

St John the Baptist Anglican Church

Newsletter August 2016

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A note from Stan...

Punitive Welfare – A Blight on the Poor

Introduction

The following is an article reprinted from the News Page of the Massey University website. I first heard about the two authors of a book on poverty one afternoon on RNZ National at the end of June 2016. It caught my attention because there was considerable synchronicity with my thinking on health, poverty, homelessness and health.

I tried to apply for some support from Work and Income NZ (WINZ) at the end of last year. I gave up halfway through, feeling guilty, angry and certainly not listened to. With a 26 page application form that included two pages on what would happen if I made a wrong statement or did not follow process, I got the distinct impression that the application process was made difficult on purpose. Your presence and your application are not wanted.

I find this hard to believe when I think of solo parents and low wage earners. Is it better to stay in an abusive relationship with an abusive partner instead of being on a benefit? Is being dependent on an exploitive employer who doesn't pay you a living wage better than collecting an unemployment benefit?

I hope you will give this article your attention. It certainly challenges how many people feel about poverty and people on welfare.

The stresses and struggles of the poor are being intensified by a punitive welfare system, say authors of a hard-hitting new book on the causes of poverty and associated health inequalities.

Lead author Professor Darrin Hodgetts says statistics out this week (the end of June 2016) that show wealth distribution is worse than ever reinforce key themes of his book. Statistics New Zealand's figures reveal the top 10 per cent of the

population owns 60 per cent of wealth while the poorest 40 per cent held just three per cent.

Evidence of growing poverty documented in the book includes more people unable to survive on welfare benefits opting for loan sharks, despite the horrendous debts they incur. They choose this rather than demeaning treatment when asking for help from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) – a symptom of an increasingly dysfunctional welfare system, says Professor Hodgetts, a societal psychologist at Massey University's School of Psychology.

Due out later this year, the book provides insights and analysis on structural causes of the current levels of deprivation, evidenced in growing numbers of homeless people, families living in cars, unaffordable housing, increased dependence on food banks and charities, low paid casual jobs – and the myriad of health problems and the exclusions these issues cause.

Titled *Urban Poverty, Penal Welfare and Health Inequalities*, by Professor Hodgetts and Dr Otilie Stolte from the University of Waikato, the book traverses 200 years of research on urban poverty in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and Britain to highlight concurrent developments and the similarities across these countries. The book includes comments from those living in poverty as well as media depictions of welfare and poverty to provide a deeper understanding behind what the authors term "the resurrection of penal welfare".

"There is little disagreement that *low incomes, inadequate housing and health and disability issues are the main causes of poverty*, yet *enthusiasm continues for punitive behavioural responses, which are largely counterproductive and deeply offensive to people facing hardship*," the authors say.

"It's depressing," says Dr Hodgetts, who has researched the effects of poverty in New Zealand and England over the past 20 years in previous research. He says *New Zealand's once-humanitarian welfare system* genuinely supported those in need but *has evolved into an*

often cruel, punitive entity. The way it treats its 'clients' reflects *an ideological switch to judgmental attitudes towards the poor as morally inept failures who have made the wrong choices*, he says.

Structural violence

The authors use the term "structural violence" to describe the behaviour that has come to characterise the relationship between welfare providers and recipients. *"They often resemble violent relationships between intimate partners, involving coercion, detailed monitoring, denying resources, blaming, threats and intimidation, victimisation, and the minimising of legitimate concerns."*

Constant scrutiny and the routine denial of entitlements is reported as undermining welfare applicants' sense of dignity and self-worth, and invokes emotional responses in the form of anxiety and dread in having to submit to such control. One participant quoted in the book described WINZ as "very judgmental" and "traumatising".

"The myth of an over-generous welfare state still features strongly in public imagination," the authors say. "The levels of scrutiny and interrogation are therefore often surprising to people who end up engaging with welfare for the first time due to redundancy, failed businesses, serious illnesses or other misfortunes."

Shadow welfare state' and loan sharks

Debt is another of the burdens facing those living in poverty, with the use of payday loans from fringe lenders in the 'shadow welfare state' as a key survival strategy. The authors say that although people are well aware that they are being financially exploited by fringe lenders, "they are at least treated with a degree of respect".

