



CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

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TREASURE OUR FUTURE
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By Anglicans in Aotearoa New Zealand & Polynesia, 2014

*May we share in the Lord's kingship
by serving him in the poor and humble.
God, Father of the poor
your son Jesus was born among us
poor, humble and dependent.*

*Open our eyes and our hearts and our hands
to honour him now as our Lord and King
by welcoming him in those who are hungry and thirsty
in all who are abandoned and lonely,
in refugees, in the poor and the sick.*

*Let our love become free and spontaneous,
like the tenderness you have shown us in your Son.
Welcome us in the everlasting Kingdom
prepared for us through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Amen.

A reflection on Matthew 25:31-46

Liturgies Alive-Models of Celebration.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is to lead you through a week of reflection, reading and actions on the issue of Children Living in Poverty.

You can choose how to use this booklet, whether in small groups, with your whānau around the table, or during your individual reflection time. Our hope is that it will take you on a journey of better understanding the situation of children living in poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand.

All Bible citations are taken from the NRSV. Full references and links to further information are on the website of the Social Justice Commission:
www.justice.net.nz



SUNDAY

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CHILD POVERTY: AN ISSUE FOR CHRISTIANS

The great tragedy in the church is not that rich Christians do not care about the poor but that rich Christians do not know the poor.

SHANE CLAIBORNE

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has sent me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

LUKE 4:18-19

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

All throughout the Bible, God cares for the poor and hears their cry.

In Deuteronomy 15:11 He commands his people to “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.” When Israel turned away from God, the Lord sent prophets and judged them for their injustice to the poor and vulnerable: “how many crimes you have committed... you prevent the poor from getting justice in courts.” Amos 5:12.

Jesus calls us to be messengers of the good news to the poor. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has sent me to bring good news to the poor.” - Luke 4:18-19. We as church have a responsibility to respond to the poverty we see around us. We are called to serve the last and the least in our community, to offer hope and justice to the poor.

POVERTY IN NEW ZEALAND?

While few New Zealanders would live in the absolute poverty of extreme hunger and starvation – poverty exists in New Zealand.

Poverty looks different in different places. For our Pacific island neighbours, poverty can mean not having decent land to grow food, lacking access to safe drinking water or electricity in the home.

In New Zealand poverty looks like families and individuals living without basic necessities such as nutritious food and warm clothes. Around a fifth of poor households report going without essential items such as decent shoes and heating in all rooms of the house.

New Zealand has no official measurement of poverty. The most commonly used threshold for poverty is 60 per cent of median disposable household income under which many households experience significant hardship. In 2013, according to this measure around 285,000 children in New Zealand live in poverty.

POVERTY – NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF CHOICE

The causes of poverty are complex and extend much broader than the result of individual choice and unwise financial decisions. For children, living in poverty is always a reality that they did not choose.

Most people will experience hardship at some point in their life. Often, the poor suffer simply because they do not have enough income to provide for their family in times of crisis. Some parents struggling to find employment are dependent on subsistent benefits that do not cover unexpected bills and costs.

People may disagree about poverty being the result of poor choices or cycles that trap people. In truth, poverty is complex; solutions will not come without genuine understanding.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- » To what degree do you think political policies create persistent poverty?
- » What are the biggest barriers to progress on poverty?
- » How can we challenge our current thinking and genuinely hear from people different to ourselves?

KARAKIA

Lord bless us with restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships. May we seek truth boldly and love deeply. Help us find the seeds of your kingdom at work in our nation.

E te Ariki, meinga mātou kia auhi ki ngā whakautu ngāwari; kia māia, kia kaha hoki mātou ki te whai i te pono me te aroha. Āwhinatia mātou ki te rapu i ngā kākano o tōu rangatiratanga kua whakatōngia ki roto i ngā iwi o te ao.

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

- » Volunteer at your local food bank, budgeting service or other social service and get to know people struggling with poverty first hand.
- » Read Facts About Poverty 2009 (www.nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page_id=276) produced by the NZ Christian Council of Social Services.
- » Read the City Mission's Speaking For Ourselves report (www.aucklandcitymission.org.nz/information.php?info_id=129&mID=121). Stories of poverty from those who live it.



