

EASTERN SYNOD of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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August 16, 2010

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Subject: A Call for all levels of Government in Canada to Develop Affordable Housing Strategies (*This letter is being copied to the Premiers of all the Provincial and Territorial Governments as well as to Municipalities in Ontario with Housing Responsibilities.*)

At the June 24-27 Convention of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, delegates representing more than 200 congregations from Nova Scotia to Sault Ste Marie, ON passed the following motion:

MOTION 1.2: Moved that this synod in Assembly express its solidarity with our full communion partner, the Anglican Church in Canada, as they call upon the provincial, territorial, federal and municipal governments to develop affordable housing strategies that will provide necessary long term funding to support the construction of affordable and accessible housing across the country;

and that the delegates to this Assembly encourage their congregations and members to support housing initiatives within their particular contexts;

and to encourage congregations to partner with other agencies or faith groups to access government support and funding to establish affordable housing.

The members of the Eastern Synod, as people of faith, strive to support measures that combat injustice. We believe that poverty in Canada is neither inevitable nor acceptable. This country has abundant resources and sharing these fairly must be our first priority. We believe that one of the ways we work toward ending poverty is by placing a priority on affordable housing.

It is most encouraging that the Canadian Senate is in agreement with this ethical stance as expressed in their December, 2009, Subcommittee Report on Cities, *IN FROM THE MARGINS: A Call To Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*, which recognizes that:

“Governments need to work across silos, both across departments within governments, across sectors, and across levels of government, to address effectively the income and housing needs of many Canadians.” (pg. 169)

This document recommends

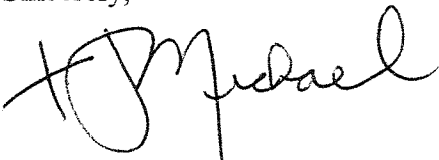
“With respect to housing, the Committee recommends that the federal government: provide sustained and adequate funding through the Affordable Housing Initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing [Recommendation 37]; issue a White paper on tax measures to support construction of rental housing in general and affordable rental housing in particular, including for the donation of funds, lands or buildings for low-income housing provision [Recommendation 38]; clarify the mandate of Canada Lands Corporation to favour use of surplus federal lands for development of affordable housing and to expedite planning processes to facilitate this use [Recommendation 39]; support the work of local and provincial non-profit housing developers by making housing programs longer term to accommodate five-year development cycles and ten-year planning cycles, and to permit more effective planning at the local and provincial levels “[Recommendation 40]; identify civil legal aid as an element to be supported by the Canada Social Transfer to assist tenants facing discrimination in housing [Recommendation 41]; extend the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program as a permanent program, increase the budget allocations for this program, and amend eligibility requirements to take into account differential costs for repairs in different communities across Canada, and projects converting housing units for affordable rental accommodation [Recommendation 42]; and work with provincial housing authorities, private landlords’ associations and non-profit housing providers, to assess impact of housing subsidies provided to individuals rather than landlords on rents [Recommendation 43]. (pg. 12, 13)

All levels of government in Canada must act to create a national affordable housing strategy but, it seems to me that the Federal Government must take the lead.

In closing, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to write to you regarding this important matter. I also wish to express my appreciation for your consideration of the same.

With all of God’s blessings,

Sincerely,



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

- c. The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
- The Honourable Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Official Opposition
- Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
- The Honourable Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party

Mr. Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta
Mr. Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia
Mr. Greg Selinger, Premier of Manitoba
Mr. Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr. Shawn Graham, Premier of New Brunswick
Mr. Darrell Dexter, Premier of Nova Scotia
Mr. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario

Municipalities, Province of Ontario:

City of Brantford	County of Northumberland
City of Cornwall	County of Oxford
City of Greater Sudbury	County of Renfrew
City of Hamilton	County of Simcoe
City of Kawartha Lakes	County of Wellington
City of Kingston	District of Algoma
City of London	District of Cochrane
City of Ottawa	District of Manitoulin-Sudbury
City of Peterborough	District of Muskoka
City of St. Thomas	District of Nipissing
City of Stratford	District of Parry Sound
City of Toronto	District of Rainy River
City of Windsor	District of Sault Ste. Marie
Counties (U/C) of Leeds & Grenville	District of Thunder Bay
Counties (U/C) of Prescott & Russell	District of Timiskaming
County of Bruce	Municipality of Chatham-Kent
County of Dufferin	Prince Edward-Lennox and Addington
County of Grey	Regional Municipality of Durham
County of Hastings	Regional Municipality of Halton
County of Huron	Regional Municipality of Peel
County of Lambton	Regional Municipality of Waterloo
County of Lanark	Regional Municipality of Niagara
County of Middlesex	Regional Municipality of York
County of Norfolk	

Mr. Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec
Mr. Robert Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island
Mr. Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Mr. Dennis Fentie, Premier of the Yukon Territory
Ms. Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut
Mr. Floyd Roland, Premier of the Northwest Territories
The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, ELCIC
Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada