



Election Talk! Shared Responsibility for a Fair Society: Inequality

With links on Criminal Justice, Alcohol, Debt

President John Roberts' induction address on Justice in 'Our Place'

Excerpts on reducing Inequality:

It has been said that the pay gap is the moral question of our time. In the future, unrestrained increases in income for top level executives, tax cuts that favour the wealthy and disadvantage the poor, and cuts to welfare for the poor, are likely to increase the level of inequality. Super salaries are damaging to the rest of society and are indicative of capitalism running off course. A wholesale commitment to fairness is needed for reforms in response to the financial crisis.

In fact with effective redistribution we can all win, with a healthier, more inclusive society." What we need now is justice, not greed. We need economic policies that will redistribute wealth in our society in favour of the poor. A preferential option for the poor signals who should have first claim on our attention because their suffering is so great. The motive for divine preference is God's love that generously seeks out those society marginalises and chooses to be in solidarity with them (slightly abridged). Full address [read more](#)

Church Leaders Vision for a Fair Society

Responsibility is shared and reciprocal between those with resources and those with few; between those who make decisions and those with less influence. Responsibilities arise out of a sense that we are members of a single human family. Those in need are not burdens to be borne grudgingly, but brothers and sisters to be welcomed and accompanied (Church Leaders Statement) [read more](#)

Article on 'the Great Divide' see < <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/5989628/The-gap-between-NZs-rich-and-poor>>

Core principles on reducing inequality

- During the Public Questioning session at the Methodist Conference everyone discussed questions on key messages to politicians and what can be done in parishes to reduce poverty and inequality. There was an overwhelming message that inequality should not be tolerated nationally, nor in parishes. At a political level the main way to correct inequality is redistribution of wealth through taxes. There were many suggestions for ways parishes can reduce poverty and inequality. These, and your responses can be acted on. For the elections we will review taxation policies.
- There are no specific party policies on reducing inequality. In the economy category you have to look at regional development, health and education policies, employment and job creation, tax, youth, employment, fisheries, agriculture, forestry and small businesses

Be Fair

Benefit levels need to be at a level for adequate living standards and ensure inclusiveness and participation
President John notes that the rise of incomes for a few is the cause of poverty for large numbers in society, most potently expressed in 23% children under the poverty line.

Be Good Stewards

New Zealand does have a form of redistribution of wealth through working for families. National do not plan to extend this to beneficiaries. Labour does. The Greens will introduce a Universal basic rate. Gareth Morgan sees the need for humanity and sympathy for those below adequate incomes. An idea is for a basic universal wage so that everyone can live in dignity. [Read more](#)

Economic Wellbeing

Economy came from the idea of the common good. 'Oikonomia is management of the household so as to increase its value to all members over the long run. If household includes the larger community of the land, of shared values, resources, biomes, institutions, language, and history, then we have a good definition of 'economics for community' (Daley&Cobb).

MMP For info on voting see < <http://www.referendum.org.nz/> >

Are you enrolled? Find out what to do [here](#)

Website links to election updates and policy views:

- Links in inequality- health: <http://www.mmsi.org.nz/images/stories/pdfs/health3.pdf>
- Salvation Army: <http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/general-election/does-inequality-matter/>

Political Parties on Fairness (Courtesy NZCCSS Policy Watch: <http://christiansocialservices.blogspot.com/>)

National - [Building a Brighter Future](#)

Mana - [movement of the people](#)

Labour - [Own Our Own Future](#)

United Future - [Fairness and Choice](#)

Greens - [For a Richer New Zealand](#)

ACT - [Your Party Vote](#)

Māori - [Our Whānau; Our Future](#)

NZ First - [For a Fair Go](#)

Information on Criminal Justice, Alcohol, Debt

Crime, Punishment, Justice and Jails

'Interest' on Criminal Justice <http://www.interest.co.nz/news/54356/election-2011-party-policies-justice>
<http://www.rethinking.org.nz/Default.aspx?page=3290>
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/ctpi/otago024786.pdf>

Alcohol Law Reform - Alcohol Action NZ

<http://www.alcoholaction.co.nz/fiveplussolution>

<http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/general-election/the-unfinished-alcohol-debate/>

University Centre for Public Theology: Alcohol <http://www.otago.ac.nz/ctpi/otago024791.pdf>

Debt and Loan Sharks –

http://nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page_id=278

Political Party Tax Policies

National – have not announced a tax policy. We already have it! These policies are aimed at encouraging people to 'work, save, spend or invest in ways that are best for them'. For a review of National's tax cuts policies from 2008-2011 see <http://www.guide2.co.nz/politics/party-policies/national-party-tax-policy/9/3178>

Māori – Tax policy is no tax on the first \$25,000. The principles of Māori economic policy are contained in Whanau ora document: http://www.maoriparty.org/file_uploads/2011MaoriPartyPolicy.pdf

Greens – Introduce a tax-free threshold of \$10,000, and provide for a standard marginal tax rate of 19% from \$10,000 to \$42,500. Then a graduated tax will be 19% for \$10,001 to \$42,500, 33% from \$42,501 to \$80,000 and 39% from \$80,001. They have policy to remove poverty traps, including adjusting abatement rates to support beneficiaries moving into work.

Labour will introduce a 39% tax rate for income over \$150,000 and make the first \$5,000 of income tax-free. See 'Labours Fairer Tax System Explained...' for a comprehensive guide to taxation <http://www.ownourfuture.co.nz/static/assets/CGTWebdoct%20July%202011.pdf>

Mana- Reduce the tax paid by low income earners. This means the first \$15,000 earned is tax free. A progressive tax scale will apply for income above this amount

Act – are going for a flat tax rate, of 12.5% on income up to \$20,000, and 15% on income over \$20,000. GST will be reduced to 10%.

Do we care enough to demand fairness in the tax system by the next government?