

STATE of the NATION 2021

Disturbed
Present,
Better
Future?

Whakararu o Inānel e pal
ake kīa ānga whakamua

Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, **“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”**
-Matthew 19:13-14

READ: In previous chapters Jesus had been drawing multitudes and many of the parents bringing their children to Jesus were in need of a healing (Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 17:14-17). In Matthew 19 children were being brought to Jesus for prayer - you could assume that these children were physically well if the disciples didn't deem them worthy of Jesus' time. We view this passage as a reflection of the value and significance Jesus places on children.

Matthew 19 also tells us another story - the story of the parent or the guardian. The adult that brought along their child even in good health to seek a blessing from Jesus. The adult that acknowledged that this rabbi Jesus was extraordinary and that they desired for Jesus to impart a blessing on what they held most dear - their children.

We often hear about child poverty, children living in material hardship or kids going to school with no lunch. In these headlines we fail to acknowledge that every child in poverty is a parent or a guardian who is unable to make ends meet. A child living in hardship is a family living in hardship. We cannot better the outcomes for our children if we are not working collectively to better the outcomes for the family.

If we are to place value and significance on our Tamariki as Jesus has then we cannot overlook the family - to improve the outcomes of our children we must first improve the outcomes for parents and guardians.

REFLECT: Working with children often seems like a simpler and more appealing solution than working with adults. However, we do our children a disservice if we're not proactively supporting the family. What are some things we can do to better support families particularly parents and guardians around us? Read our children's chapter in the State of the Nation 2021 and discuss what are some ways we can move forward. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2021>

State of the Nation 2021 is the 14th annual report from The Salvation Army. The whole country heeded the call for our 'team of 5 million' to come together to respond to the Covid-19 health threat, but it is clear that the burden of the social impacts of the pandemic is not being equally shared. **Many of the children in the 'team' were missing out before the impacts began and indicators available point to a worsening in key areas.**



Positive news includes continuing reductions in teen pregnancies and teen abortions, a drop in youth suicide this year and the continuing trend of more than a decade of reduction in youth offending.



Trends of violence towards children showed a similar level to previous years but with a shift to more serious assaults.



Children living in benefit households has increased by 23,000 in 2020. There are more students leaving school without qualifications and growing disparity in outcomes between low-decile and high-decile school students.

PRAY:

- Thanksgiving for the indicators that have improved
- All the staff and the work across the The Salvation Army in supporting families
 - Youth Mission, Community Ministries, Early Childhood Education, Keep Children Safe etc.
- Families - particularly those living in poverty and material hardship
- Students and academic achievement
- Schools and education providers
- The government agencies like Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Social Development whose works have direct impacts on children
- Community organisations that are working to support families in your community

Please continue to pray for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

"Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him." - Psalm 127:3

OUR CHILDREN



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The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **work it and keep it.** - Genesis 2:15

READ: The garden of Eden is often associated with paradise. Paradise, a place of bliss and idleness but paradise according to Genesis 2:15 was not exempt from work. God did not intend for man to be idle even before the fall of man we were to work. Genesis to Revelation the Bible continues to reiterate the importance of working; that we would honour the Lord in our work, that we would provide for our families, that we not be sluggards. If God was giving us work even in a state of innocence than we would have never been happy inactive.

There was an entrepreneur who sold his business for \$26 million which was 4 times the value of his business at the time of sale. The entrepreneur talks about despite having all this new wealth he became very depressed. He realised that his happiness was not from the paycheck he had got as a result of his business but it was from his work. He found joy in helping his staff grow and in innovating his business to cater to his customers. His happiness wasn't dictated by his bank account but what he could do to serve others.

Beyond the practical level of income and wages to support our families work brings a sense of self-accomplishment. When you enjoy your work and know that your work serves others whether indirectly or directly we experience joy and contentment. God had never intended for us to be idle so in whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

REFLECT: Confucius once said "Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life" the reality for many however is "Choose any job so that you can pay your bills" The inability to work and provide for your family takes a toll on people. Are there people you know struggling to find employment? What can you do to support them? How do we instill hope for those affected by unemployment? Read our chapter on work and incomes and let us know what you think. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2021>

State of the Nation 2021 is the 14th annual report from The Salvation Army. The disruption caused by Covid-19 has impacted our social and economic systems. In 2020, unemployment increased by 35,000, there was an increase of 75,000 people on welfare and The Salvation Army gave out over 110,000 food parcels which is double to what we usually give out. **The impacts are also unequally shared and create pressures that seem likely to increase inequalities of income and wealth.**

NC

Full-time employment has declined but part time employment had increased. In December 2020 2.75 million people were employed.

Unemployment rose sharply during the year. Impacts fell unequally, with younger people, women and Māori. The Government spent \$14.6 billion on welfare in 2020. Living costs for those in the lowest-income households have been rising faster than those across all households. Wage gap increasing between high earning and low earning sectors.

PRAY:

- Hope for the unemployed seeking employment
- Business owners
- Work and Income
- The Salvation Army Food Banks, staff and volunteers
- The Salvation Army donors and partners
- Community Organisations helping people to become employed
- Pray for the work in The Salvation Army that equips the mission - family stores, public relations, wills and bequests, communications etc.

Please continue to pray for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense. - Proverbs 12:11

WORK AND INCOMES



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Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, **but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it - Matthew 7:24-27

READ: Many instances in the Bible speak about housing and homes. The Passover blood on the houses for the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, the Jewish people rebuilding homes, having safe and peaceful homes, discussing homelessness, the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple - the list goes on. From all these Biblical references, we can learn that safe and secure housing brings stability, security, community and often hope for families. The absence of this kind of housing can lead to uncertainty, insecurity, hopelessness and impact destructively on other areas of life.

Matthew 7:24-27 reiterate this point - People who live in safe, secure and stable housing probably those who own their own homes or who have adequate incomes to match their rental properties are more likely to withstand and recover from the struggles such as the impacts of Covid-19. Whereas people who live in social, transition, emergency housing or are homeless are less likely to be financially resilient in the face of challenges because their homes are unsecure and unstable. Housing costs are the biggest costs for families so when housing costs exceed income and wages there are flow on effects that impact the wellbeing and safety of the family.

The housing crisis in New Zealand does not seem to be getting any better. There is a quote that says "A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on it's own wings." Encouraging for The Salvation Army as we are a church first and then a social provider. The Salvation Army is in the business of strengthening her wings through the local corps and community ministries as well as strengthening the branch through out transitional and social housing services. In the face of this housing crisis we remain hopeful.

REFLECT: What can you do to help our housing crisis? Can you strengthen people's wings or can you strengthen the branch? How do we help those in emergency/social housing to feel more secure and safe? Read our chapter on housing and let us know what you think. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2021>

State of the Nation 2021 is the 14th annual report from The Salvation Army. Housing has seen things get worse across all the areas we monitor. The Salvation Army has made numerous recommendations for housing policy in recent years through our reports, submissions to legislation and our own transitional and social housing building programmes and provision. More changes are urgently needed right across the housing continuum—from homelessness through to home ownership.

The social housing register is at record levels, reaching and surpassing the 22,400 mark in November 2020. Māori and Pasifika people continue to be disproportionately represented. Houses becoming increasingly unaffordable. Median house prices continue to rocket upwards across the country. Rent is rising much faster than income levels. Consents for new houses has reached the highest levels in decades. The average total household debt is at its highest level in over 10 years.

PRAY:

- Pray for the work of The Salvation Army and the staff/volunteers that work in these areas
 - Transitional Housing
 - Social Housing
 - Supportive Housing
 - Homeless Programmes
- The homeless, those in emergency and in transitional housing
- Kainga Ora and Ministry of Housing Urban Development
- Community Housing Providers
- Developers

Please continue to pray for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.
- Isaiah 32:18

HOUSING



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For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. - Isaiah 61:8

READ: There are many attributes of God in the Bible; God is love, God is righteous, God is holy, and the list goes on. As we reflect on crime and punishment one of God's attributes, we reflect on is God's justice. The Bible tells us that we have all sinned and as sinners God's justice requires us to account for our sins. Our faith in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our retribution to God for our sins.

The justice of God requires retribution that leads to redemption and reconciliation. The justice of God illustrates that we need all three aspects; appropriate retributions for crimes committed, opportunities for redemption of the individual and the ability to reconcile with society. The Salvation Army have a long history with supporting the plight of those caught up in the justice system with the latter two, but a successful justice system requires all three aspects.

Isaiah 61:8 shows universal recognition of God's grace and mercy as He restores Israel to that favoured nation status. Throughout the Bible God continues to show his grace and mercy despite our constant faults and failures those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ continue to be restored.

Restoration for those in the criminal justice system both offenders and victims is essential in reforming the criminal justice system not just by those agencies involved but all of society.

REFLECT: What would it look like if society showed the same grace and mercy as God has to us to those reintegrating back into society? If inmates had more employment opportunity, better access to housing or educational opportunities? Would they be less likely or more likely to return to a life of crime? Read our chapter on crime and punishment and let us know what you think. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2021>

State of the Nation 2021 is the 14th annual report from The Salvation Army. About a quarter of all crime is reported – 30% of population will experience some form of sexual or intimate partner violence in their lifetime – nearly half of offences by family members are connected to alcohol or other drugs – **these are tragic numbers and represent a system not working and failing victims especially.**



Positive news includes trends in prosecutions and convictions are declining. The number of people incarcerated has also been declining since 2017.

NC

Overall violent crime has gradually declined but family violence continues to be a key issue. Family violence is almost back at the same levels it had been 10 years ago. There were more than 16,000 family violence occurrences during level 4 lockdown higher than previous years.



Minimal change in offending levels but victimisations increasing. We need to keep striving to do better for victims of crime.

PRAY:

- Pray for the work of The Salvation Army and the staff/Volunteers that work in these areas
 - Reintegration Services, Court Services etc.
- Local Corp programmes supporting victims of family violence
- Victims of crime
- NZ Police, Ministry of Justice and Department of Corrections, Parole Board
- Ministries working in the prisons
- Community organisations supporting inmates and offenders

Please continue to pray for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly. - Leviticus 19:15

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



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The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that **they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.** -John 10:10

READ: John 10:10 Jesus says, the thief [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. That's where we come in; The Salvation Army – the army that brings life. But we know very well that there are many obstacles restricting people from fully living this abundant life – spiritually, socially, financially and in other areas. This abundant life is central to Christianity and the life, hope and salvation found in Jesus. One of the major hindrances to this abundant life is addictions to harmful substances or behaviours.

The Salvation Army aims to help people dealing with these problems –without judgment or discrimination. We want people to live free from these addictions - alcohol, illegal drugs and gambling. All of these activities have an addictive element and can create serious harm for the person engaging with it, as well as their family and community. Addictions affects rich and poor alike, advanced nations and developing ones, men and women, and people of all ages and races and religions.

Problem debt continues to hinder and trap many people from an abundant life. Debt issues are so deeply connected to other issues we frequently see, especially housing, addictions, income and employment problems. Often, people turning up to our services have financial and debt issues that manifest into not having enough money for food, or rent, travel and other living costs.

Hope is central to who we are and what we do even when the obstacles are too big or too complex. We are often the last port of call for many who walk through our doors so we remain hopeful that abundant life is never out of reach for anyone.

REFLECT: HOPE; a simple 4 letter word which marks the difference between those who fight and those who give up. The Salvation Army strives to continue to bring life and be light - How do we remain hopeful for our communities when battling the alcohol industry? How do remain hopeful when meth levels continue to rise in our communities? Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) the reason for our hope; the reason we stay hopeful for others. Read our Social Hazards section and let us know what you think.
<https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2021>

State of the Nation 2021 is the 14th annual report from The Salvation Army. It is hard to find signs of improvement when looking at the social impacts of alcohol, gambling & illicit drugs. The Covid19 lockdowns disrupted gambling, drinking and drug use patterns – offering opportunities for change for some but for others it brought social and mental pressures that were unhelpful.

NC

Alcohol availability continues to decline – but more report they are drinking in hazardous ways – 1 in 5 Kiwis drinking hazardously. Meth offences continue to dominate – offences, prosecutions and convictions for cannabis all declining whereas meth surging and climbing. Pokie machine numbers declining but remaining machines still profitable.

Over 3500 new budgeting cases were started by our budgeters between April and November 2020. Over 5300 face-to-face budgeting sessions were delivered, and the total debt presented by these clients was nearly \$55 million.

PRAY:

- Hope; for the clients that walk through our doors with addictions and financial debt
- The Salvation Army work and the staff/volunteers that work in these areas
 - Community Finance, Financial Mentoring
 - Oasis, Bridge
- Recovery Church Services
- Families who are struggling with loved ones with addictions
- Other community groups that are working in Addictions
- Local Alcohol Advocacy - objecting to alcohol licenses

Please continue to pray for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

Wine produces mockers; alcohol leads to brawls. Those led astray by drink cannot be wise. - Proverbs 20:1

SOCIAL HAZARDS



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