



# 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION GUIDE:

## *Called to Be Salt and Light*

April 2025 | A Resource from the Commission on Justice and Peace of The Canadian Council of Churches



THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
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# CONTENTS

Invitation to Prayer and Discernment.....	3
Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.....	5
Rejecting Racism .....	6
Poverty, Homelessness, and Economic Inequality .....	7
Climate Justice .....	8
Peace and Disarmament.....	9
Ending Sexual Exploitation.....	10
Restorative Justice .....	11
Refugee Rights .....	12
Public Healthcare .....	13
Religious Freedom .....	14
Ethical AI Regulation .....	15
Who We Are .....	16

For further information on or links to any of the resources mentioned please visit [justiceandpeace.ca](https://justiceandpeace.ca), an archive website produced by the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of Churches. This archive features over 25 years of ecumenical dialogue and advocacy on various social justice issues in Canada.

Special thanks to the Commission on Justice and Peace Election Guide Subcommittee, the Canadian Council of Churches staff, and the Governing Board Executive for their support in developing this Election Guide.

All Scripture quotations in this document are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE).

# INVITATION TO PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

***“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:13-16)***

As followers of Christ, we are called to be **salt and light** in the world—preserving what is good, illuminating the path of justice, and bearing witness to God’s love and truth. In a time of social division, global uncertainty, and pressing moral challenges, we are invited to engage in Canada’s democratic process with wisdom, humility, and a deep commitment to the common good.

The Canadian Council of Churches (the Council) encourages people of faith to approach the 2025 federal election prayerfully and thoughtfully. Elections provide an opportunity to reflect on how our faith informs our public witness. Christ’s call to love our neighbours compels us to seek the well-being of all, especially people who live on the margins, to care for creation, and to work for justice and reconciliation in our communities and beyond.

Since the 2021 federal election, Canada and the world have faced significant upheaval and transformation:

- **Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples** is a critical responsibility for Canada. The history of residential schools, a system of assimilation that had disastrous effects on students, their families and communities, and the identification of potential unmarked burial sites continue to impact the lives of Indigenous people today. The implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action remain an urgent priority to uphold Indigenous rights.
- **Advancing Anti-Racism** continues to be necessary as racism directly impacts various communities, including Indigenous and Black communities in Canada. Addressing racial inequities in education, employment, policing, and representation in public life requires ongoing commitment and action.
- **Poverty, Homelessness, and Economic Inequality** has worsened as inflation, housing costs, and wealth disparities leave more people struggling to afford their basic necessities. Ensuring a living wage, affordable housing, and fair economic policies is crucial for the dignity of all.
- **Climate Justice** is an urgent moral imperative. Extreme weather events, wildfires, and rising sea levels disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. Faith communities are called to advocate for sustainable policies, ethical environmental stewardship, and a just transition to a green economy.
- **Peace and Disarmament** are urgent global issues. War and humanitarian crises worldwide have caused mass displacement, civilian casualties, and suffering, worsened by violence and weapon proliferation. Canada’s role in diplomacy, arms control, and peacebuilding must be examined.
- **Ending Sexual Exploitation**, including human trafficking and online abuse, is a growing crisis. Stronger human rights protections for vulnerable individuals and greater efforts to combat gender-based violence are necessary.
- **Restorative Justice** offers an approach to criminal justice that emphasizes a greater focus on rehabilitation, community reconciliation, and addressing the root causes of crime.
- **Refugee Rights** are under threat as global displacement reaches record levels. Ensuring Canada respects the rights of all asylum seekers, addressing delays in immigration processes, and improving refugee support services are essential.

- **Public Health Care** faces critical challenges, including hospital shortages, mental health crises, and accessibility concerns. Advocacy for equitable, efficient, well-funded, and inclusive health care is a priority.
- **Religious Freedom** must be safeguarded in Canada and globally. The rise of religious persecution, restrictions on faith expression, and increasing intolerance demand vigilance and advocacy.
- **Ethical AI Regulation** is a new frontier of justice. Artificial intelligence is rapidly shaping society, raising concerns about discrimination, privacy, and accountability. Ethical oversight in AI rooted in human dignity and the common good is essential.

In the face of these realities, Christians are called to engage as active citizens with a deep commitment to justice, peace, and the dignity and worth of all. We are invited to **pray, discern, and act** in ways that reflect the hope and love of Christ.

## How to Use This Guide

This election guide describes broad areas of agreement and is not intended to include all possible concerns. While some churches will invite their members to keep specific issues in mind as they exercise their right to vote, this resource is intended to help individuals and faith communities reflect on the key issues shaping Canada's future and engage in meaningful civic participation. You can use it to:

- **Pray** for Canada, its leaders, and the election process.
- **Discern** how your faith shapes your priorities as a voter.
- **Engage** candidates by asking informed questions on critical issues.
- **Participate** in all-candidates meetings and community discussions.
- **Encourage** others to vote and reflect on their role in shaping Canada's future.

The gospel calls us to engage in public life and to shine the light of Christ's love and justice in the world.

As we approach the 2025 federal election, may we commit ourselves to faithful witness, thoughtful engagement, and hopeful action for the greater good of all.

In Christ's abundant love,

Estee Lau, Chair, Commission on Justice and Peace

Karen Puddicombe, Associate Secretary, Commission on Justice and Peace

Roshney Kurian, Program Facilitator, Commission on Justice and Peace

## A Prayer for the Election

*God of love and justice,*

*We pray for a peaceful and fair election process in Canada.*

*We give thanks for those who seek to serve in public office,*

*And we ask that all leaders be guided by wisdom, compassion, and integrity.*

*Strengthen us to be salt and light in our communities—*

*Seeking justice, caring for the vulnerable, protecting creation,*

*And working together for the common good.*

*May your Spirit lead us in discernment,*

*That we may cast our votes with faith, hope, and love,*

*And continue the work of reconciliation and peace.*

*In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.*

# RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

As people of faith, we recognize that reconciliation is not merely a political or legal obligation but a shared and sacred responsibility—one that calls us to act with justice, humility, and love.

The implementation of the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are still an urgent priority. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is a powerful framework for reconciliation and should be implemented within Canadian law. In 2019, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Inquiry released 231 Calls for Justice, but only 2 have been fully implemented, leaving families and advocates still demanding action.

As Christians, we believe in the sacred dignity of all people and the call to right relationships. We must continue to listen, learn, and advocate alongside Indigenous communities, ensuring that commitments to justice are fully realized.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party implement the TRC's Calls to Action?
2. What steps will you and your party take to integrate UNDRIP in Canadian law?
3. What steps will you and your party take to support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice and what plans do you have to move matters forward?
4. How will you and your party address gaps in Indigenous justice, land rights, and child welfare reforms?

## Resources:

- [Letter to Minister Lametti: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2020)
- [On Promoting Climate Justice and Ending Poverty in Canada: Faith Communities in Canada Speak Out](#) (2015)
- [Expression of Reconciliation from The Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2014)

***“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18)***

# ADVANCING ANTI-RACISM

Racism is a sin. It is a failure to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all people, created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) (cf. Gen 1:27). We are all called to love our neighbours and to reject all forms of racism as a faithful response to God's call to justice. In Canada, racial discrimination continues to affect Black, Indigenous, and other communities, evidenced in the overrepresentation in the prison and child welfare systems, discrimination in housing, employment, and education, and increased violence and harassment.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. What concrete steps will you and your party take to address racism in employment, education, policing, healthcare, and housing to ensure equitable opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and other communities?
2. How will you and your party support community-led initiatives, including funding for education, restorative justice programs, and protections against hate crimes, to foster racial equity?

## Resources:

- [Journeys to the Well – An Ecumenical Devotional Towards Anti-Racism](#) (2025)
- [A Recommitment to Recognize and Combat Racism, Discrimination, and Unearned Privilege: A Statement from the President and General Secretary of The Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2020)
- [Church Leaders' Letter against Anti-Semitism](#) (2003)

***“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)***



# POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

As followers of Christ, we are called to seek justice, care for the vulnerable, and work toward a society where all can live with dignity. Yet poverty, homelessness, and economic inequality remain persistent challenges. In 2022, [9.9% of Canadians—approximately 3.8 million people—lived below the poverty line](#), with Indigenous communities, single-parent families, and racial minorities disproportionately affected.

The COVID-19 pandemic further deepened these disparities, exposing the fragility of our social systems and the urgent need for just policies. Food insecurity has reached historic levels, with [2 million Canadians relying on food banks in March 2023](#)—a 32% increase from the previous year.

Rising housing costs and a shortage of affordable units have fueled homelessness, while working poverty remains a concern as wages remain insufficient to meet the cost of living.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. What measures will you and your party implement to enhance the effectiveness of Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy and ensure it meets its 2030 target to cut poverty by 50%?
2. What policies will you and your party advocate to ensure all individuals have access to sufficient, nutritious food?
3. What concrete steps will you and your party take to increase the supply of affordable housing and support long-term solutions to homelessness?
4. How will you ensure that social assistance programs adequately cover basic needs and are accessible to all eligible individuals without unnecessary barriers?

## Resources:

- [Healing Poverty, Commission on Justice and Peace of The Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2019)
- [On Promoting Climate Justice and Ending Poverty in Canada: Faith Communities in Canada Speak Out](#) (2015)

***“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6)***

# CLIMATE JUSTICE

As Christians, we are called to care for creation and seek justice for those most affected by environmental harm. Climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, making it a moral imperative to act. It is our responsibility as churches and citizens to advocate for climate policies that protect God's creation and future generations.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. What steps will you and your party take to ensure Canada's policies align with global targets to keep global warming below a 1.5 degree increase from pre-industrial levels?
2. What measures will you and your party implement to support the development of an economy that protects creation, workers and communities?
3. How will you and your party address concerns regarding investment in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts in the Global South?

## Resources:

- [\[VIDEO\] Canadian faith leaders issue an urgent plea for climate action](#) (2019)
- [On Promoting Climate Justice and Ending Poverty in Canada: Faith Communities in Canada Speak Out](#) (2015)
- [Letter to Minister Aglukkaq on Canada's Action on Climate Change](#) (2013)

***"Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being."  
(Job 12: 9-10)***



# PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

As followers of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers in a world overtaken by war and violence. Wars and humanitarian crises have caused mass suffering and displacement, underscoring the urgent need for peacebuilding and disarmament. Despite acceding to the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), [Canada remains a major arms exporter, thereby](#) fueling conflicts. [Emerging threats like autonomous weapons and AI in warfare](#) demand strong moral and political leadership. Canada has yet to sign the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#), despite the growing threat of nuclear conflict in the world.

This election, we must hold leaders accountable to pursuing peace, protecting life, and resisting militarization. Faith calls us to reject policies that fuel war and advocate for a Canada committed to true peacebuilding.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party strengthen Canada's role in diplomacy and conflict resolution to prioritize peace over military expansion and further arms control efforts?
2. What steps will you and your party take to comply with the Arms Trade Treaty in Canada?
3. How will you and your party work for nuclear disarmament?
4. How will you and your party regulate emerging military technologies, like AI and autonomous weapons?

## Resources:

- [Called to Be Salt and Light: Open Up Space to Stand for Peace, Commission on Justice and Peace of The Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2024)
- [A Canadian Pastoral Letter on Ukraine, Canada and the Church](#) (2024)
- [Letter to Minister Graham on Foreign Policy Dialogue](#) (2003)
- [Project Ploughshares, the peace research institute of The Canadian Council of Churches](#)

***"He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."* (Micah 4:3)**

# ENDING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The inherent worth and dignity of all people, created in the image of God, makes sexual exploitation an egregious offense against the human person. Sexual exploitation remains a serious issue in Canada. Addressing this crisis requires stronger legal protections, demand reduction, and action against online exploitation. Canada has taken steps to combat exploitation, including the [Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act \(PCEPA\)](#) (2014) and the [Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act](#) (2015).

Churches urge the federal government to strengthen enforcement of PCEPA, increase funding for trauma-informed services for survivors, and expand programs that empower survivors to rebuild their lives. Public awareness campaigns are also needed to shift cultural attitudes and reduce the demand for exploitation. Christians are called to reflect Christ's compassion by walking alongside survivors, providing healing and restoration, and ensuring that every person experiences the dignity and safety they deserve as children of God.