MONDAY

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CHILD POVERTY, INCOMES, & WORK

Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills... While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few.

POPE FRANCIS

WEALTH AND INEQUALITY IN NEW ZEALAND

There are enough resources for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed. In the last 30 years, inequality in New Zealand has grown faster than in any other developed country. While some have become richer, others have found themselves struggling to keep up with the rising costs of living.

The bible teaches not only concern for the poor, but also that the fortunes of the rich and poor are connected.

“Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honour him.” - Proverbs 14:31

DO PEOPLE DESERVE WHAT THEY GET?

A common belief in society is that people get what they deserve and are responsible for their economic and social position, rich or poor. While there may be some truth in this, such a view may provide justification for the worthy rich and the blameworthy poor.

In New Zealand we are seeing a growing number of workers struggling to make ends meet. In 2012, between 500,000 and 750,000 people in New Zealand were living in households with incomes below the poverty line.

There is widespread poverty among workers, who cannot earn enough in a low wage job to support their family. About two in five children living in poverty have at least one parent or caregiver in full-time work.

A JUST WAGE FOR ALL

A just wage goes beyond what the market decides is competitive. Instead a just wage should be enough to meet the basic needs of the worker and their family.

In Jeremiah 22:13, the prophet Jeremiah rebukes Judah saying “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbours work for nothing, and does not give them their wages”.

We are called to offer justice to our workers.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- » At what point does inequality become morally wrong?
- » Have we reached that point in Aotearoa New Zealand?
- » Where do people struggle on a low wage in our community?

KARAKIA

Lord, bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation. Guard us with the mind of Christ that we might discern injustice rightly. Loving God, you call us to be one in Christ across social divides. Grant us the courage to seek understanding through relationships with those different to ourselves. Amen.

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

- » Find out more about the Living Wage campaign in your community and get involved (www.livingwage.org.nz).
- » Write a letter to your local Council asking them to pay a living wage for their workers.



TUESDAY

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY & POOR HOUSING

Every child should find itself a member of a family housed with decency and dignity, so that it may grow up as a member of that basic community in a happy fellowship unspoilt by underfeeding or overcrowding, by dirty and drab surroundings or by mechanical monotony of environment.

WILLIAM TEMPLE,
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

A LACK OF AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY HOUSING

Housing is a basic need for all people and the church has long been an advocate for decent housing for all God's children.

In 1980 the median house cost just twice the median income, now it costs more than five times the median income. As housing costs have escalated, more and more low and middle income families and individuals are dependent on rental properties.

In cities such as Auckland, market rent is incredibly high. In 2011, close to 40 per cent of low-income households spent more than 30 per cent of their income simply on rent. This leaves less money to pay for the cost of food and other expenses.

THE IMPLICATION FOR FAMILIES

Some families find themselves having to constantly move from house to house on short-term lease. Others move into crowded living arrangements or move into poor quality houses that are damp and cold. According to the Human Rights Commission, almost a third of New Zealand homes fall below the World Health Organisation recommended indoor temperature of 18 degrees Celsius.

As a result many children living in poverty also live in insecurity. Over two thirds of children living in poverty live in rental housing and some in temporary accommodation such as boarding houses and caravan parks.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

“My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” - Isaiah 32:18

In Isaiah, the prophet describes an image of justice where people dwell in safety and security. A home is a place where children and families can find shelter and rest.

It is a place from where we can show hospitality to others; see our children grow up healthy and strong. It is an injustice when our children are deprived of a secure place to call home.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- » Imagine sharing your room with your whole family, how would it affect the other aspects of your life?
- » What are the qualities that make a place home?
- » How can we be better tenants, better landlords and better homeowners?

KARAKIA

O Lord, by whose cross enmity is brought to an end, awaken in us the passion to dream. Lord, who can make all things new, open our eyes; let us see in our communities those without adequate shelter. Today we lift up to you all those who yearn for a simple, decent, warm, and affordable place to call home. Amen.

E te Ariki, mā tōu rīpeka te mauāhara e whakamutu, whakaoho mai ki roto i a mātou te kohara kia moemoeā. E te Ariki, nāu te kaha ki te whakahou i ngā mea katoa, whakapuaretia ō mātou kamo; kia kite ai mātou i ngā tāngata o ā mātou hapori e noho whakarurukore. Tirohia ngā tāngata katoa e hihiri ki he wāhi noa nei, he wāhi pai, he wāhi mahana, he wāhi utu-tika hei kāinga mō rātou.

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

- » Support Habitat for Humanity build and maintain housing for those in need (www.habitat.org.nz).
- » Find out if there is a local initiative in your areas to establish Warrant of Fitness for rental properties or bring the Anglican *Record Your Rental* scheme to your area (www.recordyourrental.org.nz).
- » Offer interest free loans to help people cover bond and letting fees.
- » Check out the Anglican Paper Walls Report about rental properties in New Zealand (www.paperwalls.org).

WEDNESDAY

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CHILD POVERTY, HEALTH & WELL-BEING

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.*

PSALM 139:13-16

CALLED TO A FULL LIFE

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

- Jeremiah 29:11

God created each one of us in His image and calls us to live life abundantly with hope.

Te Whare Tapa Wha is a holistic model of Māori health and wellbeing. Each wall of the wharenuī symbolises an aspect of health that upholds the wellbeing of a person – Te taha hinengaro (psychological health), te taha wairua (spiritual health), te taha tinana (physical health) and te taha whānau (family health). When one area of a young person’s health is affected, the other areas are also affected.

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY AND HEALTH

Children growing up in low-income households generally have poorer physical health outcomes than those in high-income families. During childhood, children living in poverty suffer more from infections and respiratory diseases. This is often a reflection of the physical and social environment a child grows up in.

Families living in poverty experience financial insecurity, which often contribute to stress for parents and children. High cost for doctors and dentists mean visits to health practitioners are often delayed or avoided. For parents, the stress of poverty can lead to negative coping mechanisms and unwise decisions that adversely affect a children’s mental and physical wellbeing.

HOLISTIC WELLBEING

All children deserve the best possible start to life, to have a healthy and strong place to stand and grow. The cost of ignoring child poverty has significant social and financial implications for families and our society, but most importantly, it impacts the future of our tamariki.

It is important to recognise that in order to invest in the hope and wellbeing of our future generation we need to support the whole individual and the wider whānau.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- » If we think of health as holistic well-being, how does this change the way we approach our healthcare system?
- » How can we as a church support and build up the psychological, spiritual and family health of young people around us?

KARAKIA

God of life, you created each child to have life in abundance, may we abundantly love the children in our care. Empower us to advocate for the well-being of all children. With the courage of the prophetic Spirit, may we challenge structures which entrench child poverty. Enable us to support and encourage parents so that children feel loved, wanted and safe in their families. Amen.

E te Atua o te ora, nāu ngā tamariki katoa i waihanga kia nui te ora, meinga kia nui tō mātou aroha mō ngā tamariki e tiakina nei e mātou. Whakakahangia mātou ki te āki kia toko te ora mō rātou, ā, mā te māia o te Wairua whakakite, meinga kia werohia e mātou ngā whakatakotoranga e tāmi nei i te hunga ririki ki roto i te rawakoretanga. Meinga mātou ki te tautoko, ki te āki i ngā mātua, kia rongo ai ngā tamariki, i roto i ō rātou whānau, i te aroha, i te manaakitanga me te ora. Āmine.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Advocate for free health-care for children up to the age of 18
- » Support Whanāu based holistic health services like those funded through the Whānau Ora programme
- » Run free parenting and parent support groups from the church which looks at the wellbeing of whole families

THURSDAY

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CHILD POVERTY & EDUCATION

*The test of the morality of a society
is what it does for its children.*

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



EDUCATION AND A GOOD START TO LIFE

The coming of a child offers hope and the expectation of a new future. The birth of any child offers new possibilities – every newborn child has the potential to do great things. The simple offering and receiving of the gift of love can transform families.

Children in New Zealand have lots of opportunities but sadly children living below the poverty line lack the resources to take full advantage of these opportunities.

