***Learning Together***

**Social Justice & Personal Responsibility (Part 2of2)**

So a fundamental question is - What is 'social justice' and its partner 'advocacy' and what is personal responsibility and how does it relate to social justice?

 To pick up on the definition in the first of the papers on this topic, we'll carry through the idea that advocacy and social justice is essentially:

**Making the world a more fair and equitable place**

It is important at the outset to make a clear distinction between legal advocacy and social advocacy.

* We are here talking about social advocacy. For those in the legal profession, advocacy means to represent the interests of a client in the best way possible. When we talk about 'social advocacy' we are in the realm of social work - where the task is to find ways to advance the interests of disadvantaged, disempowered and those discriminated against.

**Key Elements of Social Justice and Advocacy**

There are some key elements in social advocacy and social justice that drive our communal and individual responsibility:

(This is an outline with key elements headlined rather than a detailed explanation of each one – they are meant to be thought starters)

* Enabling or empowering the affected a voice - affected people and groups are the primary focus and have the right to speak for themselves. This means not speaking unilaterally for someone else when they have not given permission or sought to speak for themselves
* If and where necessary acting 'on behalf of' - sometimes affected person/s are for various reasons unable to 'speak' for themselves and need someone to act on their behalf.
* Action
	+ Speaking
	+ Acting
	+ Writing
	+ Creativity - using music or other art etc.
* With minimum conflict of interest - our position is not compromised by ulterior or hidden motives.
* We partner with like-minded people and groups to achieve the change we seek
* Promote, defend or protect welfare / justice
* It covers the interests of individuals and/or groups
* Empathic, loyal to and compassionate towards those affected by inequity and injustice, even though it may not be the same as your own life choices
* Vigorous campaigning and implementation of action plans
* Often has an element of working against established and entrenched values and processes, structures and customs - sometimes speaking and acting against authorities
* May have political implications with possible costs
* Informed by thorough research and strong evidence - requires patience and discipline
* Social marketing - helping people and wider society to buy into ideas for change
* What other key elements would you add?

 **Reflect 1**

Examine our own story of *Terra Populous* (see Part 1) in the light of these key elements

1. What needs to be strengthened?
2. What advocacy action should we not be doing?
3. What other ideas for *Terra Populous* does this outline trigger?

**Reflect 2**

Some of us remember the 80s when Fusion Australia partnering with a range of other colleagues and friends (such as Peter Garret) were producing white papers on such things as - Youth Homelessness, Employment and Being Young in Australia and presenting them to the government. These were substantial position papers based on our practical day-to-day advocacy and youth work.

Poatina has a wealth of experience and where we don’t feel that 'wealth,' we are on a learning journey together and we could invite others along the journey with us - and that forms the foundation and experience for a voice.

What other areas (other than our goals around *Terra Populous*) of social justice and advocacy could or should Poatina Community by engaged with?

* 1. Consider:
		1. Our strategic pillars -

Conferencing and accommodation

Sustainability and Stewardship

Art

Education & learning

Community

Events

1. Our resources
2. What government (national, state and local) policies should we be influencing?
3. What about:
	* Equitable access to education?
	* Policies that promote lifelong learning?
	* Young people and the land?
	* Transitioning from youth into adulthood?
	* Youth leadership?
	* Models for supportive community housing?
	* New housing for a new era?
	* Art as justice and advocacy?
	* Advocacy in the digital and social media?
	* Etc

 **Reflect 3 - Social Justice and Personal Responsibility**

 **Speak the truth** - if possible without alienating

* + How do we do that?
	+ What effect does 'hate' or 'criticism' have on our ability to tell the truth?
	+ *Extra focus* - *For those of us that use the Bible as our faith foundation*, what stories can you think of that illustrate the need to speak the truth. (Ex. 2 Sam. 11:27, 12:1-13; Ezek. 3:16-21)
1. **Empowering Others** - how do or did you feel when others make decision that effect you without asking you?
	* Empowerment is a mutual process involving partnership and self-determination.
	* How well are we doing that as a Poatina community?
	* In what ways could we do it better?
	* *Extra focus* *for those of us that use the Bible as our faith foundation* – How does Mark 10:46-52 illustrate empowerment? What principles are at play in this encounter?
2. **Building Peace** - using power appropriately, reconciliation and conciliation
	* How do you view power?
	* What makes power a positive or negative factor?
	* As an advocate what is the wise approach to partnering or opposing those in power?
	* *Extra focus* *for those of us that use the Bible as our faith foundation*: Check out Genesis 41-45. How did Joseph approach the issue of power and authority?
3. **Counting the cost** - of justice and advocacy
	* Sometimes the truth puts us at odds with powers, no matter how hard we try to engage appropriately.
	* How do we prepare for this eventuality?
	* How do we cope with it in both short and the long term?
	* What kinds of advocacy positions might put us at odds with the powers that be?
	* *Extra focus* *for those of us that use the Bible as our faith foundation*: check out Matt. 5:1-16. What can be the costs of discipleship?

 I trust this helps a little in our journey together towards achieving our community valuing of ***Social Justice and Personal Responsibility***

 John West July 2019