Online exploitation has recently surged in our country, disproportionately harming children and youth. To address this growing issue legislation is needed that requires all pornography platforms to implement privacy-preserving age verification measures to help protect minors from exposure to explicit content.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party improve enforcement of existing laws to combat sexual exploitation and ensure better protections for vulnerable individuals?
2. What measures will you and your party implement to enhance resources, funding, and long-term support for survivors of sexual exploitation and human trafficking?
3. How will you and your party strengthen efforts to regulate digital platforms and prevent online sexual exploitation, particularly of children and youth?
4. What steps will you take to address the root causes of sexual exploitation, including reducing demand for commercial sex services and holding exploiters accountable?

## Resources:

- [Sexual Exploitation in Canada Working Group Brief: Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act Review](#) (2022)
- [Sexual Exploitation Working Group Engages Canadian Government on Issues of Human Trafficking and Pornography](#) (2021)

***“Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.” (Jeremiah 22:3)***



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

As Christians, we are called to seek justice that heals, restores dignity, and promotes reconciliation. This election, we must call on our leaders to ensure restorative justice is accessible to those most affected.

Restorative justice is an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime. However, its implementation remains inconsistent in Canada and many communities are without access to it. Additionally, the Canadian Victim's Bill of Rights (2015) gives victims the right to ask for restorative justice, but it does not require that victims be informed about restorative justice.

Restorative Justice is key to the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls for Justice, which urge reforms to address systemic inequities and expand culturally appropriate justice solutions.

As well, Indigenous, Black, and other communities are disproportionately overrepresented in Canada's prisons. They face higher incarceration rates and often experience discrimination within the carceral system. Indigenous women and youth, and those struggling with poverty, addiction, or mental health issues are especially overrepresented, often trapped in cycles of harm rather than receiving meaningful rehabilitation.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party ensure restorative justice approaches and programs are widely available, sufficiently funded, and consistently implemented across Canada?
2. How will you and your party strengthen resources for survivors of violence, communities, and offenders engaging in restorative justice?

## Resources:

- [Corrections and Restorative Justice](#)

***"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matthew 25:35-40)***

# REFUGEE RIGHTS

As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger and defend the rights of the oppressed (Proverbs 31:9). Global conflicts, persecution, and climate displacement have led to a growing refugee crisis, with millions seeking safety. Canada has long been recognized for its humanitarian leadership, but recent legal and policy decisions have raised concerns about access to protection for asylum seekers. A key issue is the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA), which requires asylum seekers to request refugee protection in the first safe country where they arrive. In June 2023, the Supreme Court of Canada [upheld the STCA](#), despite concerns that it [may return vulnerable individuals to unsafe conditions](#). The Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Council for Refugees, and Amnesty International Canada warn that Canada's participation in this agreement may deny refugees their right to seek safety.

Canada needs compassionate and just refugee policies that uphold our international commitments, reflect human dignity, and act on the moral responsibility to protect those in need. Let us work toward a society where displaced persons are treated with justice, compassion, and respect.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party guarantee that all asylum seekers, refugee claimants, and refugees in Canada are treated fairly and fully protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?
2. How will you and your party work with international partners to address the root causes of displacement, including conflict, persecution, and climate change, while ensuring Canada provides fair and just pathways for refugees?
3. What measures will you and your party implement to improve refugee resettlement and integration, including access to housing, healthcare, and employment to ensure long-term success in Canada?

## Resources:

- [Supreme Court Decision on Safe Third Country Agreement \(STCA\) Misses the Mark on Refugee Rights, but Offers Some Hope – Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2023)
- [Letter to Ministers Blair and Hussen on Budget Implementation Bill](#) (2019)

***“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19)***



# PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

As Christians, we are called to defend human dignity and promote the common good. An important way we do this in Canada is through our publicly funded healthcare system, built on universal access and equity. However, staffing shortages, long wait times, and rising costs have undermined its effectiveness. Ensuring the presence of a strong public healthcare system and improving accessibility are critical to upholding justice and equity. [The COVID-19 pandemic exposed gaps in healthcare access](#), especially for vulnerable communities. Similarly, the access to and quality of palliative care remains uneven across regions, despite the [2018 Framework on Palliative Care in Canada](#). Moreover, the availability of mental health supports varies widely across the country, despite their critical connection to other aspects of healthcare.

