

Canadian Baptist

Response to 2010 Interfaith Statement: *A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action*

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As we reflect on the past 65 years of world history we can revel in many technological achievements. There is much for which humanity might congratulate itself. However, where progress has been achieved, we must ask ourselves “for whom and at what cost?” Certainly the economic benefits of the industrial revolution have been disproportionately enjoyed by a minority of the world’s population and the imbalances between the global rich and the global poor have become simply intolerable, from both moral and ecological perspectives. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that as the political leaders of the G8 and G20 countries prepare to meet at the Summit in Canada this June, global peace and security is hanging by a very thin thread. So, Canadian Baptists would certainly concur that this IS a time for inspired leadership and action.

We do look to the political leaders of the G8 and G20 countries, since they are in a position to make - and adhere to - the kinds of policy decisions which we believe are required in order to address the most serious challenges facing humanity at this moment. But we also acknowledge the incredible responsibility that lies before faith leaders around the world. The fact is, our future depends on our capacity to work together, across both national borders and faith traditions. And it will not be enough to simply establish political targets, or even to re-commit to meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. We must also discover ways to challenge our constituents to a deeper understanding of the tremendous costs of a consumer-driven, materialistic vision of life – both for those who *have* and for those who *have not*.

In the Interfaith Statement it is asserted that, “*Together, we have the know-how, the human capacity and the global resources to end poverty and its impacts.*” We agree, with some hesitation and with the understanding that it is *extreme* poverty that is being targeted – the poverty which is characterized by loss of dignity due to insufficient access to safe food, water, sanitation, shelter, medical care and basic education. But we would suggest that the eradication of poverty and its impacts requires much more than a brilliant political/economic agenda. In our view, if poverty eradication COULD be accomplished by global political policies, we would not be in the state we are in today. In the post war period, The United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (to name a few) have all sought to level the playing field, and despite their good intentions and sincere best efforts, have all failed to prevent the current injustices which plague our planet.

We support, in general, the three emphases of the Statement: poverty reduction, care for the earth and investing in peace, recognizing the intricate interdependence of these three issues. As a Christian organization, with ministry interests in Canada and in a number of developing countries around the world, we are committed to a model of discipleship and integral mission which we believe embraces the fundamental requirements for global peace and sustainability and we will continue to work with passion and intentionality to hold ourselves and our governments accountable to these objectives.