

# RELIGIOUS SOCIAL ACTION COALITION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Dear friend,

A group of religious Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are in the process of building a Religious Social Action Coalition, open to all throughout the province. I am writing to invite you and members of your congregation to take part.

We are a nonpartisan group from a broad array of religions – Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others – united in our religious commitment to call on our society to abolish poverty at home and abroad.

The sad fact is that economic inequality is growing, and human beings are suffering needlessly.

In 1999 – according to Statscan – the richest 20% of Canadians had a combined financial net wealth of 2.4 trillion dollars. The poorest 20% had a combined net wealth of less than zero! They had a combined net *debt* of 3.7 billion dollars.

**By 2005, just six years later, the wealth of the richest 20% had grown to 3.4 trillion dollars. That's a gain slightly over 43 %.**

**Meanwhile, the indebtedness of the poorest 20% rose 70%.**

The rich didn't get 43% more inventive or start working 43% harder.  
The poor didn't get 70% lazier.

These numbers are a result of social policies, policies set by Parliament and the House of Assembly.

It is the goal of our coalition to call upon **all** candidates for Parliament and for the House of Assembly to pledge to move our society toward greater economic fairness. To finally fulfill the promise that Parliament made to abolish poverty among Canadian children, even though they have missed their own deadline by seven years. To make sure that working families in Newfoundland and Labrador can find affordable housing. And to fulfill Parliament's Kelowna pledge to Native Canadians.

And, because the 10% of richest people in the world own 85% of all the wealth on earth – according to the *Globe and Mail* – while the poorest 90% own only 15%, we shall call upon candidates to commit themselves to fulfilling Lester Pearson's pledge of foreign aid equal to 0.7% of Canada's GDP.

It is our goal to get citizens talking about poverty – and to make ***Ending Poverty*** a voting issue in Newfoundland and Labrador.

If you share our religious conviction that feeding and housing the poor are our moral responsibility, we invite you to join the Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We look forward to working with you.