



Anglican Church of Canada

Office of the Primate, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2
Tel. 416-924-9199 Ext. 276 / Email primate@national.anglican.ca

March 30, 2006

Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa
K1A 0A2

Fax: 613-941-6900
E-mail: pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

We are writing to you as leaders of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Together, our churches are active participants in and supporters of the National Housing and Homelessness Coalition. We are inviting other church leaders to add their voices at this critical moment.

In June 2005, Parliament approved a budget that included \$1.6 billion over two years for new affordable housing, the single biggest commitment of new housing dollars in more than ten years. This is an urgent policy area where you now have the opportunity to act.

It is in your power to allocate these funds immediately to the benefit of people in Aboriginal communities and in our cities and provinces who face homelessness every day.

Members of our churches across Canada give generously of their time, goods, money, and attention to support the most vulnerable in their communities – at food banks, community suppers, and shelter programs. Yet they know these acts of charity are not enough, for they do not bring about sustainable justice nor do they fully restore a person's dignity. Without secure, affordable, and long-term housing, "home" for the people they serve will never be possible.

Many of our church members are also involved in non-profit housing organizations, or in on- or off-reserve housing organizations for Aboriginal peoples. Along with other civil society groups, they are at the ready to partner with your government and provincial and territorial governments to develop affordable housing that is long overdue and desperately needed.

Yet unless you decisively allocate these funds from the surplus, promised for affordable housing, we fear they may simply revert to debt reduction – making only a marginal difference to Canada's economy and doing precious little to address the social and infrastructural deficits behind Canada's crisis of homelessness and affordable housing. These deficits demand resolute action by Canadians and their governments.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have ended speeches with the words, “God bless Canada”. We all seek this blessing. Indeed, the prophet Isaiah makes clear that God blesses you when you “share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house” (Isaiah 58.7). We are asking you to spend tax dollars now in a way that will help bring the homeless poor into their own house, and allow them the dignity of sharing their bread with others.

Sincerely,


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Andrew". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Most Rev. Andrew Hutchison
Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Henry Hess
Canadian Ministries Director,
Christian Reformed Church in North America - Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Raymond". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Rev. Raymond L. Schultz
National Bishop, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Short". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Right Rev. Peter Short
Moderator, The United Church of Canada

c.c. Hon. Diane Finley – fax: (613) 996-9749; e-mail: Finley.D@parl.gc.ca
Hon. Jim Flaherty – fax (613) 992-8320; e-mail Flaherty.J@parl.gc.ca.
Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper – fax: (613) 941-6900; e-mail: Harper.S@parl.gc.ca