



# Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care

## Welcome Package

789 Don Mills, Suite 208, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3C 1T5  
Telephone: (416) 422-1490, 1-888-837-0923, Fax: (416) 422-4359  
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## **WELCOME TO THE ONTARIO MULTIFAITH COUNCIL ON SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS CARE.**

The pages which follow were prepared to help you understand the Council's purpose, explain its goals and provide an understanding of its work. We hope that this information will make clear the Council's place in society and your place within the Ontario Multifaith Council community.

The Ontario Multifaith Council has its roots in the field of institutional chaplaincy, chiefly in the areas of correctional institutions, hospitals and long-term care facilities. In the 1970s, when the changing face of the Ontario population demanded innovative responses to the diversity of people and faiths, the Government of Ontario brought together faith group representatives to provide advice and assistance to the government with regard to the delivery of adequate and appropriate spiritual and religious care to the people in the care of the province. The result was the formation of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual & Religious Care, whose role is as the faith group advisory body to the Provincial government. The Council was mandated to assist in policy development, training and professional education and to assist with the development of standards of adequate and appropriate religious and spiritual care.

Today, working under a Memorandum of Agreement with the provincial government, the Ontario Multifaith Council provides the ministries of Community & Social Services, Health & Long-Term Care, Children and Youth Services and Community Safety and Correctional Services with authoritative advice from the faith groups. Hundreds of volunteers who comprise the Council's twelve Regional Multifaith Committees offer support and education to spiritual care providers across Ontario. These same volunteers serve on Screening Committees to approve spiritual care providers for work in a Multifaith environment and conduct assessments of spiritual and religious care programs in government operated and funded institutions.

The Multifaith Information Services program provides resources, information and advice to those working in the front lines of spiritual and religious care – chaplains, volunteers and community faith group leaders – and increasingly to medical staff, educators, policy makers, institutional managers and government workers.

The Council publishes a variety of materials, including the Multifaith Information Manual which provides authoritative information regarding the protocols for care of persons from many faiths as well as occasional papers and reports on a variety of related subjects.

In the following pages, you will discover many of the functions, objectives and structures that support the activities of the Ontario Multifaith Council. We welcome your questions and comments.

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## **WHAT IS THE ONTARIO MULTIFAITH COUNCIL?**

### **One Purpose, Many Faiths**

The Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care is a not-for-profit, charitable organization representing a wide range of faith groups in the province of Ontario. Through a Memorandum of Agreement, signed with the Government of Ontario December 1992, the Ontario Multifaith Council was given the responsibility to:

- Ensure adequate and appropriate religious services and spiritual care for persons in directly-operated and transfer payment institutions and community-based agencies and programs;
- Assist in the formation of appropriate responses to spiritual and religious needs;
- Collaborate in the development of policies and standards which safeguard spiritual care and religious rights and practices;
- Provide an effective liaison between the faith groups of Ontario and the provincial government;
- Collaborate with the Government in providing training and professional education for persons who are, or would be, chaplains in government institutions and transfer payment agencies;
- Assist with the coordination, supervision, support and evaluation of chaplaincy programmes in government institutions and transfer payment agencies.

OMC is the advisor to the government on religious services and spiritual care issues, standards and practices. Regional Multifaith Committees (RMCs), work with facilities and faith communities within a specific geographical area. OMC and RMC representatives are appointed by their faith groups and are responsible to their faith communities.

### **Our Mission Statement**

The Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care, working in partnership with the Government of Ontario in accordance with the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement, ensures that persons in government institutions, transfer payment agencies and community based programs and those affected by the process of de-institutionalization have access to adequate and appropriate spiritual and religious care. The Ontario Multifaith Council actively supports chaplains and other spiritual care providers.

### **Our Objectives**

To work in partnership with the Government of Ontario to ensure the provision of religious services and spiritual care to persons in institutions operated or managed by the Province and transfer payment agencies of the Province.

- To be an advocate for and to safeguard individual and collective religious rights and spiritual care practices
- To promote an appropriate response to the spiritual and religious needs of persons in care
- To ensure, in collaboration with the Province, the development, implementation and maintenance of standards, policies and procedures for the provision of spiritual care and religious supports in institutions operated or managed by the Province and transfer payment agencies of the Province

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- To be an advocate on behalf of religious rights and practices and all who provide spiritual care and religious supports in institutions operated or managed by the Province and transfer payment agencies of the Province
- To provide a forum which enables member Faith Groups to grow in understanding and respect, to develop helpful relationships with one another, and to collaborate effectively in response to the diverse spiritual and religious needs of persons in care operated or managed by the Province and transfer payment agencies of the Province
- To advise the Government of the Province on matters relating to or affecting the provision of religious practice and spiritual care
- To advise, and to receive advice and direction from, the faith groups in the Province represented on the OMC's Board of Directors on matters relating to or affecting the provision of spiritual and religious care
- To support, collaborate with and offer directions to Chaplaincy Services Ontario in the provision of spiritual care and religious practices in institutions operated or managed by the Province and transfer payment agencies of the Province
- To promote and to engage in the production and distribution of literature and media resources relative to spiritual care and religious practice
- To promote within the institutions and society of the Province the ongoing development of a culture of mutual understanding, respect and acceptance of all persons
- To fulfill the above objectives as they apply to the provision of spiritual care and religious rights to persons in community based programmes in the Province.

