



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Langevin Block
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

October 20, 2011

Dear Prime Minister Stephen Harper,

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I am writing to encourage the Government of Canada to work collaboratively with indigenous peoples to fully and effectively implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to provide the Parliament of Canada with regular reports on how the Government will reform laws and policies in order to meet the Declaration's standards.

In July 2011, the ELCIC met in Saskatoon for its biennial convention. In exploring our convention theme, "Covenant People: *In Mission for Others*," we were reminded that the word "treaty" is a synonym for the word "covenant." There are moral and spiritual dimensions to making and keeping covenants. The convention adopted a motion committing our church to promoting right and renewed relationships between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples within Canada, and recognizing the Declaration as a standard for the practices of the ELCIC. In this motion, the convention also asked me to communicate to you our church's desire to see the Declaration fully implemented.

The Government has an opportunity and a duty to use the Declaration as the basis for reviewing and reforming laws and policies to ensure that indigenous peoples' rights are upheld without discrimination. The Declaration itself states that the rights it contains "constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world." (article 43)

Regular reports to Parliament on implementation are an essential element to the Government's accountability to the people of Canada and to Canada's commitments to meet the Declaration's standards for laws and policies.

I encourage you to use the Declaration as a standard and a tool for promoting the rights, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Yours in Christ,

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

cc: The Hon. Nycole Turmel, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition
The Hon. Bob Rae, Interim Leader, Liberal Party
The Hon. Louis Plamondon, chef parlementaire par intérim BQ et porte-parole affaires
autochtones
The Hon. Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party
The Hon. John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
The Hon. Linda Duncan, NDP Critic for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
The Hon. Carolyn Bennet, Liberal Critic for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Lorraine Rekmans, Green Critic for Aboriginal Affairs
National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, Assembly of First Nations
Clément Chartier, President, Metis National Council
Mary Simon, President, Inuit Tapirit Kanatami
ELCIC National Church Council