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ARE WE DOING GOOD?

Catholic Social Teaching
and the ethics of public policy outcomes
in New Zealand

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN PUBLIC POLICY

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
ALBANY

BRENDA MARGARET RADFORD
2010
Dedicated to my father

John Robert Fittes
1920 – 2005

His calm guidance shaped my ethical perspective
and sense of fair play
in the light of our rich spiritual heritage

Requiescat in pace
ABSTRACT

From the perspective that avoidable social and environmental injustices exist in New Zealand, this research examines the ethics of public policy. It suggests that our society would be more justly sustainable if the ethics of policy outcomes were to supersede political expediency as the dominant influence in government’s decision-making. An Appreciative Inquiry with expert interviewees is applied to the two-part proposition that: (a) a greater focus on ethics and social morality is required for effective policy-making; and (b) the application of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching would enhance the ethical coherence of government policy, programme and service development.

The research has found that the public policy system in New Zealand enables its workers to ‘do well,’ but often prevents them from ‘doing good,’ in policy domains such as housing and employment. Erroneous assumptions by policy actors that their work is morally neutral limit their appreciation of the effects that government decisions have on society and the natural environment. The research suggests that government should insist on ethical analysis of policy proposals and impacts as a pre-requisite for its decisions. Since Catholic Social Teaching is congruent with our accepted standards of social morality, it could helpfully be applied to policy design and implementation in this country. The best way to position CST as a moral signpost for policy-making would be to apply it to specific policies and services.

This project has been oriented from the outset towards applicability in the public policy environment. Accordingly, the research includes three new policy-making frameworks which combine the principles of Catholic Social Teaching with the methodology of Appreciative Inquiry. Use of these analytical frameworks would enable all policy actors to assess the ethics of recommendations and decisions in terms of their impacts on people and the earth.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Significant goals are achieved only in relationship with other people. In completing this research project, I owe a debt of gratitude to these friends:

**Jack Fittes**, my father, for unwavering support and thoughtful questioning as the early phases of this research project took shape

**Carolyn Radford**, my daughter, for believing in me. We all need her kind of loyalty, to help us through difficult journeys in life and in research

**Associate Professor Michael O’Brien**, my principal research supervisor, who insisted that I maintain conceptual focus, integration and prioritisation in a project redolent with absorbing highways and byways to explore

**Rev Dr Neil Vaney**, my research co-supervisor, who protected the integrity of Catholic Social Teaching and increased my understanding of it, as I applied it to a project that was policy-oriented rather than theological

**Joy Oehlers**, the former College Librarian at Albany, who, with great enthusiasm, invested in my topic with the purchase of 25 library books on Catholic Social Teaching, thus causing Christmas to arrive early in 2005

**My research participants**, for their generosity, encouragement, insight and engagement with the research project.

**The Social Work Programme Team** at Albany, who welcomed me into their professional environment as I gained a taste of tertiary teaching and refined my approach to social research

**My students in the 2008 MSW (Applied) course**, who engaged with me through their research projects as we all clarified aspects of the research task

**My former Ministry of Education Planning Team**, whose members cheerfully tolerated, even enjoyed, my early experiments in Appreciative Inquiry, as we sought to embed the ‘best of the best’ in our work

Thank you. I will always be grateful.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMP</td>
<td>Active labour market programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGF</td>
<td>Auckland Regional Growth Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Accommodation Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Centesimus Annus (social encyclical 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFOD</td>
<td>Catholic Agency for Overseas Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBEW</td>
<td>Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCJP</td>
<td>Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELAM</td>
<td>Conference of Latin American Bishops</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIV</td>
<td>Caritas in Veritate (social encyclical 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPAG</td>
<td>Child Poverty Action Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Catholic Social Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCE</td>
<td>Deus Caritas Est (encyclical 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOL</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Ecclesia in America (apostolic exhortation 1999)</td>
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<td>EN</td>
<td>Evangelii Nuntiandi (apostolic exhortation 1995)</td>
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<td>EO</td>
<td>Ecclesia in Oceania (apostolic exhortation 2000)</td>
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<td>ES</td>
<td>Ecclesiam Suam (encyclical 1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td>Gaudium et Spes (pastoral constitution 1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNZC</td>
<td>Housing New Zealand Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Iustitia in Mundo (World Synod of Bishops’ Statement 1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRD</td>
<td>Inland Revenue Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>Income-related rents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Laborem Exercens (social encyclical 1981)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUHEC</td>
<td>Massey University Human Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIRU</td>
<td>Non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New public management</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZCCB</td>
<td>New Zealand Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
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<td>NZCCSS</td>
<td>New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services</td>
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<td>NZCEO</td>
<td>New Zealand Catholic Education Office</td>
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<td>OA</td>
<td><em>Octogesima Adveniens</em> (apostolic letter 1971)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCE</td>
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<td>PCJP</td>
<td>Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace</td>
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<td>PMTTE</td>
<td>Prime Ministerial Task Force for Employment</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td><em>Populorum Progressio</em> (social encyclical 1967)</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td><em>Quadragesimo Anno</em> (social encyclical 1931)</td>
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<td>RMA</td>
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<td>RN</td>
<td><em>Rerum Novarum</em> (social encyclical 1891)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANZ</td>
<td>Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (Inc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Social Allocation System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCE</td>
<td>Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education</td>
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<td>SRS</td>
<td><em>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</em> (social encyclical 1987)</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td><em>Spe Salvi</em> (encyclical 2007)</td>
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<td>State Services Commission</td>
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<td>TOP</td>
<td>Training Opportunities Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPK</td>
<td>Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Maori Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
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