

**The Price of Life: An Open Letter  
to Members of Parliament from Leaders of Faith Communities in Canada**

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March 3, 2011

Dear Members of Parliament:

As leaders of various faith communities across Canada, steadfast in our commitment to helping those in need, we strongly urge you to support Bill C-393, a bill that will improve Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR). We reach out to you now with a sense of urgency, knowing that our brothers and sisters worldwide are living in the shadow of death without sufficient access to affordable, life-saving medicines to battle diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We believe that Bill C-393 can reform CAMR into sound legislation with the power to relieve suffering and save lives.

As leaders of faith communities, we are well aware that the privilege of being Canadian carries with it a high degree of responsibility, both here at home and within our global community. It is also true that Canada has a long and celebrated tradition of humanitarianism, consistent with the fundamental character of our nation and its generous people; of this we are fiercely proud. We must remember, however, that the word "tradition" implies consistency of purpose and action; we cannot rest on our laurels when the opportunity to end suffering and save lives presents itself.

We believe that the passage of Bill C-393, with its "one-licence solution" intact and without prohibitively short timelines imposed, presents just such an opportunity. We ask that you, our elected Members of Parliament, reflect upon the awesome power and responsibility you now have to make it easier to send essential medicines to developing countries and to help the most vulnerable people worldwide. Please act upon your humanitarian values by supporting Bill C-393 when it comes to a vote at third reading.

As you consider your position on the substance of Bill C-393, supported by many prominent Canadians with considerable experience in development contexts, we ask that you think about the following:

- Every day, thousands of people in developing countries die of treatable diseases, including AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. AIDS and other illnesses are taking a terrible, yet preventable, toll on families and communities across the developing world.
- Children are often among those hardest hit. Half of all children with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa die before the age of two, and 80% die before reaching the age of five.
- People are dying because medicines are not available to them at prices they can afford. They die because they are too poor to buy the medicines that Canadians so often take for granted. They die because they cannot afford to buy life.

The original and laudable intent of CAMR remains clear: to allow generic drug manufacturers to supply less expensive medicines for export to developing countries, by obtaining a special licence and, in exchange, paying royalties to the patent-holding drug companies on any such sales. However, we can see that the current law is not working and that its bureaucratic hurdles translate into unnecessary suffering and death.

As concerned Canadians of faith, this is unacceptable to us — and we believe that it would be unacceptable to our elected representatives as well. We therefore call upon you to show mercy toward our brothers and sisters, on our collective behalf.

Bill C-393 makes it possible to fix CAMR at no cost to taxpayers. If passed with its "one-licence solution" restored, Bill C-393 will reduce red tape in the process by letting generic drug manufacturers fill multiple orders of the same medicine to different developing countries under one simple licence as they are needed. Most importantly, Canada will once again demonstrate its deep compassion and desire to help those who are needlessly suffering and dying each and every day.

The world is watching, and those in need of life-saving medicines wait and hope and pray. We ask you to support Bill C-393 and its power and potential to deliver lifesaving medicine where it is most needed.

Respectfully, and with hope,

**Canadian Council of Imams**

**William Francis**, Commissioner and Territorial Commander, Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda

**Mark J. Freiman**, National President, Canadian Jewish Congress

**The Reverend John Kapteyn**, Executive Secretary, Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America

**The Reverend Brian Kiely**, President, International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

**Archbishop Fred Hiltz**, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada

**The Reverend Susan C. Johnson**, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

**Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC)**

**Mardi Tindal**, Moderator, United Church of Canada/ L'Église Unie du Canada

**The Reverend Bill Burke**, Director, National Liturgy Office, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

**The Reverend Frances Deverell**, President, Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice

**Bernie M. Farber**, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Jewish Congress

**John Hopewell**, President, Canadian Unitarian Council

**The Reverend Dr. Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd**, Member, Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, Past President of the Canadian Theological Society

**The Reverend Julie Stoneberg**, Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada

**Nancy Mortifee**, Interfaith Committee, United Church of Canada

**The Reverend Bob Patterson Watt**, former President of the Board, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America Co-Chair, Toronto Ecumenical Good Friday Walk for Justice, Secretary-Registrar, Gathering of Baptists

**The Right Reverend George L.R. Bruce**, Bishop of Ontario, Anglican Church of Canada

**The Reverend Canon Bernard Barrett**, Past President, Multi-Faith Action Society of British Columbia

**The Reverend Margaret Bell**, Moderator, Elgin Baptist Association, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

