Anglican DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Do Justice!!

"Do Justice, Love Kindnessand Walk HumblyWith Your God" Micah 6:8

A Newsletter on Social Justice Issues

Welcome to the September 2015 edition of Do Justice.This newsletter, prepared by Auckland Diocesan Social Justice Group looks at various Social Justice Issues.

Synod

The Synod of the Auckland Diocese gathers from September 3rd-5th and, as +Jim White flagged in the recent Auckland Diocesan video news, amidst the myriad of business for synod to address are some important social justice related motions.[1]

From a social justice perspective, synod provides an opportunity to take heed of Isaiah's message about the importance of good governance:

Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees,
who write oppressive statutes,
to turn aside the needy from justice
and to rob the poor of my people of their right,
that widows may be your spoil,
and that you may make the orphans your prey![2]

Housing

One of the motions that is being brought before synod relates to the issue of housing. Its origins lie in the recognition that there is increasing housing crisis in Auckland for middle and low income residents. This is especially the case for many young families, and people living on their own including an increasing number of elderly with low or fixed incomes and few or no assets.

The housing issue is a concern for many different churches and organizations that are working with or are concerned about the most vulnerable amongst us. The Child Poverty Action Group, for example, has launched a Campaign for Healthy and Affordable Homes.[3] Their campaign recognises how the current "housing crisis is a recipe for disaster for our poorest families," and expresses concern at how quickly children in particular can get sick in poor quality housing which is not up to decent standard, the exact sort of housing which the poorest New Zealanders are forced to live in.

The motion "[i]nvites the Diocese to explore *Laudate Si*, especially Chapter Four, Sections 149 – 152 where Pope Francis calls for a creative relationship between urban planners and residents living in poverty in the planning of neighbourhoods.[4]" The Church of England's House of Bishops also engaged with issues to do with housing in their open letter, *Who is My Neighbour?,* which was published earlier this year.[5]

The motion also calls on the Government to reverse its current policies about state housing by:

a) taking responsibility as the major provider of public housing; and,
b) stopping all plans for the sale of state houses in New Zealand.

In this sense the motion is in-keeping with various other, actions, studies and seminars across the country that seek to affirm the importance of to public housing, including two upcoming hikoi:

The first hikoi is happening in Wellington on October 13th - see the flyer on the second page. It is organised by the State House Action Network.[6] The hikoi is supported by the Auckland Anglican Social Justice Group as well as the Peace and Justice Commissions of both the Auckland and Wellington Catholic Dioceses.

[1] http://www.auckanglican.org.nz/news/news/weekly-video-news-from-auckland-diocese
[2] Isaiah 10:1-2 (NRSV). The Message starts with "Doom to you who legislate evil…"
[3] http://www.cpag.org.nz/the-latest/cpag-campaign-for-healthy-and-affordable/couch-caravan-car/
[4] http://m.vatican.va/content/francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
[5] https://churchofengland.org/media/2170230/whoismyneighbour-pages.pdf See, for instance, 84 where "[i]nstitutions like Credit Unions and Housing Associations are not important simply because they are effective but because they embody the principle of mutuality – the common bond between people being the heart of the operation and not just a bolt-on accessory."
[6] The State House Action Network (SHAN) is a network of HNZC tenants and their supporters.

The second hikoi will take place in Auckland on November 21st and more information will follow in subsequent editions of *Do Justice*.

Income Inequality

There is also a motion which addresses income inequality and reflects the reality that the growing income gap in our society, and the increasing prevalence of insecure employment, jeopardise a cohesive social framework.[7] This means that many people do not have reliable incomes to meet their everyday living needs, enjoy their lives and participate in society.

The motion builds on previous commitments made by the synod, including supporting the Living Wage Movement. One of the long-term concerns is that simply raising the bottom does little when employers' perceptions are shaped by the idea of relativity in the sense that if the lowest paid worker gets an increase then everyone else above them in the pecking order, including the CEO, should get an increase, too. It cannot be forgotten that the spread between lowest and highest paid has increased so much on the last 20 years; it is the inequality aspect that needs correcting. Maintaining relativities will never do this.

Slipping the Moorings

+Richard Randerson's memoir weaves faith with justice, ethics and community and provides a back-story of significant changes in church and society in Aotearoa New Zealand over the past half-century. Parishes have been developing study groups around key topics such as poverty and justice, ethics in public life, same-sex relationships, and how the Church can engage with society.

A simple study guide with questions for discussion starters is now available free.[8] Groups (7 or more copies) can now purchase the book for $19.50.

Climate change

The Auckland Diocesan Climate Change Action Group (DCCAG)[9] continues to do good work and is celebrating after the success of the recent Pacific Leaders Climate Tour.

At an international level, the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference meets in Paris in December with the hope of coming to an agreement on a shared target for climate action.[10]

[7] Insecure employment is defined as including: casual, temporary, fixed-term and zero-hour employment that can be characterised by low and/or fluctuating pay, uncertain duration and/or no security of hours of work and with limited or no access to training, career progression and employment rights and benefits such as sick leave and holiday pay.

[8] http://movementonline.org.nz/762/book-launch-slipping-the-moorings-a-memoir-weaving-faith-with-justice-ethics-and-community-by-bishop-richard-randerson-19-may/

[9] **http://cherished-earth.org.nz/**

[10] http://350.org/the-time-for-feeling-powerless-in-the-face-of-climate-change-is-over/