

Made in Aotearoa New Zealand
Report by Angela Hair

Seminar with Dr Chris Houghton Budd,
Auckland Anthroposophical Centre
104 Michaels Ave, Ellerslie
9-11 May 2025

It was a stormy night when I arrived in Auckland. Travelling by car, plane, bus, train and car to my destination gave me a real life experience of the economic system that Made in Aotearoa New Zealand is today. Mostly efficient, and workable as a traveller and resident. I reflected on all the people that have collaborated to create this experience for me. As I sat down to eat a lovely meal with my brother and his family, we reflected on the past, told stories about the now, and speculated about the future. I missed the first public talk that Chris Houghton Budd gave to the group, and I admired those brave souls who drove through intense rain to get there. Chris Budd is an economist and monetary historian based in Folkestone, England (<http://www.hopespringseternal.world/about/>) I excused myself by saying that there are times when the social dimension is more important than arriving at an event that has been paid for by others. As the Anthroposophical Society had paid for my airfare and seminar fee, I felt a responsibility to pay back \$50 to the Centre for the missed first talk.

“Responsibility” is the word that lies behind the spiritual school of anthroposophy - we use our will to take on the responsibility of living our lives in a certain way. I went with the question in my mind “why do we have to pay a branch fee, a NZ membership and an international membership?” This three tier membership could be seen as a sure way to discourage new members from joining this group of people with a mission to bring Rudolf Steiner’s clear thinking into the world.

Chris Budd clearly said that the membership contribution is not to further a person’s own will, but to create a chalice to uphold the spiritual school of anthroposophy. In reality, this equates to \$1 a day and Chris suggested everyone can afford this, with careful planning. Chris Budd felt that asking for a tax break in New Zealand was immoral and went against Steiner’s ideas. (Statute One of Christmas Conference).

Annually giving this ‘gift’ may appeal to many people who are spiritual seekers, and may have had an experience with the spiritual world that is beyond the experience of the physical, mental and emotional worlds of many modern people.

Why be at church worshipping Jesus Christ, when you could be at the farmers market filling up your basket of goodies for the week? It's true the farmers' market allows local farmers to trade their goods with the local community, but it doesn't meet the need to further the spiritual tasks that has been asked of humans - a new Earth where working together and caring for each other, and the Earth we live on, are the moral fibres.

Steiner established the School of Spiritual Science and called it Anthroposophy. One hundred years later, we gather in Auckland to understand how this may apply to the economic world of which we are all a part. There is an inner sanctum in Anthroposophy - the Circle of Treasurers who have a global intention that has developed over the past 100 years, to create the chalice that allows anthroposophy to thrive.

As sent from anthroposohie.org

"The Circle of Treasurers is looking ahead as far as 2033. It began in 2018 and meets in person two times a year – in Dornach and in another place, to date usually in Europe. In between, we meet on Zoom. Of the 37 country societies, up to 20 take part, meaning our collective deliberations represent more than 70 per cent (28,000) of the worldwide membership (40,730 on 1 January 2025).

Looking to the future

Our first task was to establish clear guidelines (Anthroposophy Worldwide 11/2021). Easily formulated but more challenging to accomplish they inform our discussions with country representatives, councils and members in general, many of whom think that they need pay nothing or very little. That is not our understanding, however, so much effort goes into reviewing why this is so.

We all receive our pink cards from the Anthroposophical Society and fully expect the Goetheanum to be there in the background and as a place to visit, yet many regard the General Anthroposophical Society as a financially separate thing 'over there', instead of seeing their groups and branches as essential parts of a greater whole. Overcoming this insulated approach to finances is thus a priority. In this connection, too, we are reviewing the implications of individual direct membership of the General Anthroposophical Society, rather than joining via a country society or branch linked to the Goetheanum – as contemplated by the Christmas Conference.

