



November 27, 2015

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

**Re: Physician Assisted Death**

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the 25 member denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches, I am writing to you on the topic of physician assisted death.

After thorough exploration and reflection on our member churches' stances on physician-assisted death in Canada, and in the world at large, the members of the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches all agree that respect for life is a God-given first principle on which we are all striving for pastoral wisdom. A number of our member churches maintain that medical interventions intended to cause death are wrong, while other member churches are engaged in a new process of discernment to apply this first principle to life/death decision-making.

We all recognize that this is a most serious and sobering topic, which engages key questions of both theology and pastoral practice, and so requires time for proper and truthful reflection. We also believe the same is true for politicians tasked with crafting a law that is just and compassionate.

Therefore, in order to allow for a full and thorough public discussion, we ask that the government request the Supreme Court of Canada to extend for a reasonable period of time the suspension of the implementation of its ruling in *Carter v. Canada*.

Please be assured of my prayers as you carry out your important duties on behalf of all Canadians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson Barnett-Cowan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan  
President

Cc: The Honourable Judy Wilson-Raybould, M.P., Minister of Justice

Rona Ambrose, M.P., Leader of the Official Opposition

Thomas Mulcair, M.P., Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

Rhéal Fortin, M.P., Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Elisabeth May, M.P., Leader of the Green Party of Canada

*The Canadian Council of Churches is the broadest and most inclusive ecumenical body in the world, now representing 25 denominations of Anglican; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox; Protestant; and Catholic traditions. Together we represent more than 85% of the Christians in Canada. The Canadian Council of Churches was founded in 1944.*