



NEW ZEALAND

**BLUE
IS THE COLOUR
OF THE SKY**

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A girl has her hair cut by Steve, a school master and a barber.

The pursuit of paradise down under

Gloriavale is a highly conservative Christian community made up of 600 members that live in an isolated area of the western part of New Zealand's South Island. Members of the community are notable for their blue clothing. Their lifestyle is extremely frugal.

Gloriavale was founded by an evangelist priest who wanted not only to preach the word of God but to put it into practice. The use of contraceptives is forbidden and weddings are often arranged. As a consequence, the community has one of the highest demographic growth rates anywhere in the world: it is normal practice that a woman from Gloriavale brings into the world more than ten children, helped by two midwives that live in the community.

Relations with the rest of the population are kept to a minimum: these are mostly of a commercial nature, given the wide variety of goods Gloriavale produces and sells, from milk to animal feed, and even cosmetic products. The members of the Gloriavale community do not have a salary: profits from the various activities are reinvested to provide the community with everything it needs. The administration of the community is that task of the menfolk, divided into two categories – shepherds and servants – and they are solely responsible for managing the community.

Members are inspired by a rigid work ethic, according to which they work an average of ten hours a day. The womenfolk, who are often either pregnant or nursing infants, are given less physically demanding tasks in the kitchen or laundry. Members of the community have the right to one week's rest each year, to be spent in one of the structures that the community owns. People reside in hostels and it is not uncommon that the same room is shared between ten or more siblings.

The inhabitants of Gloriavale live a life of sacrifice, in the hope of spending eternity in heaven. Everybody can join Gloriavale, after a trial period.



Members of the Gloriavale community have dinner in the communal dining area.



Beekeepers from the community check the hives.



A member of the Gloriavale community relaxes in his room.



Children play a ball game in the park.



One of the nursery walls has been hand painted by some of the women.



A child leans against the window of the school bus.



A girl in the swimming pool. Having left her swimming costume at home, she decided to swim in her clothes.



A moment during Sunday worship.



Gloriavale as seen from one of the community's planes.



Two seamstresses prepare fabric to be cut. For practical reasons it is easier for everyone to wear the same colour.



Children ride on an auto rickshaw.



A woman makes cheese.



Children play football.



A boy reads the Bible.



Inside one of the rooms.



Two young members of the Gloriavale community pose outside the mechanical workshop.



Girls play volleyball.



A teacher helps a youngster make doughnuts. This is pretty unusual since cooking is typically female work; however once in a while, boys get to experience female roles.



A boy poses in the playground.



A moment during Sunday worship..



14-year-old Tender Joy.



Students read some Maori History notes.



Boys pose for a photo during a break. During the school holidays they get to help the adults with their daily activities.



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