

EASTERN SYNOD of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

74 Weber Street West, Kitchener, ON N2H 3Z3
Phone (519) 743-1461 Fax (519) 743-4291
Toll Free 1-877-373-5242

BISHOP

The Rev. Michael J. Pryse
mpryse@elcic.ca

ASSISTANTS TO THE BISHOP

The Rev. Guenter F. Dahle
gdahle@elcic.ca

The Rev. Dr. Mark W. Harris
mharris@elcic.ca



February 11, 2010

Right Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Subject: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Efforts

I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate your government for its efforts to help those living in poverty in Ontario. The report that you released on December 2, 2009, entitled, "Breaking the Cycle, The First Year" provided a good update on the progress being made to reduce child poverty in the Province. It highlights that you have invested significantly to address poverty in Ontario – even when the economic downturn was negatively affecting Provincial revenues.

We are heartened by the investments made to:

- Accelerate the Ontario Child Benefit
- Phase in the Early Learning Program for all 4 & 5 year olds in 2010
- Invest in affordable housing
- Increase Social Assistance rates
- Increase the minimum wage to \$9.50
- Expand the provision of free dental care for low income children, and
- Set up a panel to review the Social Assistance Programs.

We encourage your government to stay the course in 2010 and follow-through with more actions to reduce poverty among the children and families in our Province. Some of these initiatives should include:

- Complete the proposed Affordable Housing Strategy so that housing solutions can be provided to more Ontarians. Housing construction can be used to boost the economy.
- Follow through on the commitment to raise the minimum wage to \$10.25 per hour on March 31, 2010
- Complete the Social Assistance program (OW&ODSP) review to make these needed programs simpler and to better support people transitioning to the work force.
- Continue the investment in Early Learning for 4 & 5 year olds scheduled to commence this September in some schools, so that all schools will soon provide this opportunity for our children
- Expand free dental services for low income residents so that their health outcomes are improved.

On behalf of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada let me once again congratulate you on your government's efforts to combat poverty in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name "Michael" in a cursive script.

Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
MP/cd