

## Do Justice!!

“Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly With Your God” Micah 6:8

### A Newsletter on Social Justice Issues

Welcome to the August 2017 edition of Do Justice. This newsletter, prepared by Auckland Diocesan Social Justice Group, looks at various Social Justice Issues.

#### No is not enough!

Naomi Klein, a Canadian/American journalist and film maker has written a number of books looking at politics, economics, climate change and corporate power including *No Logo, Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies; The Shock Doctrine, the rise of Disaster Capitalism; This Changes Everything, Capitalism v. the Climate*. Klein has just published **No Is Not Enough, Resisting Trump’s Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need**. Klein looks at the first 100 days of the Trump Presidency, his choices for his Cabinet and the many other posts that the President has to appoint and at how Trump fits into the political landscape not just in the USA but worldwide.

Klein puts Trump into perspective, at the same time warning about where he could go over 4 years as President. Klein also looks at the massive resistance to Trump that has sprung up in the US and around the World from Women’s Groups to Scientists, She concludes that just saying No to Trump is not enough. To stop Trump taking advantage of the inevitable crisis that will occur during his time in office much more needs to be done. Or he and his supporters will take advantage of the crisis to tighten his, Trump’s, grip on power.

Klein asks a very important question “*Ever since the 2008 financial meltdown, I have been puzzling over the question of what it would take to pull off a truly progressive popular response to the crisis we face. I had thought at one point, that the factual revelations of climate science – if we truly understood them – might be the catalyst. After all, there could not be a clearer indication that our current system is falling: if business as usual is allowed to continue, ever larger expanses of our planet will cease to be hospitable to human life. And, as we have seen, responding effectively to climate change requires throwing out the entire pro-corporate economic playbook – which is one of the main reasons so many right-wing ideologues are determined to deny its reality. So, it seems to me that, just as the aftermath of the Great Crash and World War 2 became periods of massive*

*social transformation, so could the climate crisis – an existential threat for humanity – become an opportunity for once-in-a-century social and economic change.*”<sup>1</sup>

Klein concludes that the time has come for a People’s Shock. Prior to the Canadian General Election in 2015, with the combination of the oil price collapse and the urgency of the climate crisis, Klein and some friends started to discuss the idea of a national meeting of civil society leaders to develop new policies. The objective of the meeting was “*to dramatically improve lives, close the gap between rich and poor, create large numbers of well-paying, low carbon jobs and reinvigorate democracy from the ground up. This would be the inverse of shock doctrine. It would be a People’s Shock, a blow from below.*”<sup>2</sup>

The meeting drew people from a wide range of groups working on a wide variety of issues, from homelessness to climate change. Klein’s role was to listen carefully to the two days of conversations, note common themes and come up with a first draft of a “platform”. One thing became very clear when they talked about the future they spoke about again and again about care and caretaking: care for the land, for the planet’s living systems, for one another. Klein sums this up “*A system in which everyone is valued, and we don’t treat people or the natural world as if they were disposable.*”<sup>3</sup>

The result of this meeting was The Leap Manifesto. A call for a Canada based on caring for the Earth and One Another, A document of some 2,000 words with many proposals specific to the Canadian situation. One paragraph near the beginning of the document summarises a vision for a society that we, in New Zealand, could well embrace.

*“We could live in a country powered entirely by renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality. Caring for one another and caring for the planet could be the economy’s fastest-growing sectors. Many more people could have higher-wage jobs with fewer working hours, leaving us ample time to enjoy loved ones and flourish in our communities.”*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Klein, No is Not enough. Haymarket Books, Chicago, Ill USA 2017 page 234

<sup>2</sup> Page 236

<sup>3</sup> Page 241

<sup>4</sup> Page 267

If you want to read Naomi Klein's book it is available from the Auckland Public Library, which has 10 copies.

Kate Raworth's book ***Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*** which was mentioned in May 2017 Do Justice, is also available from the Auckland Public Libraries, 6 copies are available.

### Equality Network.

In New Zealand, the Social Justice Group is a member of the Equality Network that had a meeting earlier in the year to discuss a common statement for our General Election in September. The agreed statement is as follows:

*We of the Equality Network want to create a more equal New Zealand, one where everyone can pursue their dreams, a country where everyone has the resources they need to build a good life for their families and whanau, where income and wealth reflect fairness and balance.*

*We believe it is possible for all New Zealanders to enjoy a decent life, one where everyone thrives. But we recognise that big imbalances of income and wealth have been deeply destructive and unfair. They corrode our social fabric and limit the life chances of hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders. Combined with other inequalities – such as those of gender and ethnicity – they damage lives and deepen disadvantage.*

*In this year's general election, we want political parties to commit to three immediate changes to tilt the balance back towards us being a country where everyone can thrive.*

*Our three immediate ambitions to help rebalance income and wealth and, as a result, promote a decent life for everyone are:*

- 1. Income for all** that provides the necessities of life through a Living Wage and fairer income support
- 2. A Government-funded house-building programme** to help address the housing crisis and provide everyone with healthy, affordable homes with long-term tenure
- 3. A tax on very high levels of wealth and higher top tax rates** on the highest incomes to ensure everyone contributes their fair share and enable our families and whanau to thrive

*To see the thinking behind this – and our complete plan to rebalance income and wealth in New Zealand – go to [www.equalitynetwork.org.nz/manifesto2017](http://www.equalitynetwork.org.nz/manifesto2017).*

### Housing: what our Church Leaders say.

The Leaders of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Wesley Methodist Churches recently issued a Statement in Housing in Aotearoa, below is a summary of the Statement

An insufficient supply of safe and affordable housing in New Zealand is contributing to a level of poverty that is fracturing the wellbeing of people and communities and hindering the educational progress of our children.

Ensuring that everyone has access to affordable housing is perhaps the most important means to lifting New Zealanders out of poverty and boosting the nation's collective health and prosperity. We are committed to working with Government and community groups on a comprehensive housing plan that will address New Zealand's housing crisis.

Copies of the Statement can be found on:

[http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sites/default/files/uploads/20170524sppchurchleaders\\_housingstatement\\_may2017.pdf](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sites/default/files/uploads/20170524sppchurchleaders_housingstatement_may2017.pdf)

### What is the impact of Inequality in New Zealand?

A recent OECD report states that inequality in New Zealand has reduced our GDP by about 10% over the past two decades.<sup>5</sup> While income inequality has contributed to the underperformance of the New Zealand economy the impact of wealth inequality is as bad if not worse.

Wealth inequality has been allowed to continue to increase in New Zealand compared to most of the OECD countries primarily because of the lack of taxes on capital gains and inheritance. New Zealand is one of the few countries that does not impose any tax on inherited wealth, this allows the wealthy to pass on their wealth and for the inherited wealthy to become "rent" collectors without actually working for the income they receive.

This is something that should be a consideration when we go to the ballot box in September.



### Up Coming events.

**South Auckland Electoral Forum Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017** St Anne's Catholic Church, 126 Russell Road Manurewa. Organised by Living Wage Movement. Hear what the local M.P candidates are prepared to commit to on a Living Wage and Housing for South Auckland  
**Time:** 6:30pm to 8:00pm

**Electoral Forum Thursday 14 September 2017 7-9pm** St Columbia Centre 40 Vincent Street, Ponsonby. Organised by the Catholic Justice & Peace Commissions with representatives from the main political parties.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/inequality-hurts-economic-growth.htm>