Beyond medical services, the social determinants of health—including income, housing, and employment—significantly impact well-being. Addressing these factors is essential for reducing health disparities and improving overall outcomes.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. How will you and your party ensure that Canada retains a strong, public healthcare system that is accessible to all?
2. What policies will you and your party implement to reduce disparities in healthcare access, particularly for people who are experiencing vulnerability?
3. How will you and your party improve and expand palliative care services to ensure all Canadians have access to quality end-of-life care, regardless of where they live?
4. How will you and your party address income inequality, housing, and employment as key factors affecting Canadians' health outcomes?

## Resources:

- [Hope, Gratitude and Solidarity: A Message to Canadians from Religious Leaders in Canada in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (2020)
- [Statement of Support for Universal Access to Palliative Care in Canada, Commission on Faith and Witness Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2016)
- [Letter to Prime Minister Chrétien: Health Council](#) (2003)

***“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”***  
(Proverbs 31:8-9)

# RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

As Christians, we are called to uphold religious freedom and to stand against discrimination. Religious freedom is a fundamental right in Canada, protected under the [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#). This election is an opportunity to advocate for stronger protections, policies, and enforcement against all forms of religious discrimination to ensure Canada remains a country that respects and protects this foundational human right. Ensuring that all faith communities are protected and respected remains an ongoing challenge.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. What steps will you and your party take to strengthen protections against religious discrimination?
2. How will you and your party fulfill commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act to ensure that Indigenous spiritual and religious traditions are freely practiced, maintained, and protected?
3. What measures will you and your party introduce to increase safety for religious communities, including protecting places of worship from violence?

## Resources:

- [Faith Communities Standing Together Against Hate Based on Religious Identity](#) (2024)
- [Statement on Religious Freedom, Christian Interfaith Reference Group, Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2016)

***“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2)***



# ETHICAL AI REGULATION

Faith communities are calling for the common good in Canada to be served by rapidly evolving artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies. While AI has transformative potential, it also raises ethical concerns about bias, accountability, and human dignity. In 2025, the Canadian Council of Churches' Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group [signed the Rome Call for AI Ethics](#), calling for greater transparency, accountability, and protections against discrimination in AI. Christians should urge the government to strengthen AI regulations to prevent algorithmic bias and ensure fairness in decision-making that impacts all Canadians.

## Questions for Candidates:

1. What steps will you and your party take to ensure AI systems do not reinforce bias?
2. How will you enforce accountability for AI-driven decisions?
3. How will you and your party include diverse communities, including faith groups, in shaping AI policies to ensure ethical decision-making and technology that serve the common good?

## Resources:

- [\[VIDEO\] Is Intelligence Enough? Exploring Human and Artificial Intelligence, Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2024)
- [\[VIDEO\] Theology and Artificial Intelligence: Systematic and Denominational Perspectives, Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches](#) (2024)
- [The Rome Call for AI Ethics](#) (2020)

***“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.” (Proverbs 3:13-14)***

# WHO WE ARE

The Canadian Council of Churches responds to Christ's call for unity and peace, seeks Christ's truth with an affection for diversity, and acts in love through prayer, dialogue, and witness to the gospel. The Canadian Council of Churches is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body, now representing 26 member churches including Anglican; Eastern and Roman Catholic; Evangelical and Free Church; Eastern and Oriental Orthodox; and Historic Protestant traditions.

We acknowledge that The Canadian Council of Churches and its members live on the historic territory of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples of this land.

"As Christian communities we take seriously the challenge of reconciliation, to deepen bonds of friendship and solidarity, to strive to "walk together" in the present and future, and to consult with you about how we can take that journey together." (Expression of Reconciliation, 2014)

Website: [www.councilofchurches.ca](http://www.councilofchurches.ca)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CCC.CCE](https://www.facebook.com/CCC.CCE)

Twitter: @CCC\_CCE

Instagram: @cdncouncilofchurches

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To carry out its mission, the Council hosts and coordinates the following:

- Commission on Faith and Witness
- Commission on Justice and Peace
- Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group
- Christian Interfaith Reference Group
- Sexual Exploitation in Canada Working Group
- Corrections and Restorative Justice Working Group
- Canadian Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Writing and Animation Team
- Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning
- Project Ploughshares

Project Ploughshares is the peace research institute of The Canadian Council of Churches and works with churches, governments and civil society, in Canada and abroad, to advance policies and actions to prevent war and armed violence and build peace.

Website: [www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)

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