**The Reverend Dr. Robert A. Burrows**, Former President, BC Conference, United Church of Canada

**The Reverend Dan Chambers**, President, BC Conference, United Church of Canada

**Nancy Chiavario**, Executive Director, Multi-Faith Action Society of British Columbia

**David Courchene** (Nii Gaani Aki Innini - Leading Earth Man), Anishinabe Nation, Eagle Clan.

**The Very Reverend Dr. Peter G. Elliott**, Dean of the Diocese of New Westminster, Bishop's Commissary

**The Reverend Dr. H. Faye Ford**, President, Saskatchewan Conference, United Church of Canada

**The Reverend W. Phil Heinze**, Director, Eastern Synod Public Policy and Service Ministries, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

**The Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson**, Archbishop of Toronto and Metropolitan of Ontario, Anglican Diocese of Toronto

**The Reverend Dr. Andrew Johnston**, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, ON, Former Moderator of the Presbytery of Ottawa, Past President of the Christian Council of the Capital Area

**The Reverend Tim McCoy**, Executive Minister, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

**Bishop Michael J. Pryse**, Eastern Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

**The Reverend Ronald E. Watson**, Area Minister (retired), Southwestern Ontario, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

**The Reverend Katherine Altenburg**, St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Kitchener, ON

**The Reverend Stephen Atkinson**, North Shore Unitarian Church, West Vancouver, BC

**Teresa Campbell**, Spiritual Care Associate, Misericordia Place Personal Care Home, Archdiocese of Winnipeg

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**The Reverend Dr. Oscar L. Cole-Arnal**, Professor Emeritus, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Waterloo, ON

**The Reverend Barry Cooke**, Past President, Multi-Faith Action Society, Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Terence Dempsey**, Burlington Baptist Church, Burlington ON

**The Reverend Dr. Timothy W. Dobbin**, Trinity Anglican Church, Simcoe, ON

**The Reverend Dr. Alf Dumont**, St. John's United Church, Alliston, ON

**The Reverend Dr. Charles Eddis**, Unitarian Church of Montreal

**The Reverend Debra Faulk**, Unitarian Church of Calgary

**The Reverend Keith Gilbert**, St. Agnes Anglican Church, North Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Dr. Brent Hawkes**, Metropolitan Community Church, Toronto, ON

**The Reverend Christine E. Hillman**, Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda, Ruthven, ON

**Bishop William D. Huras**, Chair, Ecclesiology & Church History, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Waterloo, ON

**The Reverend barb m. janes**, Crescent Fort Rouge United Church, Winnipeg, MB

**The Reverend Paul Kett**, St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, ON

**Jick Lee**, Chair, Inter-Faith for World Peace Society, Richmond, BC

**Deacon Lizz Lindsey**, St. Agnes Anglican Church North Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Gayle Lucas-Roth**, Stockdale United Church, Frankford, ON

**The Reverend Louise Mangan**, Board Chair, InterSpiritual Centre Society, Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend John Marsh**, First Unitarian Congregation, Ottawa, ON

**The Reverend Ron McConnell**, Chair, Riverbend Presbytery, United Church of Canada Saskatoon, SK

**The Reverend Arch McCurdy**, St. John's United Church, Alliston, ON

**Rabbi David Mivasair**, Ahavat Olam Synagogue, Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Shawn Newton**, First Unitarian Congregation, Toronto ON

**The Reverend Anne Orfald**, Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough, ON

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**The Reverend Lillian Roberts**, Presbytery Minister, Ottawa Presbytery, United Church of Canada

**The Reverend Millie Rochester**, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Winnipeg, MB  
**Carol Rose**, Spiritual Director, Rose Counselling and Consulting, Winnipeg, MB

**Rabbi Neal Rose**, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Manitoba (retired), Winnipeg, MB

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**The Reverend Christine Rowe**, St. Catherine's Anglican Church, Diocese of New Westminster, BC

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**The Reverend William Shafer**, St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Kitchener, ON

**The Reverend Dr. W. Wayne Soble**, Edith Rankin Memorial United Church, Kingston, ON

**The Reverend Shirley Stockdill**, St Agnes Anglican Church, North Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend George Strack**, St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, ON

**The Reverend Dr. Keith Sweeting**, First Baptist Church, Owen Sound, ON

**The Reverend Martha ter Kuile**, Bloor Street United Church, Toronto, ON

**Sukhvinder Vinning**, Vice-President, Multi-faith Action Society, Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Michael Webster**, St Martin's United Church, Saskatoon, SK

**The Reverend Geoff Woodcroft**, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Winnipeg, MB

**Robert Worcester**, President, Multi-faith Action Society, Vancouver, BC

**The Reverend Dawn Yarker**, Burlington Baptist Church, Burlington ON