

November 24, 2004

The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Fax: 613-941-6900

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you today on an important anniversary. Fifteen years ago the House of Commons unanimously voted to end child poverty in Canada, and to do so by the year 2000. Today however more than one million children, or one in every six children in our country, live in a low-income family. This failure to adequately address child poverty weighs heavily upon many Canadians: for the sake of our children, we can and must do so much better.

Canadians have met other national social challenges in the past with determined leadership and strong public resolve. We have implemented a Medicare system, drastically reduced poverty among seniors, and more recently, eliminated the federal deficit. A comprehensive, multi-year strategy is now needed to overcome child poverty before it becomes a permanent and even more devastating feature of Canadian society.

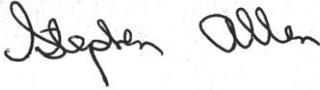
The Canadian Council of Churches is proud to belong to Campaign 2000, a non-partisan coalition of hundreds of Canadian anti-poverty groups who advocate for action to end child poverty. Campaign 2000 has advanced four policy proposals which would go a long way to end child poverty in Canada. They include enhancing the annual child benefit to \$4,900 for low and modest income families, establishing a universal system of quality, affordable and inclusive early learning and child care services, providing affordable housing for low income families and developing a labour market strategy that ensures jobs with good wages and benefits for Canadian parents.

Canadian churches have many social outreach programmes devoted to families who have been left behind, but these cannot be expected to carry the burden created by the structural inequalities of our national economy. On the fifteenth anniversary of the

parliamentary promise to end child poverty, we invite your government to take up this challenge anew.

Please be assured of our sincere prayers and willingness to collaborate in this societal cause that is so worthy of the efforts of all Canadians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'A'.

Stephen Allen
Chairperson
Commission for Justice and Peace

Cc Hon. Ken Dryden (613-941-0889)
Hon. Joseph Fontana (613-994-5168)
Hon. Joseph Volpe (613-992-9791)
Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (613-953-0944)
Hon. Tony Ianno (613-941-3729)
Hon. Ralph Goodale (613-995-5176)