Debt makes life even more precarious, "adding to their stress and undermining people's ability to flourish and to participate in society, as well as forcing impossible choices between rent, heating and food".

Neo-liberal agenda undermining welfare system

The authors assert that current problems are the result of "the continued dominance of neoliberalism", creating a society "characterised by increased wealth concentration, the associated corruption of political processes, and increased urban poverty and health inequalities".

"Neoliberal-inspired governments have employed the common strategy of *deliberately underfunding*

government services, which eventually *lose their efficacy due to resource restraints. This*, they say, then *provides 'evidence' of the perceived inefficiency of government services and a rationale for the need to privatise service delivery.* Underfunding also cultivates a prevailing view of urban poverty as "a personal problem involving the moral failings of those affected, rather than as a socio-economic problem and a consequence of the actions of more affluent groups in society".

The majority of people on welfare want to work, Professor Hodgetts says. But they are often presented with unviable options of low-paid casual work, which is not enough to live or support families on. Introducing a living wage or Universal Basic Income are potential solutions. And those living in poverty should be involved in the design, planning and development of better services and solutions, he says. "There is a strong need for engaged, advocacy social science, to give a voice to those who are not being heard," says Professor Hodgetts, a former army officer.

He hopes the book will be of interest to policymakers and welfare providers. It will be published by Routledge, the world's leading academic publisher in humanities and social science, as part of an international series on Critical Health Psychology.

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To Conclude

A key argument about our system is, "We can't afford to do any more than we are!" And when crises arise (like the homeless issue of the last two months), unworkable, short-term solutions are thrown at them. Is it not strange that the basis for our welfare policies were put in place in Britain, Australia and New Zealand after World War II when all three countries were broke. Yet there were universal health care and welfare benefits that were generous for that time. Now we cannot afford these, and we have "record growth."

This book has some radical ideas which will no doubt cause governments and policy makers to scoff and advocate a bigger stick because that's what "middle New Zealand" wants. I trust this article has enabled us to be better informed about the welfare system.

May our Father bless you and keep you warm...

Kindly,

Stan Pilbrow

In and around St John

Sunday Services: 8am, 9.30am, Eucharist

5pm (study/discussion group). All welcome, come as and when able.

Sunday School: 4th Sunday of the month at 9.30am

Evening Women's Fellowship: 7.30pm 2nd Tuesday of the month

Men's Breakfast & Bible Group: 7.15-8.15am fortnightly on a Wednesday.

Craft Group: Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday 1.30pm in the St Jude's Room

Next Garage Sale: Saturday 8th October

Hall Users

Rowe Dance - ballet classes for 3-8 year olds on Monday 2.45-4.30pm, Wednesday 3.45-5.30pm and Thursday 3.30-4.30pm in term time.

Rowe Dance - dancing for adults, Friday 10-11am.

Rowe Dance - Personal tuition by arrangement.

Positive Balance Yoga - Mon, Tues 6-8.30pm, Thurs 5.45-8.15pm in term time.

Weight Watchers - meet in St Jude's Room weekly, Tuesday 5.30-7.30pm.

Positive Balance Yoga - Mon, Tues, Thurs evenings, 5.45pm - 7pm or 7pm - 8.15pm in term time.

Jumping Beans - Wednesday 9am-1pm in term time.

Scottish Country Dance - Wednesday 7.30pm - 10pm throughout the year.

Northcote Steps - meet in the St Jude's Room, Friday 7-10pm throughout the year.

Soccer for Tots - Sat 9am - 1pm during term time

Northern Performing Arts - Saturday 4-8pm.

Barnardos Kid Start - fortnightly on a Thursday 9am-12pm.

English Folk Dance - 2nd Friday of each month, 7-10pm

Early English Dance - 4th Friday of each month, 7.30 - 10pm

Alcoholics Anonymous support group - each Fri evening

AlAnon family support group - 3-5pm first Sun of each month.

North Shore Stitchers - 3rd Sun each month 10am - 2pm

Plus occasional use by...

Northcote Residents Association

Northcote/Birkenhead Boat Owners Association

St Thomas, Syrian Church.

Readings for the month

August 7 19th Ordinary

Reading: Isaiah 1: 1, 10-20

Epistle: Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16

Gospel: Luke 12: 32-40

August 14 20th Ordinary

Reading: Isaiah 5: 1-7

Epistle: Hebrews 11: 29-12: 2

Gospel: Luke 12: 49-56

August 21 21st Ordinary

Reading: Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Epistle: Hebrews 12: 18-29

Gospel: Luke 13: 10-17

August 28 22nd Ordinary

Reading: Jeremiah 2: 4-13

Epistle: Hebrews 13: 1-8, 15-16

Gospel: Luke 14: 1, 7-14

GARAGE SALE

The next Garage Sale is happening on Saturday 8th October. Goods to the hall from Thursday 6th October at 1pm. Please look out for goods for the sale and tell your friends and family.

WOMEN'S EVENING FELLOWSHIP

The Evening women's fellowship meets this month IN THE ST JUDE'S ROOM this coming Tuesday 9th August at 7.30pm. This is a CHANGE in venue. Our numbers have grown so we are having our book night here rather than at Pam and Mike's. We have had so many enjoyable times at their house and we thank them very much!

However we will still have a great time - bring a book to talk about or just come to listen and talk. Supper as usual and a raffle. All welcome!

Please ring me if any queries or transport problems. Rosemary (489 5830)



LIVING WISDOM SCHOOL

Transformation is at the heart of the Christian journey. Paul says this happens by the renewing of our minds. But here's the deal, you can't build a new house on bad foundations. Come to the next Living Wisdom course starting August 8th to learn about everlasting biblical truths and the latest insights in psychology and neuroscience, so that you can learn how to build a new mind based on spiritual truth from the foundations up. Join Counsellor and teacher Rene Aish as he takes you through this 18 week course starting August 8th. For more details contact r.aish@vodafone.co.nz or visit www.facebook.com/burningbushnz

The details

David Riddell's Living Wisdom School – taught by Rene Aish

When: Starting August 8th at 7pm, and runs for 18 weeks

Where: Living Waters International (Formerly Balmoral Baptist)

Cnr Dominion Road and Queens Ave, Balmoral

Cost: \$920 in total. Can be paid over time as required

MEN'S "BREAKFAST"

While Peter has been away and breakfast wasn't served, we had a "Men's Supper" instead in a couple of homes. There were a few new guys present, which makes us start thinking that we could do this more often. We heard from Murray Anderson on 'Life in the Ambulance Service'; Vicar Stan about 'Life in the Army' and from Peter Mundell about 'His careers involving things ecological'. Stan also lead us and we all chatted about some great thoughts and gleanings from the Book of Galatians, then we had supper - And what a supper!! Provided by each of us.

For the next dates and venue, keep an eye on the weekly church sheet.

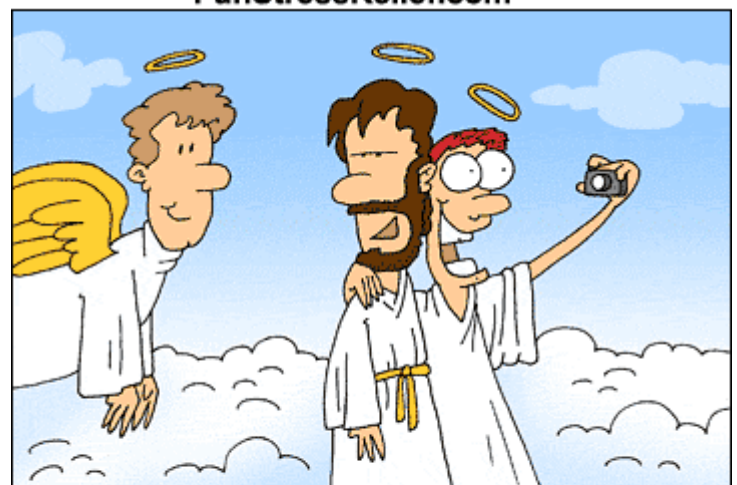
Men - You'll want to be there!

