



The Anglican Church of Canada



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada
In Mission for Others

January 20, 2011

Hon. Diane Finley
Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Finley.D@parl.gc.ca

Dear Ms. Finley,

The Parliamentary Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities has recently produced an excellent report on the federal role in poverty reduction strategies. The HUMA report recommends that the federal government immediately commit to a federal action plan to reduce poverty in Canada.

We write on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) requesting that you will respond positively to the 60 recommendations in the Report. Together, our churches will watch for indicators of an effective national strategy for reducing poverty and homelessness.

In June 2010, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada called for a national strategy that would *reduce or eliminate poverty in Canada by 50% over the next ten years and substantially reduce the growing gap between rich and poor by 2020*. In June, 2009, the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada called on the federal government to make housing for the poor and subsidized housing high priorities on Canada's agenda.

We commend to your attention the goals of the *Dignity for All Campaign* of Citizens for Public Justice, Canada Without Poverty, and Make Poverty History, which are endorsed by our churches. These goals are:

1. a federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans;
2. a federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment to and accountability for results; and
3. sufficient federal investment in social security for Canadians.

We support the call for the federal government to offer leadership in poverty reduction by developing a poverty reduction plan for Canada which includes these components:

- Raising the Canada Child Tax Benefit and supplement to \$5000 within 5 years;
- A long-term national housing and homelessness strategy;

- Measures to help the most vulnerable—a refundable Disability Tax Credit, easing EI qualifications, increasing adult literacy, increasing and indexing GIS for seniors, implementing an early learning and child care strategy; and
- Major help for Aboriginal People for housing, education and social services, including elimination of the two per cent cap on federal funding.

The recommendations in this report are an opportunity to make a big difference in the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens, and to help Canada become a more caring and just society.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



The Most Rev. Fred J. Hiltz
Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada

cc Michael Savage
Liberal Critic for Human Resources and Skills Development

Yves Lessard
Porte-parole du Bloc Québécois en matière de ressources humaines et développement social

Tony Martin
NDP Critic for Human Resources and Skills Development

National Church Council, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Council of General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada