

16 February. 2007

The Rt. Hon. Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta
The Hon. Greg Melchin, Minister of Seniors and Community Support
The Hon. Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Dear Sirs:

In the past three weeks, in my city of residence, Red Deer, we have experienced two tragic events. During the last cold snap, a homeless man was found dead in a green strip behind businesses in north Red Deer. A week or so later, a separate school principal was taking garbage out to a dumpster during recess at his school, and discovered another homeless man dead in the dumpster. For these poor souls, there clearly was no "Alberta Advantage".

In Red Deer, Edmonton, Calgary and throughout the province, many of the Lutheran parishes for which I am responsible are involved in "Inn from the Cold" or similar emergency housing programs. The Lutheran parish in Red Deer was one of the funding participants in getting the *People's Place* up and running. These were all intended to be temporary measures to provide emergency housing until long-term provision could be made for the homeless. Like the food-banks that preceded them, temporary measures have become permanent means for dealing with chronic societal issues. None of these are solutions; they are simply band-aids on gaping wounds that the least fortunate in our society are suffering. The government has the means to address these issues. Does it have the will and the heart to do it?

For we who are entrusted with leadership, the measure of that leadership will not be the bottom lines of our respective institutions' financial statements. The measure of our leadership will be what has happened to the last, the least and the most vulnerable on our respective watches. Nothing more, nor less, than this is required of us: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

Be assured that you are regularly remembered in prayer in the 152 Lutheran congregations, and by the 42,000 parishioners, for which I am responsible.

Yours truly,

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada