

CO-OPTED? KIA NGATAHI

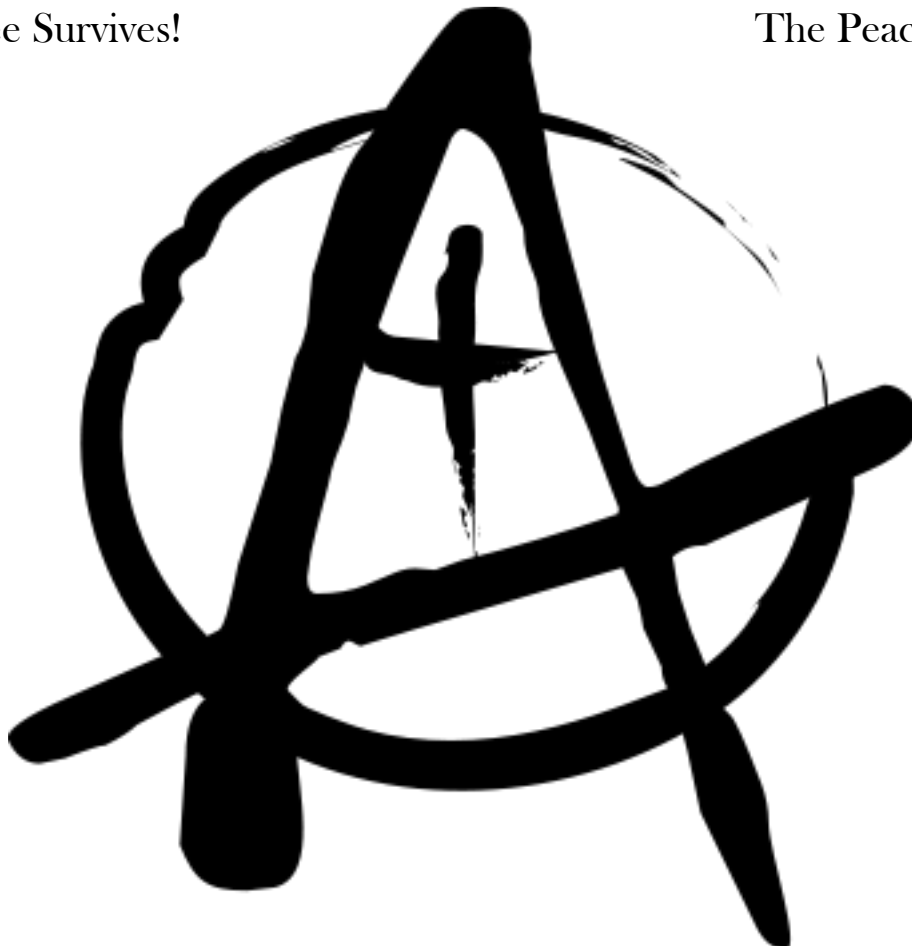
The Zine of the South Pacific
Christian Anarchists

No. 2

Summer 2010

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From The Editors...



What does it mean to identify as Christian and/or Anarchist?

Each contribution to this zine responds to this question in a different way. Clearly each of us have a different take on this complicated title of Christian-Anarchist.

Big respect to all the people who were part of the 2009 SPCA gathering, and those who have subsequently put down some thoughts on paper. Putting together this zine has proved that there are all sorts of people in Australia and New Zealand who are seeking to have a crack at authentic lives in commitment to radical Christian politics.

Wherever you find yourself reading this zine - on a train; at a blockade; in a park; at church; in bed....may you find a space to let the ideas connect and collide with your own ideas about ethics and spirituality. The idea is not to find homogeneity or any systematic theology - but to inspire you to dig deeper about what the teachings of the radical Jesus mean in your life.

You may note the lack of New Zealand content - unfortunately we didn't get any articles from across the ditch. Perhaps its worth reflecting on how dominant cultures inevitably reproduce...

So - here's the handball (excuse Aussie reference) from the editorial team of edition #2!

Jessica Morrison + Fiona Murray

South Pacific Christian Anarchist Gathering 2009

Melbourne, Australia

Hosted at the CAVE Community Space,
Ascot Vale Church of Christ

Anthony Varenica

The Cave community space became the hub for around 60 Christian Anarchists to meet and share stories in August 2009. The gathering commenced on Thursday night with an open meeting with people travelling from New Zealand, and Australians from Queensland, Western Australia, the ACT, New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria.

From the very beginning, there was a wonderful atmosphere of old friends reuniting and new friends meeting for the first time. At all times over the weekend, there were children playing and new-born babies capturing the attention of all.

Having such a mix of culture together at the same time, the depth of conversation and story-telling was both rich and impacting. The weekend was loosely structured around workshops and topical discussions. Topics included: the history of Christian Anarchism, conflict resolution, nonviolent communication, sexuality, sustainability and many more. These times were facilitated by volunteers who helped guide particular sessions. In most cases over the gathering, the allocated time was never enough and the conversations inevitably spilled over into breaks and meals. The passion and struggles of people living in community was both inspiring and heartbreaking. The purpose was not in trying to find answers, but more to unite in solidarity over issues that we all face in varying degrees.

The backyard bonfire became the gathering place for many of the participants over the weekend. The stories ran wild and the laughter was contagious. Hearing fabled stories by Ciaron O'Reilly was definitely a treat for me.

Having our dear friends from New Zealand with us was also very special. They not only brought themselves, but a strong sense of culture and identity, which permeated through the space and deeply spoke to all.

Each of the groups from around Australia also brought with them their unique qualities. The amazing thing for me was that no matter how young or old a community is, we are all living in difficult times, and ultimately facing very similar challenges.

One of the key elements to the gathering was participation by all, including the children. As many of the folk who attended were there with children, there was no doubt that they should be included. Not only was this beneficial for the kids, but also for the adults who engaged with them. The generational diversity of the gathering was refreshing.

Each morning there was a devotional time led by a different person. This was a wonderful balancer to some of the heavy issues that were discussed.

The last morning of the gathering was dedicated to a group debrief and questions of 'where to now?'. One of the strengths of the SPCA gatherings are that all have a voice and the space for people to contribute is wide open. So over a couple of hours, we broke up into groups and discussed the weekend that had just passed us and the future of the gathering. Goodbyes and well-wishes were exchanged and the clean-up began.

I'm sure all who attended the gathering are eagerly anticipating what is to come next.

Reflections on the Anarchist and Pacifist Implications of Christian Discipleship

Ciaron O'Reilly

The word "radical" is not a scary word, it's not a nostalgic word left over from the 1960's - it's an old Latin word. To be radical is to "return to the roots". Why would you need to return to the roots? It's because things tend to get co-opted. Whether it is Christianity, Buddhism, socialism, feminism, punk rock, trade unionism... everything that confronts the status quo will face the seductions and temptations of the desert Jesus confronted at the outset of his public life. Wealth - to create bread from stones, Power - to control the kingdoms or Status - jumping off towers as good public relations.

Power, wealth and status reduced the liberated Exodus community to a pathetic mimicry of Pharaoh by the time of Solomon and David.

The prophets kept calling the people and the rulers back. The Constantine shift in the 3rd century encapsulates the co-option of Christianity by the empire. But there have always been radical Christians, saints and martyrs calling the people and the church bureaucrats back to the life of Jesus and the way of the cross.

Power, wealth and status are the temptations that have lead people like Peter Garrett, yesterday's self appointed leader of the Australian peace movement, to open uranium mines, justify the first strike U.S. bases like Pine Gap and support the present colonial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These are the temptations that have co-opted every dissident movement and the temptations that church bureaucrats continue to embrace with a passion. We are called to be faithful to the way of the cross, the resurrection and the Kingdom of God, to realise the Kingdom in all its fullness. We are called not to sell out. We are called to be radical. In praxis, and in the best sense of the ecumenical, we will hook up with radicals of other traditions on the basis of nonviolence and anarchy to realise peace and justice in the personal and the political, in the here and now.

The insight of Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and the Catholic Worker movement, which kick-started during the Depression of the 1930's, is that Jesus is to be found in the poor, whatever we do to the least of these we do to him. The insight of the Berrigans and the Ploughshares movement is that it is violence of empire that sustains exploitation. As Pope Paul 6th. stated "if you want peace work for justice", as the crowds chanted as L.A. burned "No justice, No peace!" It is something moderate western peace and justice movements fail to embrace - the relationship between violence and exploitation and the relationship between peace and justice. It is the insight of the prophet Micah, a vision of disabled weapons of war and economic vine and fig tree justice.

The anarchist and pacifist orientations are implicit in Christian praxis, they are not a ménage a trois of eclectic ideologies. Because anarchist and pacifist are negative definitions "without violence" and "without exploitation" they are much better open ended expansive questions than tight exclusive p.c. answers. A pacifist is a person who lives with the question "how do I live a life without violence?", an anarchist lives with the question - "how do I live a life without exploitation?" These are questions basic to Christian discipleship.

In his book "Who Will Roll Away the Stone" theologian Ched Myers presents Jesus in Mark's gospel as the great questioner. Jesus tells us one thing directly that we must pick up the cross to follow him, the rest of his teachings are delivered as questions or queries. The most significant one being "Who do you say that I am?" We answer that one with our life.

Blog <http://ciaron.wordpress.com/>



Mural - Otter St, Collingwood

Christianity, Christi-Anarchy and Killing

Dave Andrews

I've been reading a book *On Killing*, written by soldier psychologist Dave Grossman.[i]

Grossman cites research that suggests that - contrary to some of our most famous cultural stereotypes - 'the vast majority of men are not born killers.'[ii] At most only 2% of men could be considered aggressive psychopathic personalities with a predisposition towards killing.[iii] A figure reflected in the kill figures of fighter pilots in World War II, where only 1% of fighter pilots accounted for more than 40% of all enemy planes shot down.[iv]

Brigadier Marshall, whose study of soldiers' conduct in World War II suggests 'that the average healthy individual has such a resistance towards killing a fellow man he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility.'[v] A view reflected in the shots-per-soldier and the kills-per-shot recorded in every major war from the Civil War through to World War I up until World War II. During this period, when it became possible to measure shots fired in combat, research has showed the vast majority of soldiers - between 75 and 95% - either did not fire their weapon - even when fired upon - or only fired into the air - refusing to kill the enemy - even when given orders to do so.[vi]

Colonel Milton Mater's uncle said the most significant fact he could remember about his combat experience in the World War I was 'draftees who wouldn't shoot'[vii] Gwynne Dyer says that most soldiers on both sides of World War II were interested mainly in 'damage limitation'[viii] And 'all forces had somewhere near the same rate of non-firers.'[ix]

According to Brigadier Marshall 'At the vital point' (when a soldier has to decide to fire or not) the average healthy individual 'becomes a conscientious objector.'[x] (emphasis mine)

Since World War II, the military has embarked on a program to turn soldiers into killers.

1. Reframing killing as saving lives

As it has become clear that most men are motivated to serve and to preserve life, the military has taken the desire to serve and preserve life and used it to make men killers by telling men that killing is the only way they can save the lives of those they love. Soldiers in Iraq are told killing terrorists is the only way to save the lives of civilians.

2. Portraying the enemy as sub-human

In World War II it became clear that soldiers found it harder to kill people they could identify with; but easier to kill people they couldn't identify with. Only 6% of Americans said they wanted to kill Germans; while 44% said they wanted to kill the Japanese.[xi] So the military has encouraged soldiers to see the enemy as 'ragheads' rather than humans.[xii] As it has become clear it is harder for soldiers to kill people who are innocent; but easier to kill people who are guilty, 'ragheads' are deemed bloodthirsty, baby killers in advance.[xiii]

3. Increasing the distance between the trigger and the target,

Most soldiers find it difficult to kill up close and personal. 'Where you hear 'em scream and see 'em die, it's a bitch'[xiv] It has always been easier to kill from a distance and to pretend its not personal. Sailors shoot up 'ships'. Aviators shoot down 'planes'.[xv] The artillery attack enemy 'lines'.[xvi] 'They can pretend they are not killing human beings.'[xvii] So the military is increasing the distance between the trigger and the target technologically as quickly as it can. Through night goggles for example when a soldiers shoots someone they say its just like shooting on a TV show - 'as if its happening on a TV screen.' [xviii]

4. Demanding every soldier's obedience to their leader

Most people presume that 'being fired upon' was the reason most soldiers fired. But veterans say being 'ordered to fire' was the reason most soldiers fired.[xix]. Without an order to fire many soldiers would not fire, even when they came face to face with the enemy.[xx]

Through social learning men have been socialized to imitate role models like the ANZAC legends who obeyed orders to attack impregnable positions in Gallipoli - even when it was obvious to everyone that the orders were insane and to obey them was suicidal.[xxi] Through the classical conditioning[xxii] devised by Pavlov to make dogs salivate at the sound of a bell. [xxiii] soldiers have been conditioned to associate obeying the orders of drill sergeants[xxiv] with rewards (pleasure), and disobeying orders with punishment (pain)[xxv] And through behavior engineering[xxvi] devised by Skinner to make rats through mazes[xxvii] soldiers have been engineered to increase their automatic quick shoot reflex[xxviii] by repeatedly shooting at targets which look like people in simulated battlefield conditions[xxix] to such a degree that an average infantryman now has a 95% shot-per-soldier rate[xxx] and a marksmen now has a 1.39 kill-per-shot ratio. [xxxi]

5. Developing each unit's capacity for collective violence.

Research has shown that the greatest fear of a man in combat is not the fear of death but of 'letting others down'[xxxii] 'You can't turn around and run the other way. Peer pressure, you know?'[xxxiii] So the military have used peer pressure - along with the intensification of power [xxxiv] and the diffusion of responsibility that a group provides[xxxv] ('there were so many guys firing, you can never be sure it was you' who killed someone[xxxvi]) - to turn men into killers.

Grossman concludes his book *On Killing* by saying that the same techniques used by the military are now being used by the media in society at large - and that not only soldiers, but also civilians, are being socialized to kill without constraints by watching movie heroes like *Dirty Harry* kill outside the constraints of the law;[xxxvii] being desensitized to the act of killing by seeing thousands of people being killed on television;[xxxviii] and being engineered to kill reflexively by shooting at human targets with model guns in life-like video games.[xxxix] Grossman says 'we are learning to kill and learning to like it.' [xl](emphasis mine).

I would like suggest that in our culture that while mainline Christianity supports the basic assumptions that make it possible to program men to kill like this, the sensibility nurtured by Christi-Anarchy would make such a social construction of killing totally impossible.



CHRISTIANITY	CHRISTI-ANARCHY
<p>Traditionally believes taking ‘an eye for an eye’ is biblical and therefore acceptable. And we should follow the bible.</p>	<p>Typically believes Moses said take ‘an eye for an eye’, but Jesus said ‘turn the other cheek’. And we should follow Jesus</p>
<p>Traditionally defines faith in Christ in terms of boundaries of belief and behaviour that need to be defended against others passionately.</p>	<p>Typically defines faith in Christ in terms of a choice to overcome any boundary of belief or behaviour that might prevent us relating to others compassionately.</p>
<p>Traditionally encourages believers to disassociate themselves from others lest they be defiled through contact.</p>	<p>Typically encourages believers to associate themselves with others and work out conflicts face to face.</p>
<p>Traditionally teaches faith in Christ in terms of submitting to the authorities keeping the rules and obeying the leaders.</p>	<p>Typically teaches faith in Christ in terms of submitting yet subverting the authorities keeping some rules but breaking others and only obeying leaders up to a point.</p>
<p>Traditionally encourages believers to conform to the group in order to act with humility.</p>	<p>Typically encourages believers to not conform to the group in order to act with integrity.1</p>

Christianity therefore aids and abets the training of men as killers by making it acceptable, if regrettable, to kill; increasing the distance between 'us' and 'them' so we do not see the humanity of the 'other'; teaching us to submit to the authorities, keep the rules and obey the leaders; and encouraging us to conform to the groups that we happen to be a part of.

However Christi-Anarchy critiques and challenges the training of men as killers by making it unacceptable to kill anyone in any circumstance; decreasing the distance between 'us' and 'them' so that we see the humanity of the 'other'- even our 'enemies'; teaching us to submit yet subvert the authorities, keep some rules but break others and only obey leaders up to a point; and encouraging us not to conform to the groups we happen to be a part of.

1. We need to be clear Christ calls us to be willing to die - but to never kill for our faith.

The patron saint of conscientious objectors must surely be the illustrious Martin of Tours. Martin was born about 316 in Sabaria, in Hungary. His father was a tribune in the Imperial Horse Guard of the Roman Army, and named his son 'Martin' after 'Mars', the god of war.

Martin showed an interest in Christianity from an early age; but his father was suspicious of Christianity and discouraged his son from pursuing his interest. However, at the age of ten, against his father's wishes, Martin went to the church and begged them to baptise him. In contemplative prayer, Martin found the spirituality he was looking for.

At the time, there was a law that made it mandatory for the sons of veterans to serve in the Roman Army. So, at the age of fifteen, Martin was forced to join the military. Martin refused to cooperate. He was put in chains until he promised he would take the orders he was given. He was then assigned to a cavalry unit. In the cavalry, Martin tried to live like a monk rather than a soldier. As an officer, he was entitled to a servant, but he switched roles with his servant, cleaning his servant's boots instead of the other way round.

Around 334, Martin was sent to do garrison duty in Gaul (now France). There, Martin's struggle with the conflicting demands of trying to live as a 'soldier of Christ' in a Roman Legion came to a head, when the Franks invaded the northern borders of the empire, and Martin was ordered to the front. Martin refused to fight, saying: "Put me in the front of the army, without weapons or armor; but I will not draw sword again. I am become the soldier of Christ." His commander said he was more than happy to grant Martin's his request; and put him in prison until he was ready to send Martin to the front.

However, the next day the Franks made peace; and Martin was discharged from the army. Martin became a bishop and continued his campaign against killing for the rest of his life.[xli]

2. We need to decrease the personal and relational distance between 'us' and 'them' and to see the humanity of the 'other'- especially the humanity of our 'enemies'

Following in the footsteps of Martin were a bunch of soldiers on the front in World War I. In 1914, amid the muddy trenches and flying shrapnel of the Great War, an unlikely reconciliation took place in the middle of combat. Trenches occupied by French and Scottish troops lay a few metres away from their German counterparts. On Christmas Day a magical event occurred that would forever emblazon the history books with a moment of humanity in the midst of the brutality. The Germans placed Christmas trees above their trench, while Scottish bagpipers played along to the operatic voices they heard wafting over from the German camp. Then, miraculously, the men from both sides climbed out of their trenches and met one another in No Man's Land for a Christmas celebration. The enemies made friends, showed each other pictures of their lovers, and played soccer in the snow with one another. When ordered to commence hostilities again the next day the men refused to fire on one another. The officers were disciplined and their units were disbanded.

3. We need to submit yet subvert the authorities, keep some rules but break others and only obey leaders to the degree that their demands reflect real love for our neighbours.

Paying the price ultimate price to act like Martin was an unknown soldier in World War II.

'In the Netherlands, the Dutch tell of a German soldier who was a member of an execution squad ordered to shoot innocent hostages. Suddenly he stepped out of rank and refused to participate in the execution. On the spot he was charged with treason by the officer in charge and was placed with the hostages, where he was promptly executed by his comrades. He responded in the crucial moment to the voice of conscience (refused to obey his orders) and those who hear of the episode cannot fail to be inspired'.[xlii]

Dave Grossman says: 'This - ultimately - may be the price of noncompliance for men of conscience. (In) overcoming obedience-demanding-authority and the instinct for self preservation, this German soldier gives us hope for mankind.'[xliii] (emphasis mine.)

4. We need to refuse to conform to group pressure, the intensification of power and the diffusion of responsibility which turns groups of men (and women) into killing machines.

The best contemporary example of a Martin of Tours that I know is Bruce from Tasmania. Bruce French was brought up on a farm in Tasmania, where from a very young age he had used a rifle to shoot rabbits which, he says, were real pests on his family's property.

When he was conscripted as a soldier to fight in the Vietnam War, Bruce joined the infantry, as he felt that as a follower of Jesus he should not use his conscientious objection to the war as an excuse to avoid the dangers other young men were being forced to face. However, as a follower of Jesus, Bruce decided that while he was prepared to face the dangers of combat with the unit he was part of, he was not prepared to pick up a rifle in anger, let alone fire it at anyone, regardless of how much pressure he was put under.

So Bruce went through basic training for the military at the Enoggera Army Barracks with a steadfast refusal to pick up his rifle. As you can imagine, Bruce was ridiculed, bullied, and abused right throughout his basic training. But his steadfast refusal to pick up his rifle under any circumstances was unshakable - his rock-solid resolve absolutely unbreakable.

Bruce told me in his typically-Aussie laid-back laconic style that the other men in his unit really gave him a hard time - until the day they had to do bayonet practice. Then, when they were confronted with the brutality of thrusting the bayonet on their rifle into the vital organs of a living breathing human being, they were forced to face the violence of killing. And that night, he said, they came to him quietly, one by one, and told him, that now they understood why he had taken the stand that he had. And never gave him a hard time again.

The war was over before his unit was sent to the front, so Bruce never had the chance to test his resolve in combat. But as most soldiers say that their fear of letting their unit down is greater than their fear of facing up to enemy fire, I think Bruce would have stood the test.

If we want to stop the continued social construction of killing in our society, I believe the best way we can do it is to advocate Christi-Anarchy - the radical, sacrificial, nonviolent compassion of Christ, which is committed to the care of friends and enemies alike, over against the commands of the authorities and demands of their agencies to do otherwise.

Sources:

Dave Andrews Christi-Anarchy, Tafina Press, Armidale 1999

Dave Andrews Not Religion But Love, Tafina Press, Armidale 1999

Dave Andrews People Of Compassion, TEAR Australia, Blackburn 2008

Dave Grossman On Killing Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, New York 2009

[1] For further details about Christi-Anarchy (as opposed to Christianity) see the author's article on "The Subversive Spirituality Of Christi-Anarchy" published in Kia Ngatahi (Vol.1 No.1) 9-12,16, 2009

[i] Dave Grossman On Killing Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company New York 2009

[ii] p31

[iii] p189

[iv] p110

[v] p1

[vi] p3

[vii] p29

[viii] p6

[ix] p16

[x] p1

[xi] p162

[xii] p161

[xiii] p165

[xiv] p117

[xv] p58

[xvi] p58

[xvii] p108

[xviii] p170

[xix] p143

[xx] p144

[xxi] p.306

[xxii] p255

[xxiii] p254

[xxiv] p322

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[xxvii] p 255

[xxviii] p 256

[xxix] p256

[xxx] p36

[xxxi] p256

[xxxii] p52

[xxxiii] p150

[xxxiv] p151

[xxxv] p152

[xxxvi] p111

[xxxvii] p325

[xxxviii] p329

[xxxix] p319

[xl] p315

[xli] Dave Andrews 'Martin Of Tours' in People Of Compassion TEAR Blackburn 2008 p7-9

[xlii] Dave Grossman On Killing Back Bay Books Little, Brown and Company New York 2009 p227-8

[xliii] p228

Correction

In the last edition of the zine, Dave Andrew's article finished abruptly on page 12 and left out the ending promised to be on p16
Here is the full conclusion:

The biblical themes that emerge we need to consider in our discussion are:

1. God loves everybody equally, but has a particular concern for the oppressed. God's concern for the oppressed expresses itself in a call to action. And this may involve God's people participating in a bloody struggle for total liberation.
2. God is passionately committed to democracy - as opposed to autocracy - and instructs his representatives to recognize the right of the people to decide on the form of government they want even if he disagrees with the decision.
3. God wants a form of government where the rules are no longer external, but internal, 'written on people's hearts' and where everyone - 'from the least to the greatest' - (note the significance of the order) - has access to power.
4. While the authorities advocate taking control of others, Jesus advocates taking control of ourselves. Jesus told his disciples not to take control over others. Their job was to enable others to take control over their own lives
5. The role of the Spirit is not to overpower people, but to empower people. Responsible self-management is described as the 'fruit of the Spirit'. And, the scripture says, 'against responsible self-management there is no law!'
6. We should seek to cooperate with other people as much as possible, but when it comes to the crunch we must obey God (who is Love) rather than mere mortals.
7. Even if it means we have to turn our world upside down!



Hiroshima Day Rally, Melbourne 2009



Nostalgic graffiti, Fitzroy

Living from the crumbs that fall from their table.....



Jess
Morrison

Dumpstering (aka freeganism or/ bin diving) is taking stuff from rubbish bins - usually from large corporate retailers. In Australia, its estimated that 3 million tonnes of food are thrown out every year (worth \$5billion!)- while globally 1 billion people go hungry. We have enough food to feed the world - but the politics of food production and distribution means that we do not. Most of our food is mass produced and sold through large retailers who are primarily concerned with making profits. Until recently, the main reason food was grown around the world was to eat - now it is to make a profit.

Personally I don't want to participate in this corporate control of food supply - so alongside growing food, buying from smaller retailers and buying organic and fairly-traded products - dumpstering is part of my resistance to this system. Its also great for a household budget - it frees up money to spend on other things (or to do less paid work).

Dumpstering follows an ancient tradition of gleaning - where people collect the leftovers in the field from the harvest. In both Leviticus and Isaiah the Jewish farmers are instructed to leave food on trees and in the fields for the poor to collect, and Ruth meets her husband Boaz while gleaning! (now there's an inspiration to dumpster!). For more history I'd highly recommend "The Gleaners and I" - made by an eccentric French woman as she looks at 'gleaning' practices in Europe - from farms to dumpsters.

Much food in Australia is thrown out of supermarkets because its near its best before date or has damaged packaging. Often one tub of yogurt in a six-pack, or one can of beer in a slab is broken, and then the rest are not sold. This leaves plenty for us to glean from supermarkets and other dumpsters.

Jess's Dumpstering Recipe

Preparation

1. collect any bags and boxes you can find...plastic bags are good for foods with dirty packaging...you can always collect plastic bags from the front of the supermarkets
2. take any torches....head-torches are the creme de le creme
3. wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, and footwear to jump into the bin (i always go in my trusty GP's). If you really are into safety and or cleanliness - then you could wear gloves...
4. ask if any fellow dumpsterers have the keys to the Safeway or Coles bins
5. for a really spiffy experience, take a rag and a squirt bottle of water to wash your hands as you go. A milk crate is good to take also if you're short like me to be able to reach into the bins !!!

Implementation

1. Scope out supermarkets (or any shop really) to find their dumpster/s... they usually have to be in an area that the rubbish truck can drive down such as a loading bay...
3. Go up to the bins and pick out whatever food and other goodies you'd like
4. If a bin is locked, and you don't have a key, often you can remove the pin in the pole holding the back of the lid together...
5. Watch for:
 - * broken glass - not common but imprtant;
 - * unsympathetic security guards/staff etc - have a friendly response pre-prepared. If they ask you to leave, then you have a legal obligation to go - otherwise you could be charged with trespass;
 - * sympathetic security guards/truck drivers/staff - don't assume they'll want to kick you out, one staff member at a bakery offered to give me the best stuff before it hits the bin;
 - * the temptation of 100 cinamin doughnuts - just because its in the bin doesn't mean you need to take it home.....remember for many of us this is a statement against over-consumption....My housemate's motto is that "some things should stay in the bin"
5. Ethics: mine are to: never damage property or leave a mess
6. Is food OK??? I've never been sick from food from the bins, and these are my guidelines:
 - * only take meat and non-UHT dairy if it is still cold
 - * be ultra-careful about anything that has been exposed to the air of the bin
 - * if there is a massive amount of something that isn't clear why its thrown out - check there isn't a recall...we got 20 litres of Bonsoy this week from two different bins, and surprise surprise there is a current recall - bugger...

Finishing up

1. Wash vegetables/fruit in vinegar water
2. wash outsides of packaged food in warm soapy water
3. test eggs by putting them in water
if they float - throw them out

Best scores from the bin:

- * TV
- * An apple Mac
- * Violin
- * Disco Ball
- * Wind up torch
- * slabs of beer
- * 20kg box cashew nuts
- * (before a party)
- bin full of chocolates/chips/nuts

Regular scores: (almost guarentee getting)

- * Eggs
- * Bread
- * yogurt
- * vegetables
- * fruit
- * snack foods (muslie bars etc...



Sources: www.foodwise.com.au ;

Check out:research by an Australian woman about dumpstering experiences:

https://www.tai.org.au/file.php?file=web_papers/WP85.pdf

Raising Children Using Non-Violent Communication

Julie Moyle

A few years ago our eldest daughter Chelsea could have easily been labelled a 'strong-willed child'. She could put on quite a performance when she wanted to (had whopping tantrums etc.). We had used several discipline techniques like time out, taking away toys, reward star charts, special prizes, ignoring her behaviour, naughty corner, and felt the pressure by some people (and a Dr who had written about strong-willed children), to smack her. Yet, we felt they were all communicating a power-over discipline system that just didn't feel right to us. I remember feeling quite frustrated thinking that there were no other options.

My husband, Simon, and I, wanted to discipline and raise our children in the most loving and Godly way possible. We didn't want to use a discipline system that encouraged our kids to be scared of us in order for them to behave or do what we wanted them to do, and we didn't want to use rewards or punishment to coax them.

Ideally, we wanted our children to know that they are unconditionally loved by us and wanted them to be motivated because we have a good relationship with them, not because they want to

avoid pain or receive pleasure. But, was it possible? Can you raise children without coercion or punishment?

I am a mother of three children; Chelsea, 5 years, Ella 3 years and Berrigan 1 year and together with Simon, we have been trying to use nonviolent communication (NVC) with each other and our children for nearly 2 years. Simon has been teaching nonviolence education for a while and as a part of nonviolence, we heard about nonviolent communication by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD. We ordered a book called Raising Children Compassionately, connected with what he wrote and have been trying to put it into practice since.

So, what is Nonviolent Communication (NVC)? One of the central principles of NVC is that all of our actions are based on needs we'd like met. If each of us learns how to effectively communicate our own needs and feelings and learns how to hear what others needs and feelings are, relationships are open and strengthened, and everyone's needs can be met. So, where reward/punishment discipline is power over, NVC is described as power with.



It is based on good relationships, which makes people want to meet the other person's needs without being forced. NVC is a way to communicate with greater compassion and clarity. It focuses on two things: honest self-expression – exposing what matters to oneself in a way that's likely to inspire compassion in others, and empathy – listening with deep compassion.

Formal NVC self-expression follows four steps:

1.
To observe without evaluation, judgment, or analysis (“When I (see/hear)...”)
2.
To express feelings which these observations evoke (“I feel...”)
3.
To express needs connected with these feelings (“...because I need/value...”)
4.
To make a specific request (optional) of another person to help meet an unmet need, and to enrich life of everyone involved. It is essential though that the other person can decline the request (“Would you be willing to...?”)

Chelsea and Ella brought new drawings in to show us. Our instinctive/habitual reaction would be to say “That looks great” or “Well done!”, but another difference with NVC is that since language is based on meeting needs, moralistic good/bad, right/wrong judgements language is unhelpful. Rather than learning to act for the approval of others, NVC encourages individuals to think in terms of how it meets their and others' needs. Children can be told that what they are doing is either in harmony or in conflict with our needs. We have found this to be a really difficult shift as our language is so habitual. We would regularly say “Good girl”. So, we are trying to say “Wow! Tell me about this picture”, or “what's your favourite part?” instead.

I can hear you asking “But does it work for children? Can a child identify and communicate their own needs and feelings?” Good question! As our children are under 6yrs, we are hoping that the more we use it in our home, the more it will help our kids to become used to expressing their needs and feelings and listening to ours. Chelsea can usually talk about why she is feeling frustrated and what her needs are, which I think has a lot to do with our change in the amount of space we are giving her to express them. I think she is feeling her needs are obviously more valued now than they were.

Using NVC is not easy, especially with young children, and I don't want to give a false impression of how easy or 'successful' NVC is. There are four main challenges we continue to have with NVC. Firstly, effective NVC requires time. In such a time demanding society, to make the space for us to stop, work out what our needs are, and communicate them clearly is not easy.

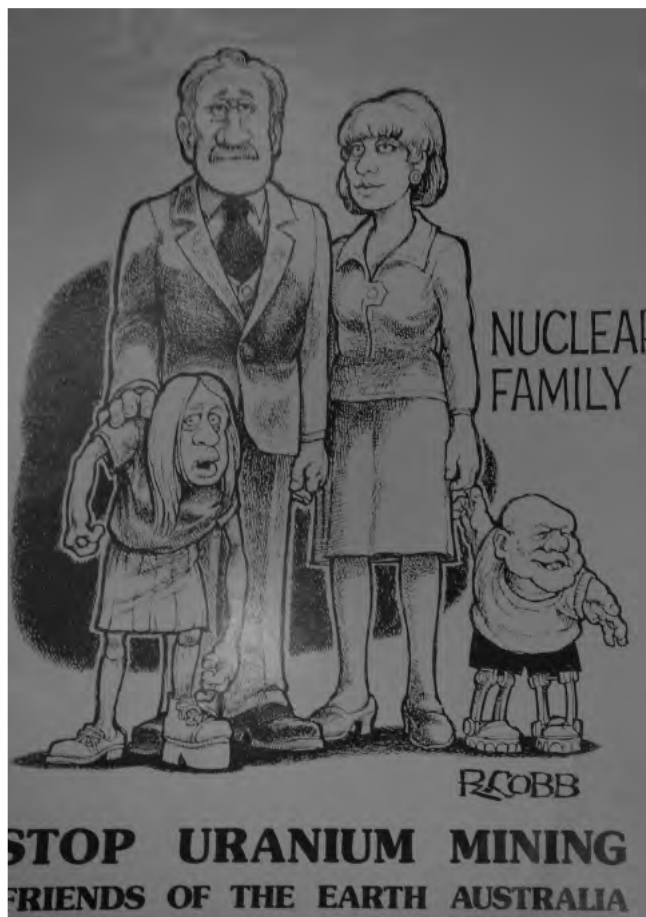
Secondly, as previously discussed, the shift in moralistic/judging language. Thirdly, we've had to learn grace with ourselves. When we started trying NVC our first reaction was to judge ourselves for getting it 'wrong'! Jane Connor, a friend and NVC certified trainer from New York helped us to see that this was the same destructive way of relating, and encouraged us to think of these as times when our or others' needs are not being met as effectively as they might be, rather than feeling guilty or seeing them as failures.

Finally, as the kids are so young, there have been some circumstances where we have been unable to meet the girls' needs and ours. For example, if Ella was playing playdough and wanted to keep playing but we needed to pick Chelsea up from Kinder, both needs could not be met. We asked Jane Connor about this challenge. She wisely advised us that there will be some circumstances where parents will need to have the final say. “You love playing playdough, don't you Ella? I hear that you would like to keep playing playdough now. Your needs are really important to me and I have tried to think of a way that both our needs can be met, but I can't. I am sorry, but we really need to pick Chelsea up now.”

Gandhi once said, “Don't mix up that which is habitual with that which is natural”. Often we have been trained to communicate and act in ways that are quite unnatural, but they are habitual in the sense that

we have been trained for various reasons to do it that way in our culture. I, too, think that my own use of reward and punishment and communication of right/wrong and good/bad behaviour, had become habitual for me as a parent. As I try to break away from that form of thinking, I believe that it is more natural, and more Godly, for each of us to connect in a loving, respectful way, doing things out of joy for each other, rather than using punishment and reward or blame and guilt as means of coercion.

Obviously, this is all a work in progress in our family...and always will be. I certainly don't want to give a false impression and make it sound like miscommunications are long gone and the Moyle household is argument and frustrated free. We certainly still have our struggles. However, overall I do feel like we are trying to be more Godly in the way we are raising our kids. I no longer feel like we are pushing our own power and demands, and we are allowing more space to respect and listen to each other's needs. My prayer is that our children, Simon and I, can ultimately develop open and strong relationships, respecting and trying to meet others needs, as a result of using power with rather than power over discipline.



More information on, Nonviolent Communication:

* 'Raising Children Compassionately Parenting the Nonviolent Communication Way' by Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD

* 'Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids' by Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD

* 'Connecting Across Differences: A Guide to Compassionate, Nonviolent Communication' by Jane Connor & Dian Killan

* 'Parenting from Your Heart: Sharing the Gifts of Compassion, Connection, and Choice' by Inbal Kashtan

* www.cnvc.org

* www.parentingwithpresence.net

Living Simply

Ross Parry

This article on simple living is, as Gandhi put it, an experiment with truth. Our whole life is an experiment with many different truths that God reveals to us as we mature. In the process of experimentation, we learn "wisdom". Wisdom is by no means completed in one lifetime, and so there will always be new ideas to discover and what we pass on to the next generation will be added on further still. It is my hope that some of my experiments in simple living will be of value to others on a faith journey. I don't claim much that is unique, but have also gathered what I could from other wiser Christian men and women whose commitment to simplicity have inspired me. I owe them a debt of gratitude for the freedom I have experienced that comes from a commitment to living simply.

My first experiments with simple living came just from a desire to read the gospels and to imitate the lifestyle of Jesus and the disciples. I was confronted with some very basic teachings of Jesus, such as "Sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and come and follow me"(Luke 12:33), and "whosoever of you that does not forsake all that they have cannot be my disciple"(Luke 14:33). Coupling this with the fact that Jesus and the disciples shared all things in a common purse, as did the church in Acts 2&4, I decided about 25 years ago, with a few other Christian friends to sell up all private possessions and to live in an intentional Christian community with no private ownership.

This meant in practice that whatever we held in common could not be bought or sold without the permission of the whole community. We became accountable to one another financially. Contrary to the individualistic values of a selfish society, it was the first step in keeping our personal greed in check.

Soon, we began to discover other spiritual

benefits that flowed on from this seemingly extreme and radical covenant. We found that we consumed or required far less household goods than we would have been using if we all lived separately as individuals or couples. Buying in bulk, sharing transport, all cut down the weekly budget. By only spending on necessities and not on luxury items, we were actually **SAVING** huge amounts of money even though our incomes were very small.

We were also committed to not going into debt for any reason. This meant that buying property and the usual subsequent bank loan that comes with it were out of the question. If we didn't have the cash, we would do without it. Initially we rented large houses out in country areas where rent was cheap.

