



# 2011 ELCIC Compassionate Justice Election Resource

## PREAMBLE

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It is a right, responsibility and a privilege to be able to choose our leaders through an election. Public discussion of current issues is an ongoing part of the democratic process before, during and after elections. As people of faith, the values of compassion and justice inform our consideration of which policies to support when we cast a ballot. The questions below are based on concerns that have been expressed by the ELCIC in convention and by the National Bishop. These concerns are shared by various ecumenical partners. An election is an opportunity to hear ideas from candidates, and a time to name priorities for citizens.

The questions below might be used in several ways as you prepare to cast your ballot:

- Asking questions at an all candidates meeting
- Meeting candidates on your doorstep
- While reading campaign material or hearing the news
- In conversation with your fellow citizens.

As disciples *In Mission for Others*, we recognize that governments alone do not solve the problems of the world, so the following questions are also reminders to look for opportunities to address these matters in the local context. The order of the questions is not intended to imply any relative importance.

## QUESTIONS

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### Poverty

In November, 2010, an all party committee delivered the HUMA Report to parliament, recommending that there be a Federal Poverty Reduction Plan. (i.e. The Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities).

- *What initiatives do you think are essential for a federal poverty reduction plan?*

### Climate Justice

Canada is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol to reduce carbon emissions in order to slow down the effects of climate change.

- *What steps will you take to help Canada meet its Kyoto commitments?*

## Right Relationship with Indigenous People

In November, 2010, Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- *What do you consider to be the most important next steps as Canada lives out the commitments made in the declaration?*

## Peace in the Holy Land

My church supports and prays for comprehensive peace in the Holy Land, with a secure state of Israel and a viable state for Palestinians, including a contiguous West Bank.

- *In what ways should Canada support peace in the Middle East?*

## International Development

Canada has established the goal of providing 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) being allocated to Official Development Assistance (ODA), by 2020. The 2011 budget called for a freeze in foreign aid spending, currently at 0.32%, which means that by 2014 Canada's ODA performance ratio will sink to 0.28%, making Canada amongst the lowest of all official donors (now 18th among 23 donor countries).

- *Are you committed to the 0.7% goal? If so, what steps would you take towards this goal and ensuring that Canada will assume a leadership role in the provision of Official Development Assistance?*

## Nuclear Disarmament

In June 2010, the leaders of 23 churches wrote to the prime minister, encouraging the government of Canada to give renewed and urgent attention to nuclear disarmament.

- *What role do you see for Canada in promoting a world without nuclear weapons?*

## Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is global problem. It is fuelled by both pull factors, such as demand for prostitution and pornography, and by push factors such as poverty and abuse.

- *What should the government of Canada do in order to reduce human trafficking?*

## Restorative Justice

When a crime happens, victims, offenders, families and the public are all in need of healing. Incarceration alone does not meet victims' needs for healing or a sense of safety. For both moral and practical reasons, society ought to be concerned not only with the length of terms for prisoners, but also with the character of the person as they leave prison.

- *In what ways might the government of Canada invest resources in order to promote safer communities and to help prisoners become productive citizens?*

## BACKGROUND

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### Poverty

The ELCIC has called for a national strategy on housing and homelessness several times in recent years. The 2009 convention called on the federal government to make housing for the poor a priority. The HUMA report calls for national strategies both for poverty reduction and for housing.

- ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson wrote to the minister of human resources and skills development encouraging the government to make the report's recommendations a priority. The letter can be found here: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoMinisterFinley20110120POVERTY.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoMinisterFinley20110120POVERTY.pdf).
- The HUMA report can be found at: [www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=4770921&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=3](http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=4770921&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=3)
- Dignity for All provides valuable information on poverty issues: [www.dignityforall.ca](http://www.dignityforall.ca).

### Climate Justice

The 2009 convention called on the ELCIC and the people of Canada to support the goals of KYOTOplus to reduce carbon emissions, and asked National Bishop Susan Johnson to write to the prime minister on this matter.

- The bishop's letter can be found here: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/PrimeMinisterHarperreKyotoplus20090922.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/PrimeMinisterHarperreKyotoplus20090922.pdf).
- KAIROS is active in matters of climate justice: [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org).

### Right Relationship with Indigenous People

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples articulates the inherent rights of indigenous peoples and provides a source of guidance for all institutions in society to review policies and behaviours. In this time of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, all Canadians are called to deepen our understanding of history and to renew relationships between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.

- The 2011 ELCIC convention will offer delegates the opportunity to explore how we are all treaty people.
- Encouraging implementation of the UN declaration is a focus of KAIROS' ([www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)) current campaign.
- Bishop Susan Johnson wrote to the prime minister commending the government of Canada on the decision to endorse the declaration: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/lettertoprime minister20101215UNDRIP.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/lettertoprime minister20101215UNDRIP.pdf).

### Peace in the Holy Land

The 2009 ELCIC National Convention adopted a resolution on peace in the holy land ([www.elcic.ca/Public-Policy/documents/600.52009-ELCICResolutiononPeaceintheHolyLand.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/Public-Policy/documents/600.52009-ELCICResolutiononPeaceintheHolyLand.pdf)). For peace to happen, violence needs to stop, and both Palestinians and Israelis need space and freedom to develop productive societies. This church wishes to encourage Canadian politicians give voice to the need for peace in the Holy Land and for respect for the rights of all who live there.

- National Bishop Susan Johnson shared the concerns of this church with the prime minister: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoPMonHolyLandNov262009.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoPMonHolyLandNov262009.pdf).

## International Development

Canada's long standing goal of 0.7% GNI (Gross National Income) to go to assistance has never been met.

- The Canadian Council for International Cooperation's articulates the importance and challenge of reaching this goal: ([www.ccic.ca/\\_files/en/media/2011\\_03\\_Budget\\_2011\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://www.ccic.ca/_files/en/media/2011_03_Budget_2011_press_release.pdf)).
- Choosing leaders who strongly support overseas development assistance will help some of the poorest people in the world to create a better life.

## Nuclear Disarmament

- The church leaders' letter can be found at: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/2010June25CCCLetter.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/2010June25CCCLetter.pdf).
- Project Ploughshares has valuable information on issues of peace and disarmament: [www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca).

## Human Trafficking

Concern about the global problem of human trafficking has been raised by The Lutheran World Federation and by the Canadian Council of Churches.

- The 2009 convention identified this concern and asked the National Bishop to write to the prime minister about this matter: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoPMonHumanTrafficking200911.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/LettertoPMonHumanTrafficking200911.pdf).
- REED Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity has information on this issue: [www.embracedignity.org](http://www.embracedignity.org).

## Restorative Justice

Policies that put more people in jail may not be the best way to reduce crime, and they are expensive.

- National Bishop Susan Johnson wrote to the minister of public safety expressing concern about heavy investment in prisons and the possible detriment of other programs: [www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/lettertoministerToews20101215PRISONS.pdf](http://www.elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/lettertoministerToews20101215PRISONS.pdf).
- The Church Council on Justice and Corrections has information on issues of criminal justice policy: [www.ccjc.ca](http://www.ccjc.ca).