FOOD BANK

Thank you everyone for the continuing contributions to our food bank. Supplies are gradually building up again. Things that are useful are items such as soap, shampoo, toilet roll, sanitary items and the like. Your generosity is much appreciated by those who have very little at the moment.

Rosemary Saunders.

FunStressRelief.com



Thanks to Dad Hengeveld

02-16-2009

I'VE TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT HE'S GOING TO BE WITH ME FOREVER, BUT HE JUST DOESN'T GET IT

Contacts**Vicar:**

Rev Stan Pilbrow 480 7568

Wardens

Vicar's Warden: Doug Dempster 418 1448

People's Warden: Pru Giles 489 1998

Pastoral Care: Karen Perrett 418-3715

Synod Representatives

Rosemary Saunders 489 5830

Louise Collenette 441 3055

Hall Hire

Richard Lewis 419 9026

Recorder

Wendy McPherson 473 3448

Women's Fellowship

Rosemary Saunders 489 5830

Catering Committee

Barbara McIlroy 418 4117

Office Admin, Newsletter and Website

Natalie Roffey 022 607 4376

Your newsletter is prepared by Natalie. You can contact Natalie by emailing her at sjbanglican@gmail.com. The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of the month and the deadline for submissions is the 25th of the previous month.

Alphabit word-puzzle

The following puzzle consists of 26 rows of letters with one empty space in each row. There is one place for each letter of the alphabet in the 26 empty squares. Fill in each letter so that a word of at least 5 letters is formed reading across only. Not all the letters in each row are used; it's up to you to discover which ones are needed to complete the right words. Some of the letters may fit in more than one of the empty squares to complete words; however only one arrangement of all the letters of the alphabet will complete a word in each row.

T	C	O	L	U	M		S	O	N	N	Y	R
B	O	C	R	O	W		E	A	T	H	M	D
B	E	Y	E	L	I		U	O	R	A	C	E
S	H	E	P	H	E		D	V	A	N	C	E
K	M	S	H	O	R		A	N	C	E	R	S
B	I	F	L	E	E		E	A	T	S	E	A
D	E	G	R	I	P		R	C	H	I	D	E
F	E	C	A	N	A		A	R	I	T	E	D
D	O	N	E	F	O		E	S	S	O	N	R
V	U	N	K	N	I		E	P	H	E	W	T
T	O	P	S	A	L		B	O	U	R	K	C
O	U	T	E	M	P		E	S	S	U	R	E
B	U	N	D	E	R		A	K	E	R	S	T
M	W	E	A	L	T		T	H	E	R	S	K
H	C	A	N	N	O		L	E	A	S	E	D
T	M	A	G	O	S		E	L	P	F	U	L
Q	R	W	I	N	T		R	A	T	H	E	R
X	F	O	R	B	I		H	O	P	L	A	N
T	R	E	S	P	A		S	O	V	E	R	D
S	H	I	V	O	R		A	N	I	Z	E	D
G	B	Y	W	O	R		S	C	U	E	D	F
K	U	N	L	O	C		S	T	D	O	W	N
B	A	G	U	L	F		A	M	E	S	A	W
C	O	W	H	E	A		E	N	D	E	R	G
A	J	O	S	E	P		L	A	C	E	N	D
J	N	S	O	L	E		N	E	E	L	A	D

Solutions to last month's puzzle

		R	E	M	O	V	E					
			D	A	V	I	D					
						W	A	L	L	O	W	
		I	M	M	O	R	T	A	L			
	W	E	A	S	E	L						
		M	A	R	B	L	E					
	L	E	G	I	O	N						
		R	E	B	U	K	E					
					D	O	C	T	R	I	N	E
				F	A	M	I	L	Y			
		J	O	R	D	A	N					
			E	X	E	M	P	T				
		A	D	O	P	T						
	T	E	A	C	H							
C	A	R	P	E	N	T	E	R				
		J	O	Y	F	U	L					
				B	E	A	R	D				
				Z	E	A	L	O	U	S		
		H	A	T	C	H						
	D	R	U	N	K							
				S	O	W	E	R				
		P	R	A	Y	E	R					
			L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E		
	S	C	O	U	R	G	E					
			R	E	Q	U	E	S	T			
		E	L	I	J	A	H					