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## **ONTARIO MULTIFAITH COUNCIL FACT SHEET**

Ontario Multifaith Council is one of North America's largest organizations dedicated to advocacy of spiritual care and the protection of religious rights.

The Ontario Multifaith Council:

- promotes an environment of acceptance and respect amongst the diverse communities of Ontario.
- is a not-for-profit charitable body representing Ontario's many Faith Groups
- is funded by the Province of Ontario as a transfer payment agency and by donations
- provides a link between institutions and local faith communities
- supports the work of hundreds of Spiritual & Religious Care volunteers around the province
  
- approves candidates for employment in a Multifaith environment
- conducts assessments of spiritual and religious care programs and services
- develops and encourages adherence to and compliance with standards, policies and procedures for best practices
- encourages, reviews and oversees research projects among and between Spiritual & Religious Care providers, faith communities and government
- provides educational opportunities for spiritual and religious care providers
- provides and develops information resources for Spiritual & Religious Care
- advises Government and the private sector on faith requirements, rites, and customs
- promotes religious rights and accommodation of religious practices
- advocates for those who require and provide religious services and spiritual care

For more information on the Ontario Multifaith Council, please contact us at:

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERSHIP**

Baha'i Community

Canadian Unitarian Council

The Christian community represented by:

Anglican Church of Canada

Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec

Canadian Conference Brethren in Christ Church

Christian and Missionary Alliance

Christian Reformed Church

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada – Eastern Synod

Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada

Macedonian Orthodox Church

Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada

Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

Ontario Conference of the United Church of Canada

Ontario Congregations of the Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science)

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Reformed Church in Canada

Seventh Day Adventist Church in Canada

The Salvation Army

The Free Methodist Church in Canada

Hindu Federation

Canadian Council of Imams

Jain Society

Jewish Community

Sikh Community

Tibetan Buddhist Community

Wiccan Church of Canada

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario

An invitation to membership is open to all faith groups in Ontario, subject to membership criteria outlined in the OMC by-laws. For more information on membership criteria or to receive a Faith Group Membership Application, please contact us at (416) 422-1490.

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## **REGIONAL MULTIFAITH COMMITTEES**

Regional Multifaith Committees, representing area faith groups, bring regional concerns to the attention of the Multifaith Council and are one of the means whereby the Council's work is represented at the local level. These committees seek to preserve and improve the high quality of religious services and spiritual care in Government of Ontario facilities, community based programs and transfer payment agencies.

This is accomplished by:

- Providing support for Religious services and Spiritual Care Providers in correctional facilities centres for persons with developmental disabilities, hospitals and long-term care facilities.
- Providing training and education for Spiritual and Religious Care Providers and faith group volunteers.
- Sponsoring information sessions and educational events for faith group leaders, political representatives and the public.
- Supporting and working with local faith communities and other organizations that have an interest in religious services and spiritual care and interfaith activity.
- Facilitating communication between Spiritual and Religious Care Providers and representatives of government institutions, community programs and transfer payment agencies.
- Conducting assessments of the quality of religious services and spiritual care programs in regional institutions.
- Approving candidates for positions as Spiritual and Religious Care Providers in the region's institutions.
- Monitoring the provision of religious services and spiritual care in the region's institutions.
- Providing input to the OMC on the development of standards, policies and procedures for the provision of spiritual and religious care.
- Providing input to OMC on local spiritual and religious care issues.
- Providing Multifaith spiritual and religious care resources for chaplains in government institutions and transfer payment agencies.
- Provide personal and spiritual professional support to chaplains and providers of spiritual and religious care.
- Encouraging Faith Groups and local faith communities in their acceptance of, involvement with and care for persons who are or have been in government institutions and transfer payment agencies.
- Representing the OMC at the local/regional level on committees, boards, councils relating to service delivery mechanisms.
- Promoting the on-going development of a culture of mutual understanding, respect and acceptance of all people within governmental institutions and transfer payment agencies.

