

Ambassador of Religious Freedom

Religious liberty advocates have been urging President Obama to appoint a religious liberty ambassador since shortly after he entered office.

He answered this summer with Suzan Johnson Cook, a former Baptist pastor and the first female president of the Hampton University Ministers Conference, a historic meeting of black preachers. As Ambassador-at-Large for the State Department's International Religious Freedom Commission, Cook will help the U.S. monitor global religious persecution and make policy recommendations.

Carl Moeller, president of the persecution watchdog Open Doors USA, says he hopes Cook's appointment "is a positive first step that the Obama administration is serious about advancing freedom of religion for every person and denouncing violations of those rights."

His group is one of 25 organizations calling on the president to adjust Cook's position to enable the ambassador to integrate religious freedom into U.S. foreign policy.