POVERTY AND EDUCATION

Children living in poverty often experience hardship, which hinders their ability to learn. In 2010, the Children’s Commission interviewed 96 children about their views and experiences of poverty. Young people identified a lack of essentials including food and warm clothes. Some talked about being picked on for not having the right shoes and books for school. Others talked about not being able to make friends as they shifted house often due to parents not being able to afford rent.

All this can have physical and psychological impacts that deter children from effective learning. According to the Children’s Commissioner 2012 report, children living in poverty are less likely to participate in early childhood education and less likely to leave school with NCEA level two.

All parents want their children to succeed but it can be difficult to prioritise education around financial restraints especially for those who may not have had positive experiences of education themselves.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Ensuring that children living in poverty are able to succeed in education is an important way to break the cycle of poverty. A good education fosters opportunity and is an extension of hope.

Through ensuring all children can experience good quality education from early childhood to adulthood, we are demonstrating our hope for our community and its future.

There is something that we can all do to break down barriers to quality education for our children.

DISCUSSION

- » What would it feel like to go to school hungry and not have the right uniform or books?
- » How can the church help children living in hardship take full advantage of opportunities to learn?

KARAKIA

God of truth and source of all knowledge, may all children in this land of opportunity be enabled to participate in education, free from hunger, clothed warmly, with the right books and equipment and above all with a thirst to learn. Bless their teachers with enthusiasm to teach and energy to love the students in their care. Amen.

E te Atua o te pono, te mātāpuna o te mātauranga, meinga ngā tamariki katoa i tēnei whenua whai rawa kia whai wāhi ki te ako, kia mākona, kia mahana, kia whai hoki i ngā taputapu tika, nei rā hoatu ki a rātou te hihiringa mō te mātauranga. Meinga ā rātou kaiako kia hihiko ki te whakaako, kia nui hoki tō rātou aroha mō ngā taura e tiakina ai e rātou. Āmine.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Get to know your local low decile schools that have a high population of children living under the poverty line.
- » See where you can support schools with homework programmes, food in schools or school garden projects.
- » Check out the “1000 days to get it right for every child campaign” (www.everychildcounts.org.nz).

FRIDAY

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CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

But this is a people robbed and plundered, all of them are trapped in holes and hidden in prisons; they have become a prey with no one to rescue, a spoil with no one to say, "Restore!" Who among you will give heed to this, who will attend and listen for the time to come?

ISAIAH 42:22-23

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CHILDREN: THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF CRIME

Last year we looked at our prison system and reflected on what needed to change. This year we continue remember that these issues are connected, that children are often the forgotten victims of crime.

Even though crime rates in Aotearoa New Zealand are falling in recent years, more and more people are being put in prison every day. We have one of the highest imprisonment rates in the developed world even though there is little evidence to show that this prevents crime or reduces reoffending.

With almost 8500 people in prison, about 4 per cent of this number are aged 15-19 and more than half are Māori.

Around 20,000 children in Aotearoa have an imprisoned parent.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF CRIME

Children of prisoners suffer more than just the loss of a parent and poverty. They are also seven times more likely to end up in prison themselves. All efforts need to be made to break this cycle of poverty, victimisation, and imprisonment.

Imprisoning more and more people is not working to reduce reoffending. Bill English was right to call our prison system a “moral and fiscal failure”. We need new ideas for solving this social disaster.

HOPE FOR OUR CHILDREN

Children are not to blame for the crimes of their parents, but often they bear a heavy burden when one or both of their parents are in prison.

No child should suffer due to the life situation of their parents, whether they are imprisoned, unemployed, or poor. We are called to proclaim freedom for the oppressed and offer hope to all children and young people in our community.

DISCUSSION

- » What is it like to live with one or both parents absent?
- » How can we support not only the children of prisoners but also prisoners who are parents?

KARAKIA

God of freedom, bless all children who are deprived of one or both parents. Where a parent is in prison, may both children and parents be supported with effective care which brings hope for a better future, love which helps through periods of separation, and action which breaks cycles of imprisonment. Amen.

