob Nicholson, Official Opposition Critic for Justice, Conservative Party of Canada  
Hon. Erin O'Toole, Official Opposition Critic for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness,  
Conservative Party of Canada  
Murray Rankin, Opposition Critic for Justice, New Democratic Party of Canada  
David Christopherson, Opposition Critic for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, New  
Democratic Party of Canada