



Anglican Church of Canada

Office of the Primate, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2
Tel. 416-924-9199 Ext. 276 / Email primate@national.anglican.ca

29 January, 2008

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, we write to express our grave concern regarding the decision of the Government of Canada to accept the imposition of the death penalty on Canadians under the jurisdictions of other countries.

We refer to the case of Ronald Allen Smith, a Canadian citizen on death row in the state of Montana, USA, and to the November 1, 2007 statement made by Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day to the House of Commons, that this government “will not actively pursue bringing back to Canada murderers who have been tried in a democratic country that supports the rule of law.”

This decision constitutes a serious departure from Canada’s historic efforts to seek clemency for Canadians facing the death penalty in foreign countries

The Anglican Church of Canada stands with the worldwide Anglican Communion against any government who practises capital punishment, and in favour of seeking alternative ways to sentence offenders so that the divine dignity of every human being is respected and yet justice is pursued (Lambeth 1988).

The Anglican Church of Canada affirms the sacredness of all human life as God’s gift to creation. We believe every human being is made in God’s image, regardless of the degree to which it has been distorted. We oppose the death penalty in every circumstance as an act of violence in response to violence – an act which strikes at the very heart of society (House of Bishops 1984).

Therefore, we call on the Government of Canada to reverse its present stance and to intervene strenuously with other governments when Canadians face a sentence of execution, as has been the practice in the past.

We respectfully request a reply to this letter stating the reasons for this policy reversal and indicating your future intentions.

Sincerely,

+ Fred

The Most Reverend Fred J. Hiltz,
Archbishop and Primate
The Anglican Church of Canada

Copied to: The Honourable Robert Douglas Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P.,
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada