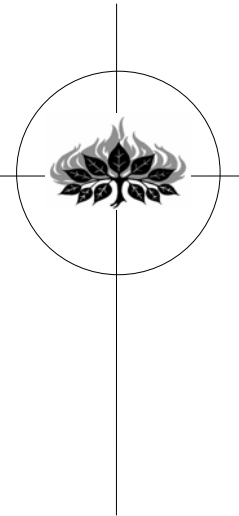


# The Presbyterian Church in Canada L'Église presbytérienne au Canada

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## MODERATOR OF THE 133RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg  
B.A. (Hons.), M. Div., M.A., D. Min., D.D.

January 2, 2008

The Honourable Brad Wall,  
Premier of Saskatchewan  
226 Legislative Building,  
Regina, Saskatchewan, S4S 0B3

Dear Premier Wall,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which met June 3-8, 2007 in Waterloo, Ontario. The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body in our denomination.

One of the issues that General Assembly considered was the depth of poverty in Canada today. Many congregations in both rural and urban areas try to respond as faithfully as they can to the immediate needs of citizens on low incomes.

Most provinces and territories are enjoying impressive economic growth. Yet the benefits of this growth are not being as fairly shared as they might be. With some exceptions, a \$ 10.00 an hour minimum wage would allow an individual working full-time for a year to reach the Low Income Cut-Off, as formulated by Statistics Canada. Our General Assembly approved a recommendation requesting provincial/territorial and federal governments to increase the minimum wage to \$ 10.00 an hour. The minimum wage in Saskatchewan was increased in the spring to \$ 7.95 an hour. According to the Minimum Wage Board there are currently about 12,400 minimum wage earners in Saskatchewan. The October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 News Release from the Minimum Wage Board announced scheduled increases to the minimum wage between January 2008 and December 2009, with the stated intension of matching the minimum wage to the Low Income Cut-Off by 2010. Does the Government of Saskatchewan plan to index the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index?

The National Child Supplement Benefit (NCSB) is federal financial assistance which can help reduce poverty in low-income earning families. The Government of Saskatchewan currently reduces provincial financial assistance to those who receive the NCSB. According to the 2006 Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child Poverty in Saskatchewan there are 43,680 children living in poverty in Saskatchewan. The NCSB can contribute to the well-being of children living in low-income families. Does the Government of Saskatchewan intend to end the claw back of provincial financial assistance to those who receive the NCSB?

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall, The Rev. Donald Muir, The Rev. Dr. Tony Plomp

Canada accedes to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. States are required to report to the United Nations on measures they have taken to give effect to the Covenant. In May 2006, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the body mandated to review State compliance with the Covenant, recommended that "...federal, provincial and territorial governments address homelessness and inadequate housing as a national emergency...". The recommendation suggests ways to counter inadequate housing, including the implementation of a national strategy for the reduction of homelessness. More recently, while visiting Ottawa on October 22, 2007 the United Nation's special rapporteur on adequate housing, Miloon Kothari, urged the Canadian Government to take steps to address homelessness and inadequate housing. What plans have been developed to address the need for affordable and adequate housing in Saskatchewan?

We believe that a society should be judged by how it treats the vulnerable and marginalized. Too many of our citizens are being left behind in the current prosperity. There is a wonderful opportunity for provincial/territorial and federal governments to work together to reduce levels of poverty through a poverty reduction strategy with measurable targets and a clear timeline.

I look forward to hearing from you. Rest assured of our continuing prayers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hans Kouwenberg', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

The Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg,  
Moderator of the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly,  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Cc The Hon. Lorne Calvert, Leader of the Opposition, New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan