

## This Little Kiddy Went to Market

by SHARON BEDER

*University of New South Wales Press, 2009, 307pp incl refs.*

Review by Richard Keller. Sharon Beder concludes her book by observing that children in English speaking countries are now being guided into an individualistic, consumerism just when a social focus in upbringing and education is needed to bring about the many changes required to meet the consequence of climate change, species extinction, water shortages, etc. *This Little Kiddy Went to Market* takes a wide-ranging look at how a for-profit corporate transformation of child rearing and education is taking place. Each chapter is punctuated with tables, figures and boxes of data illustrating its focus, and there are hundreds of references listed in the back. Young people's 'gatekeepers' (parents, schools, communities) are being bypassed as advertising reaches children through television, internet, supermarkets, toys, etc, promoting feelings of dissatisfaction which apparently only 'more stuff' can satisfy. Schools are under pressure as big corporates call for lower taxes leading to lower school budgets. Then corporate-sponsored education think tanks call for 'accountability' of individual schools, promoting standardized testing of the kind of 'basics' which business would like to see in employees. Privatisation of schools is suggested as a means to provide competition, typical in the business world. Parents would be given a choice of schools. For-profit businesses emerge ('Kipp schools,' 'Charter schools,' 'Edison schools'). 'Discovery,' 'curiosity,' are words seldom heard in many of these schools, replaced by 'performance' and 'achievement'. Perhaps the most eye-catching chapter is the one on 'wayward' children, those who don't fit the mould. They are increasingly being referred to the medical profession, where psychiatry is increasingly prescribing medication as it evolves in a direction which satisfies the needs of drug companies. For those readers wishing to get a concise view of the many ways childhood is being captured by corporations this book is highly recommended and shocking.



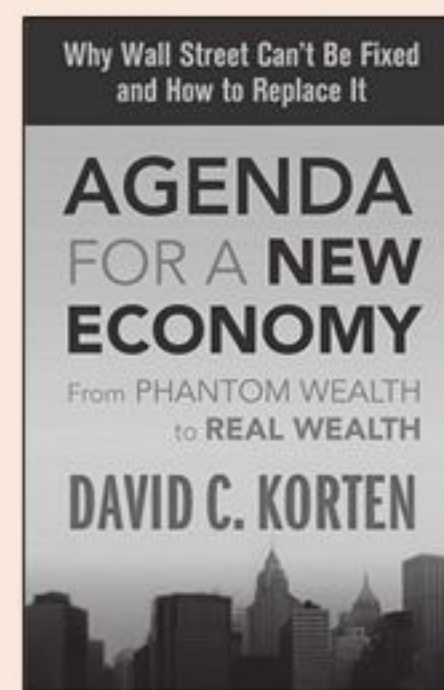
## The Carbon Challenge: New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme

Geoff Bertram & Simon Terry

*Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2010; 224pp; appendix, endnotes, index.*

Review by Cliff Mason. The New Zealand government's response to climate change has seen a façade of good intentions concealing a lack of effective policies to reduce carbon emissions. This scrupulously researched book exposes both the policy vacuum and smokescreen of rhetoric, creative accounting and denial that have resulted in an emissions trading scheme that is ineffectual in reducing emissions and results in a massive transfer of wealth to selected industries. Households, small to medium industry, commerce and services and transport operators will pay 90% of the costs resulting from the ETS during the first five years while being responsible for only 30 per cent of total emissions. Lack of political strength has allowed groups in agriculture and industry to weaken the response and to gain private benefit at the expense of the public and the country's international reputation. Chapter 9 exposes the poor advice being given to Members of Parliament, including Prime Minister John Key, and is an indictment of various government departments, including the Treasury and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Documentation in the book is exhaustive, reinforcing the authors' incisive analysis showing huge economic risks to future generations of taxpayers as afforestation credits evaporate from the Kyoto Protocol balance sheet and to the country as a whole as our lack of effective emissions

reduction is revealed. One can only agree with their conclusion that there is an urgent need to reopen the debate on the design and implementation of climate change policy.



## Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth

by DAVID KORTEN

*Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009; 196pp*

Today's economic crisis is the worst since the Great Depression. Yet, as David Korten shows, the steps being taken to address it do nothing to deal with the reality of a failed economic system. It's like treating cancer with a bandage. Korten identifies the deeper sources of the failure: Wall Street institutions that have perfected the art of creating 'wealth' without producing anything of real value: phantom wealth. Our hope lies not with Wall Street, Korten argues, but with Main Street, which creates real wealth from real resources to meet real needs. He outlines an agenda to create a new economy, locally based, community oriented, and devoted to creating a better life for all, not simply increasing profits. It will require changes to how we measure economic success, organize our financial system, even the very way we create money, an agenda Korten summarizes in his version of the economic address to the nation he wishes Barack Obama were able to deliver.