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## **MULTIFAITH SCREENING**

The Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care (OMC) has the responsibility to ensure that candidates for positions as Spiritual and Religious Care Providers (Chaplains) in government funded institutions and transfer payment agencies, have sufficient knowledge and experience to provide and coordinate spiritual care and religious services in a multifaith setting. A screening process has been developed to enable candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of multifaith issues and their ability and experience in working with persons from diverse faith backgrounds.

Regional Multifaith Committee have members and other faith group representatives who are experienced Spiritual Care and Religious services providers who conduct screening interviews at various times throughout the province. Using a standard format, the Screening Committee seeks to determine the candidate's competence for work in a multifaith environment. The Committee takes notes during the interview and after consultation informs the candidate of its decision. Successful candidates receive a letter and certificate, valid for five years, attesting to their competence. Candidates who are not successful are given information about the areas they need to address. Unsuccessful candidates may appeal the Screening Committee's decision to the OMC and may be granted another interview. Documentation is confidential and is kept on file for five years. There is a processing fee, which must accompany the application for screening. Applications for Screening are available on the OMC website at [www.omc.ca](http://www.omc.ca)

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## **MULTIFAITH INFORMATION SERVICES**

Multifaith Information Services (MIS) is a program of the Ontario Multifaith Council whose aim is to provide information and resources that foster the development of a culture of knowledge and respect for the wide range of faith traditions in Ontario.

### **The Multifaith Library**

The Multifaith Library is a lending and reference service for those requiring information on chaplaincy, faith accommodation, multiculturalism, spiritual and religious care, long-term and palliative care, world religions, restorative justice and corrections, cultural practices, and ecumenism. The library provides extensive research, reference and referral services within the bounds of its subject and operational guidelines.

Library services are available free of charge to those who oversee or deliver spiritual care and religious rights programs in the provinces institutions. There may be fees for some services, or fees for those whose requirements are not covered by OMC's agreement with the provincial government.

The library contains more than 3,500 books, 2,000 articles, 250 videos and 500 web sites which can be accessed through our on-line catalogue, by telephoning our library staff, or by visiting our library with an appointment. Donations of material are welcome, and subject to our collection policy; larger donations of goods, services, or funds can be acknowledged by a charitable receipt.

Through the maintenance and development of this resource collection, the Ontario Multifaith Council is able to fulfil many of its objectives and to assist the government of Ontario in its challenge to provide adequate and appropriate Spiritual Care and Religious Rights.

### **Publishing**

The **Multifaith Information Manual** is produced by the Ontario Multifaith Council. The manual contains practical information and accommodation guidelines for many of Ontario's religious groups. Topics dealt with under each listing include the following, where applicable: founder, nature of religion, scriptures, basic beliefs, mode(s) of worship, structure, divisions/denominations, rituals, laws, mode of dress/modesty requirements, dietary requirements, holy days/festivals, symbols, beliefs & practices regarding death, rituals, sacred writings and objects required. In some cases, additional sections address unique subject areas within that religion.

If you would like to order multifaith resources, please fax the order form in your package to (416) 422-4359.

### **Contact Us**

Telephone: (416) 422-1490 E-mail: [thelibrary@omc.ca](mailto:thelibrary@omc.ca) Toll-Free: (888) 837-0923

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## **SPIRITUAL & RELIGIOUS CARE AWARENESS WEEK**

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Spiritual and Religious Care Awareness Week honours the religious services and spiritual care providers and also recognizes the collaboration of staff, families and countless volunteers from faith communities.

Across Canada, thousands of dedicated and gifted spiritual and religious care givers of all faiths work around the clock in highly specialized settings such as hospitals, long term care facilities, correctional facilities, mental health centres and facilities for people with developmental disabilities.

Spiritual and Religious Care Awareness Week offers an opportunity to recognize the value of religious services and spiritual care and to honour those who provide the care.

Each year the Multifaith Council provides Spiritual and Religious Care Awareness Week packages to individuals and facilities across the province. Packages include posters, a multifaith liturgy and other multifaith resources.

The theme for 2000: We Treasure Each Person Wholly

The theme for 2001: Valuing Life's Passages: Volunteers Are There!

The theme for 2002: Valuing The Multifaith Spirit

The theme for 2003: Celebrating our Multifaith Community

The theme for 2004: Diversity in Practice

The theme for 2005: Respect & Understanding: All Faiths, All People

The theme for 2006: Faith in Practice: Nurturing Spirits – Caring for Souls

The theme for 2007: Caring for the Human Spirit

The theme for 2008: Spiritual Care: A Healing Presence

If you would like an order form forwarded to you to receive Spiritual & Religious Care Awareness Week materials, please send an e-mail with your contact information to:

If you have any questions, please contact us at (416) 422-1490 or visit the Spiritual and Religious Care Awareness Week website at

2/23/2010

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