

Mercy and Justice shall meet

Housing

Then Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
Mark 9:5

What are the prominent issues in housing for you?

From the main menu click on 3. Building and Strengthening. Watch the three video clips.

What is the dominant image or phrase from the video clips that remains with you?

Our Father in heaven,
in hostels, temporary homes, alone on a park bench.

Hallowed be your name
hallowed by your tenderness for all your people.

Your kingdom come
to those who hunger for righteousness, to those who thirst for justice.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
by those with political power and moral influence,
by those who stand alongside your wounded people.

Give us this day our daily bread
to share with our sisters and brothers.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us,
our fear of risk, of loss, of sharing our wealth,
our reluctance to follow where Christ leads.

Lead us not into temptation,
into pride, into self-righteousness; into denial of truth.

But deliver us from evil
that prevents us from taking responsibility for crises in our world.

For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
your people, your city, your land,
your glory which will transform us all,
for ever and ever. Amen.

(adapted from 171 in Trampled Vineyard)



Housing Rights in NZ

- New Zealand has a good stock of adequate housing, a low level of homelessness, legislation to protect the rights of tenants, and targeted programmes to provide housing to those who are disadvantaged.
- Maori and Pacific peoples are disadvantaged in terms of affordability and habitability of housing - they are four times more likely to live in overcrowded houses than the national average.
- Disabled people are disadvantaged in terms of affordability and accessibility of housing.
- New Zealand houses are cold by international standards.

State house on \$72,000 The Press—11 March 2006

Social service agencies are questioning why families who earn more than \$70,000 a year are still living in state housing while more than 11,000 people are languishing on the waiting list. Information obtained by The Press shows one family living in a Christchurch state house took home more than \$72,000, after tax, last year. They have lived at the Riccarton property since 1988. Another family in the same suburb took home more than \$70,000. The situation is mirrored in other parts of the country. In Hamilton one state house tenant is earning \$87,000 and two Auckland families in state housing are bringing in more than \$84,000 a year. Normally, state houses are provided only for people who have an average assessable income of \$287 a week, or about \$15,000 a year. City Missioner Michael Gorman said the situation was genuinely distressing. "If the state is going to subsidise housing it should be subsidising it for people in need. It's difficult to see how people who are on \$70,000 are in need." Gorman said some of the families he saw were struggling to rent houses on the open market in which they could live safely. He knew of families waiting for state housing who were forced to live in properties where the toilet was not fixed to the floor, plants grew through the ceiling, and the houses were riddled with mould and mildew. "We have got people who are trying to live on \$15,000 and they've got families. They need housing and they're being forced to rent on the open market. "It's difficult for them on so many levels and leaves them open to exploitation." Gorman said it was those people Housing New Zealand should be looking after.

A spokesman for Housing Minister Chris Carter said many of those on high incomes living in state houses were doing so under the legacy of "bad" National policies set in the 1990s. He said new figures showed 99 per cent of new tenants were under the threshold income, but the Government would not evict existing tenants for a variety of reasons. "Some people entered these homes on a low income and have improved their situation so the Government doesn't want to penalise them. That sends a shocking message to others. "Many of those market renters were actively encouraged by National to enter state housing under a bad policy. Labour believes it is unjust to uproot those families because of the failure of a previous government. They thought they had a home for life." Housing New Zealand was running programmes encouraging tenants who could afford to rent privately or to buy their own home.

National's spokesman on housing, Phil Heatley, said the situation was absurd and called for Housing New Zealand to review its placement criteria. "These people are earning more than the average New Zealander but being placed in our state housing. Housing New Zealand have these figures so they should be acting on them. "They should be meeting with these particular tenants and working through a strategy of how they can own their own home so we can free up state houses for those who need them." Heatley said Labour must review the income criteria for state house tenants and monitor their earnings as incomes rose.

As at 31 January 2006, there were 11,135 people on the Housing New Zealand waiting list. Of this:

- 121 applicants had a severe and persistent housing need (A priority).
- 3,907 applicants had a significant and persistent housing need (B priority).
- 4,435 applicants had a moderate housing need (C priority).
- 2,672 applicants had a lower level housing need (D priority).

Spend some time allowing God to speak to you through the scripture passages below.

Micah 4:1-5

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

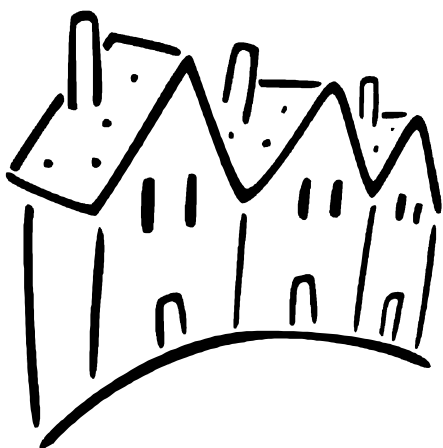
Matthew 7:24-26

'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand.'

Acts 2:44-47

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

What question are you left with after your reflections?
You may like to draw or journal your reflecting below.



We are sent;
In the name of the Father,
who promised radical newness
to obedient Abraham;
In the name of the Son,
who reveals a Messiah
who will suffer and die;
In the name of the holy Spirit,
who affirms the beloved ones of
God;
That in our testing,
the holy God extends us
and causes us to grow in faith,
to become the community
God wants us to be,
until we gather again.

A Franciscan blessing

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships so that we may live deep within your heart.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people so that we may work for justice freedom and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war so that we may reach out our hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.
Amen



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References

- Mercy and Justice Shall Meet Interactive CD ROM
- Housing Rights in NZ— <http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/newsandissues/summaryofconclusions.php>
- State house on \$72,000 The Press—11 March 2006 by Beck Eleven http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/the_press/0,2106,3599955a6009,00.html
- Statistics from Housing NZ <http://www.hnzc.co.nz/rental/step3.htm>
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