E te Atua whai mana, manaakitia mai ngā tamariki katoa e mahue pani ai. Mēnā kua mauheretia tētahi o ngā mātua, meinga kia tiakina ai ngā tamariki me ngā mātua, kia puta ai te tūmanako kia pai ngā rā āmua, kia whakangāwari te noho mawehe, kia mutu atu ai te whakarauanga i tēnā whānau, i tēnā whānau. Āmine.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Support Angel Tree, helping prisoners give Christmas presents to their children (www.pfnz.org.nz/angel_tree.htm).
- » Invite a speaker on restorative justice to your church.
- » Visit a prisoner (Matthew 25:36), which can be arranged through your local prison chaplain or Prison Fellowship.
- » Support Pillars' work with the children of prisoners. Volunteer to be a mentor (www.pillars.org.nz).

SATURDAY

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THE RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN TO A FULL LIFE

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.

KOFI ANNAN

ALL BELONG TO THIS LAND

We are all people who came from somewhere else; Māori or pakeha, early or recent migrants. From faraway places we came and put down roots, together we call Aotearoa New Zealand our home. While we are diverse, we recognise the fingerprint of God in each one of us as equal human beings.

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.” - 1 Corinthians 12:26

Child poverty is an issue that affects us all, but about a third of Māori and Pasifika children live in poverty. This is double the rate of Pakeha children living in poverty.

INEQUALITY FOR MĀORI AND PASIFIKA CHILDREN

The cause of this over-representation of Māori and Pasifika children living in poverty is diverse. There is a high concentration of Māori and Pasifika communities living in areas of high deprivation where opportunities are scarce.

The experience of colonisation for Māori, including alienation from land, resources and culture, has an ongoing impact for Māori whānau today.

The experience of Pasifika children growing up in New Zealand include the challenge of negotiating cross-cultural education and the realities of societal poverty connected to ethnic origins.

The solutions to child poverty need to be holistic and should acknowledge and nurture the rich cultural needs and heritage of all young people.

ADVOCATING FOR OUR TAMARIKI

“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the poor and needy.” - Proverbs 31:8-9

Speaking out for those that cannot speak means risking offending people or even being wrong. If you provide much needed charity everyone will love you. But speaking out against policies that maintains poverty as a trap will always upset some people. We may also disagree about what raising a just voice would sound like. “When I give food to

the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.” - Archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara

From anti slavery to civil rights, Christians have been on the front line advocating for justice. In recent times the Hikoī of Hope, Springbok tour and the anti-nuclear movement have seen the church engage politically. This engagement has always been controversial. Even during the civil rights movements Christians fought on both sides.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- » To what degree is appropriate for the Church to advocate for political change?
- » What might be the limits to how the church engages politically?
- » What are the benefits and risks of both advocating and remaining silent about social and political matters.

KARAKIA

God of peace and justice, we ask you to bless the representatives we have elected. Grant that through their discussion and decisions we may achieve a fair and united society. As part of the system we have inherited, make us bold to speak truth to those in power when your Spirit moves us.

E te Atua o te rangimārie, o te tika, he īnoi tēnei nā mātou kia whakapaingia e koe ngā māngai kua kōwhiria e mātou. Meinga mā o rātou kōrero me ā rātou whakatau kia tipu te tika me te kotahitanga i roto i te ao. Whakakahangia mātou ki te whakapuaki i te pono ki ērā e whai mana ana ina whakaoreorengia ai mātou e tōu Wairua.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Read the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty from the Children’s Commission (www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/EAG/Final-report/Final-report-Solutions-to-child-poverty-evidence-for-action.pdf).
- » Go and speak to your local MP about the solutions presented on behalf of your church.

SUNDAY

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A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN

*Let the little children
come to me, and do not
stop them; for it is to such
as these that the kingdom
of heaven belongs.”*

MATTHEW 19:13-14



CHILDREN – A PRECIOUS GIFT

Jesus, in his ministry kept children close to his heart. ***“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” - Mark 9:37***

WHEN CHARITY HURTS

Child poverty cannot be separated from family poverty. Poverty may bring hunger, but it may also bring a sense of helplessness and powerlessness. This in turn may result in depression, anger, frustration or illness. It is possible for charity to address hunger, but contribute to a sense of helplessness and therefore depression and anger. As much as possible we should seek to do things *with* people rather than *for* or *to* people. Charity in a crisis is an essential act of compassion from the church; however, it is not sufficient. As Augustine said, “charity is no substitute for charity withheld.”