Our second task involves building a culture for treasurers, developing together a

shared understanding of the principles we operate by, the intuitions we have, and the specific karmic circumstances that inform finance and money flows everywhere. Every society has a past story to tell, but our interest is in the next episodes!

Clear image of overall reserves

Third, we are finding ways to carry a detailed and shared image of the finances of all the Societies worldwide. This involves an annual exercise of placing up to 20 sets of accounts into one shared chart of accounts and then converting their currencies into Hibernias (at 1:1 to the CHF), a serious device intended to give the Society its own global currency and so reflect and enforce the mutuality of our work. The chart matches the image of the Society as the body of Anthroposophia and the School as her soul that appeared on the front-page image of Anthroposophy Worldwide 1-2/2025. So far, our focus has been on the income and expenses of the Society, but our remit will now expand to include balance sheets and so enable a clear image of the Societies' overall reserves, both real and financial, in order ideally and ultimately to ensure the various groups that make up the Society as a whole are optimally financed.

Liquidity Challenges

A fourth innovation and outcome of our cooperation is to share the liquidity challenges everyone faces by remitting membership dues to the General Anthroposophical Society at the end of May and end of October.

Funding Section Work

Finally, we are paying special attention to how section (or section-like) work is funded, given that although the School has its centre at the Goetheanum, as 'representatives of anthroposophy', its members are active in many parts of the world.

<https://anthroposophie.org/en/news/circle-of-treasurers>

This mirrors the struggle that we see in the outer world as world economies struggle to find ways to work together, rather than work against other economies? What does each country bring to the table that is unique to that country? Steiner

called this the 'folk soul'. How do organisations with a worldwide outlook work together to achieve stated goals?

Folk soul

Chris Budd wasn't sure if there is a folk soul in Aotearoa. He didn't have an answer and what we proposed as folk soul, was not what it is. Traditional economics is developed on ideas from leading philosopher Adam Smith (1723 - 1790) based on competing against other humans rather than cooperating. Neoliberal economics is based on one's own self interest. It is 'God's responsibility' to create cooperation, as seen in the natural world where complex ecosystems work cooperatively to support growth and diversity. When growth becomes too excessive and the Earth can no longer sustain itself, there is collapse - the classic bell graph seen in biology and ecological systems. These systems are powered by the sun and our unique position in relation to the sun. From the sun comes light that enlivens the Earth and creates the rhythms that allow human beings to thrive on the planet. Rudolf Steiner says there is also a light that comes from the spiritual cosmos, and this light is unique to each country. From this light comes sovereignty - the supreme authority. In New Zealand, sovereignty is claimed by the 'crown' but Budd argues that for everyone to have free space, we must all have sovereignty.

Budd suggested that Bookkeeping had a solution to play and particularly the formation of a non-country based currency, which he calls Hibberian (see above). This currency is created through each currency being transferred into Swiss Francs and then this new currency, allows world wide trading between member countries. He gave the example of Anthroposophy branches sending their membership fee (roughly a third of its annual fee of \$450 per annum) to Goethanum in Switzerland and then this combined currency is available to support the worldwide Anthroposophical Society. The Society was not to be considered a charity but a group of people who want to lend to other people to create an idea - be it in agriculture, education or health. The Circle of Treasurers (one Treasurer from each member country) would monitor this idea and distribute funds as deemed appropriate. Bookkeeping would show how each member country was budgeting for and spending the money that they received from members. Nic Parkes is currently New Zealand's representative on the Circle of Treasurers.

For two hours on Sunday morning, the group discussed what unique light New Zealand brought to the whole. Chris Budd seemed to dismiss everything that was offered such as First Light Essences and indigenous plant remedies. His visit was to find out if NZ has a folk soul - the guiding Angel of a group of people. Do we have

a mission like the Anglo-Saxons had a mission? What are our Angel guides asking of us for the furthering of mankind's evolution of consciousness?

I didn't feel we met his expectation of what Aotearoa New Zealand could offer. Was money the only 'light' we could offer? Our weakened economy and low dollar relative to the Euro, makes our contribution appear minimal. 1 NZD = 0.4978 EURO.

Or is our folk soul the courage New Zealanders have to stand against evil? To fight in foreign lands to protect our trading and cultural connections, as we did in World War 1 and World War 2. And now, as an insidious take over of our land and institutions occurs through a neo-liberal way of seeing the world, how do New Zealanders stand against this?

Women protested outside Parliament on the day of the budget as the government used the funding for equal pay for women to balance the books.

This is also currently being acted out in New Zealand through the investigation of the Phase 2 Covid Vaccine Mandates. Thousands of people writing about their injurious Covid vaccine stories.

At the same time the fluoridation of urban water with a known neurotoxin (NZDSOS and NZFF) is challenging the seventy year old fluoride story. Maybe if the young mums of New Zealand who do not want their babies damaged by fluoride in the water, pushed back against the Plunket Society, this stalwart of mothers and babies, may condemn fluoridation, rather than support this government-backed public health policy.

The government is also allowing a higher concentration of Roundup/ glyphosate in our food without informing New Zealanders of the health risks. If people knew the direct connection between glyphosate and breast cancer and testicular cancers, maybe charities like Cancer Society would stand up and challenge the government.

While these political stories were not discussed by Budd or the 20+ people who attended the event, it sits in the background on which this event was heard. The question that always arises in pushbacks against the government is 'how do we pay for community led campaigns (mostly paid through donations), while government lawyers and bureaucrats are funded through rates and taxes?'

Taxing Charities

Alesha Hope recently wrote a Talking Point in *Hawke's Bay Today* (15/5/25) "Taxing charities could cripple vital community support". She argues that government will never have the funds to meet all our needs. In fact, some in power openly state they don't see it as their job to try. Instead they tell us it's up to communities to lead.



TALKING POINT

Taxing charities could cripple vital community support

Alesha Hope

Hawke's Bay is a generous region. There's evidence of kindness and reciprocity everywhere you turn. We rally when times are tough and there are many shining examples of this, like Cyclone Gabrielle's Silt Taskforce and Mates4Life's commitment to suicide prevention in our province. We care, deeply. But we also need to trust. Right now, charities across Aotearoa are under immense pressure. The need for support has never been higher, bridging big gaps in food security, family violence, youth pathways, housing, health and education. These are not fringe issues - they're fundamental to our community's wellbeing. But as the need sharply rises, the resources to meet it continue to shrink away. Communities have long hoped for central government support in solving some of our greatest social concerns, but the message from the top is clear. This Government, and successive governments, no matter their colour, will never have the funds to meet all our needs. In fact, some in power openly state they don't see it as their job to try. Instead, they tell us it's up to communities to lead. And that sounds empowering, until you look at how the charitable sector is treated. Rather than being adequately resourced and celebrated for stepping in when Government shies away, charities are increasingly scrutinised. Sometimes, we're penalised, and at Hawke's Bay Foundation, we've spent time this year pushing back against proposals to tax charitable income that is derived through business or investment activity. We are a community foundation and our operating model is exactly that - creating wealth for our community by carefully investing donations and bequests, and using income from those investments to support local charities year after year. For now, the Finance Minister has delayed a decision until at least 2026, which gives us more time to advocate for our case as a not-for-profit with scruples, with integrity, and with the support of our community. But if these changes do eventually come, they could cripple our sector. As at the end of 2024, we are honoured to be the guardians of \$12 million, safeguarded to support Hawke's Bay not just today, or tomorrow, but forever. It's long-term, sustainable philanthropy. However, as a concept, charities are often treated with scepticism. The Government's suggestion that it might deservedly earn revenue from our sector is a case in point. It's frustrating, it's a flawed narrative and it represents a fundamental misunderstanding of how necessary the not-for-profit sector really is. Charities only exist because there is need, and to meet that need they need to solve serious, complex issues. Yet, as a community, we struggle to give our charitable sector the licence to grow, innovate and thrive. We want them to do great things, but only if it's on a shoestring. We question their overheads, we scrutinise their marketing budgets, and we demand that those working in this valuable sector are paid little more than minimum wage. When we donate or leave a bequest in our wills, we believe we have the right to query how our dollars are managed. Imagine if we applied the same scrutiny to business - telling a tech start-up they're spending too much on attracting talent, or that they need to cut their marketing spend because we don't like how it's funded. In business, we tacitly understand that growth takes investment, that risk and innovation go hand in hand, and that trust fuels success. Charities should be treated no differently. In fact, given they are doing their level best to solve some of the most pressing issues in our communities, they should be afforded even more licence to think big and act boldly. For some, there's a misconception that charities are careless with the funds they accrue, and this is one of the biggest barriers we at Hawke's Bay Foundation face. Yes, there have been some high-profile missteps by some big-name charities around the world but they are the exception, not the rule. The vast majority of charities work tirelessly with transparency, accountability and a deep commitment to solving systemic issues and proving the impact of those solutions. And they do it all with a smile. If the Government can't meet the need - and to be honest, it never will - supporting the community falls to our sector. Hawke's Bay Foundation is about place-based giving - giving back for the long-term benefit and enhancement of a place and its communities. It's a proven way for locals to invest in the community they love, backing the people on the ground doing the mahi. Need doesn't change with the election cycle. It's here, it's growing, and it impacts all of us either directly or indirectly. It's our job to place trust in our charities and dignify them with the licence to create their vision, assess need and allocate the money to where it's most necessary. That's how we generate real, lasting change.

Charities should be allowed to think big and act boldly - instead they get unfair scrutiny, Alesha Hope writes.

Alesha Hope is the executive officer of registered charity the Hawke's Bay Foundation

HIVE HERE GIVE

HOT TOPICS

Quiz

Hope argues that increasingly charities are scrutinised by the government. She writes that for now the Finance Minister has delayed the decision (to tax charities) until at least 2026. The Hawke's Bay Foundation is a registered charity that at the end of 2024 had \$12 million safeguarded to support Hawke's Bay. The government sees this pot of money as something they could share in, while the Foundation argues "Charities only exist because there is need, and to meet that need they need to solve serious, complex issues. Yet, as a community, we struggle to give our charitable sector the licence to grow, innovate and thrive. We want them to do great things, but only if it's on a shoestring."

So the question that arose at Chris Budd's seminar was why are you a charity in New Zealand when around the world, anthroposophical groups are an incorporated society?

If the government decides to tax charities what difference would this make to our financial status? What is the role of the anthroposophical society in New Zealand?

Ultimately, 'this new world in the morning' that Steiner would have us make on Earth, will develop both through conscious thought about the implications of our financial status, and factors beyond our control.

*Everybody talks about a new world in the morning
A new world in the morning so they say
I myself don't talk about a new world in the morning
A new world in the morning that's today*

*And I can feel a new tomorrow coming on
And I don't know why I have to make a song
Everybody talks about a new world in the morning
New world in the morning takes so long*

*I met a man who had a dream he had since he was twenty
I met that man when he was eighty-one
He said too many folks just stand and wait up till the morning
Don't they know tomorrow never comes*

*And he would feel a new tomorrow coming on
And when he'd smile his eyes would twinkle up in fun
Everybody talks about a new world in the morning
New world in the morning never comes*

Written by Roger Whittaker 1971

Recommendations:

Maintain the New Zealand Anthroposophical Society as a incorporated society.

Stop the charitable status of this organisation so the government cannot 'share' in what the society has created for itself in New Zealand.

Develop a clear set of guidelines for New Zealand Anthroposophical Society on what it considers to be appropriate spending of accumulated fees.