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

New Zealand can begin to overcome child poverty by having a national strategy to reduce poverty with official child poverty measures. This is the recommendation of the Children’s Commissioner and UNICEF, and yet, our government has not agreed to this critical first step. When a doctor asks how much you hurt from one to ten she is not after an objective value, but trying to see if it changes over time. Without a national strategy and official poverty measures that are consistent beyond elections it is impossible to know whether government policy is actually working.

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi
With your basket and my basket the people will live

KARAKIA

God who is father and mother of us all, grant us both the hope of a better future for all our children, and the will to work for change so that the children we love may enjoy the benefits of health, education, and distribution of wealth which ensures they live in warm and safe homes. Amen.

E tō mātou Matua, hōmai ki a mātou te tūmanako ka pai ake ngā rā āmua mō ā mātou tamariki katoa me te kaha ki te mahi kia whakarerekē ai te ao, kia rongo ai ngā tamariki e arohaina ai e mātou ki ngā hua o te ora, o te mātauranga, me te whakaratonga o ngā rawa kia au kia mahana hoki ō rātou kāinga. Āmine.

ACTION

- » Read the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty from page 137 onwards (www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/EAG/Final-report/Final-report-Solutions-to-child-poverty-evidence-for-action.pdf).
- » Write a letter to your MP, to the Minister for Social Development, and to the Prime Minister asking for them to initiate cross-party talks to create a national strategy to reduce child poverty.
- » If you know no-one struggling with poverty in some form, lament the loss of counter-cultural diversity within the church set up by the one who came to tear down the walls that divide.

SUNDAY LITURGY RESOURCE

In the U.K in 1841 young children were working in coalmines. They were underground for up to 18 hours a day. In 1842 laws were past that stopped children under ten years working underground. In 1860 the age limit rose to twelve, and in 1900 to thirteen. Each step may have been small, but as the saying goes “Ahakoa he iti he pounamu” - *although it is small, it is greenstone.*

In New Zealand in 1872 six year olds were working long days in factories. In 1873 regulation meant child workers had to be over 10 and could not work longer than 8 hours. *Ahakoa he iti he pounamu.*

In 1877 Charles Bowen fought to introduce compulsory primary school education up to the age of 12, effectively lifting the age of factory work to 13. *Ahakoa he iti he pounamu.*

In 1890 children were still working with dangerous chemicals in poisonous area. This ended in 1891. *Ahakoa he iti he pounamu.*

People with vision fought for each positive change in our legal protection for children. Vision might be described as having dissatisfaction with what is and an ability to see what might be. What might the next change look like if it were guided by a vision of the kingdom of God? What small changes will be wrought by the church of our time? What will they write in 100 years time?

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice.” - Nelson Mandela

SENTENCE

The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.
- (Psalm 103:6)

KARAKIA

Creator God, You loved the world into life. Forgive us when our dreams of the future are shaped by anything other than glimpses of a kingdom of justice, peace and an end to poverty.

Incarnate God, you taught us to speak out for what is right. Make us content with nothing less than a world that is transformed into the shape of love, where poverty shall be no more.

Breath of God, let there be abundant life. Inspire us with the vision of poverty over, and give us the faith, courage and will to make it happen.

E te Kaihanga, nā tōu aroha te ao i waihanga. Aroha mai ki a mātou i ngā wā ka waihangatia ō mātou moemoeā mō ngā rā āmua ki whakaaro kē, nei rā, tua atu i tōu rangatiratanga o te tika, o te rangimārie me te whakamutunga o te nohoanga rawakore.

E Imanuera, nāu mātou i whakaako ki te kōrero i te tika. Meinga kia kua e toko ō mātou manawa mō te ao inā kāore taua ao e auahangia e te aroha me te whakakāhoretanga o te noho rawakore

E te hā o te Atua, meinga kia nui te ora. Whakaawetia mātou ki te whakakitenga o te whakakāhoretanga o te noho rawakore, ā, hōmai ki a mātou te whakapono me te māia kia tutuki ai.

READINGS

Jeremiah 17:5-10, Psalm 1, I Corinthians 15:12-20 & Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

POST COMMUNION SENTENCE

The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28) *or*

He has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