We did a lot of hitch hiking in those early days up and down the east coast of Australia. We experimented with what we called 'faith outreaches'. Times where people would go out two by two with nothing but the clothes on our backs, and trust God to provide for over a week at a time.

Seeing as most of us came from materially comfortable suburban lifestyles surrounded by possessions, we experienced for the first time these new forms of 'liberated poverty'. We were no longer afraid of not having money in our pockets, of not knowing where we were going to sleep that night, of where our next meal would come from. The **FEAR** of poverty is actually worse than poverty itself. And we were actually learning how to **ENJOY** being poor! We were, as the disciples did, discovering just how **BLESSED** it is to be poor, totally contrary to what our western society tells us! As time went on we consolidated our experiences. We learned some things that worked better than others, but nothing can beat that honeymoon phase with God we all had together as young adults with simple child-like faith. As I mentioned, community living meant we were actually saving more money than we needed to spend on ourselves despite our income being a

fraction of the salaried worker. At that time, a common slogan we saw on cars was 'Live simply so that others may simply live'. We prayed, and decided we should start sending some of us in rotation overseas to do community work in developing countries where the REAL poor live. Again, we never lacked the funds to do whatever project came up. We became fascinated by the life of Gandhi when, in 1984, the movie of his life appeared in cinemas for the first time.

We chose India as our destination, and were eager to see what the poor there could teach us, as much as what we could do to help them. Again, we learned from them, just how little we really need materially to survive and even to be happy about it!

Rather than pay rent, many of us while living in the rich west freely chose not to live in houses, but to live in camper vans. When we considered that whole families in India can live in slums in a hut not much bigger than a camper anyway, the campers seemed luxurious by comparison!

Learning to live in small spaces means learning not to live with extra clutter. It becomes necessary to off load anything you are not using, and as Jesus said, "not to lay up treasures on earth" for moths, mold, dust and rust to get on them.

We became experienced at buying old vans and fitting them out as campers, and at doing many of our own mechanical repairs. The money saved on not renting could be used on more worthwhile projects or airfares. At the same time we tried to keep up with the digital age. Laptop computers became our new post offices to our co workers overseas, and we had mobile telephones to complement our mobile lifestyle. We started to use solar panels for light and power on the roof of our vehicles.

When we became aware of the negative side effects of burning fossil fuels, we moved to convert our motor homes to use waste vegetable oil. So not only was living simply saving money, it was bringing us closer to the ideal of reducing ones environmental footprint which is now becoming a major global issue. We could see clearly the wisdom of Jesus teachings, now centuries old, had lost none of their radical impact and relevance to life in the 21st century.

The goal was not total poverty, but a liberated form of simplicity.

As we get older, we have learned to make our vehicles more comfortable while still staying simple. We have started experiments with squatting in abandoned buildings, riding freight trains, and dumpster diving at the back of supermarkets rather than buying food.

The other great thing about simple living is that we can take back our TIME from the obsession to make money in the 9 to 5 rat race. With no mortgage and no rent to pay, the pressure is off to stay on the economic tread mill. We have more quality time for our families, spiritual brothers and sisters, for the needy in society. The capitalist system works best on divide and rule. It promotes selfish individualism, so that each person is enslaved, competing with others, with increased consumption as the only reward for giving their life to the boss.

The rich (which all of us living in western countries now are) fear what they are going to lose, but we cannot see what we are actually going to gain by letting go.

To conclude I wish to encourage the reader to not listen to any of your fears and to let go of all your preconceived ideas of material security that society tells us are necessary from a very young age. Do we like to travel and see new places? Well so do our children! We are told we are providing them with "security" by having a nice expensive home for them, but in reality it can become a drain, a chain and a prison which kills all the adventure of life. Stay hungry for new ideas and new ways of simple living.

This is real practical faith, but you will only ever learn it by letting go of whatever it is you are hanging on to right now. Job, house, car and respectability. Let it all go and experience the adventure and blessed simplicity that God has for you. You won't be disappointed.

Diverse Sexualities and Christian Communities

A Christi-anarchy approach (?)

Fiona Murray

I want to explore how Christian communities can be more inclusive and respectful of people with diverse sexualities (I'll use the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex acronym for convenience.) However - I don't want to involve the theological and ethical debates that usually occur in Christian circles. In my opinion these debates purposely dodge the more confronting issues: Gay Christians exist - in fact, they may be lurking in your community... So how can communities approach this 'issue' in a way that is more in line with the teachings of Jesus, and less a reaction based on questionable religious doctrines or unchallenged Christian culture.

In thinking how to frame an approach, I revisited the beatitudes from Matthew chapter 5. In recognition of the theological work of Dave Andrews, I believe this scripture can be interpreted them as a framework for non-violent, inclusive and justice seeking approach to living with each other. I will use his paraphrased heading for each section of the beautitudes.

What follows are just my thoughts and questions - I'm not aiming to prescribe an exact approach, but rather leave it up to the reader to reflect on this piece of scripture to ask;

- . What guidance can Jesus' teachings give for Christian communities and gay Christians to live together more peacefully? Is it different from the message of mainstream Christian churches or secular society?

- . What changes could be made to a/your community to more closely follow Jesus' teachings on this 'issue'?

Blessed are those who mourn - who grieve over the injustice in the world

It's possible to think that issues of GLBTI people are not important in our current society because of the major gains in rights and exposure this group has had recently. But when you look a bit closer, it's disturbing how much discrimination GLBTI people face on a local, let alone a global level. Furthermore, this systemic injustice is perpetuated by some mainstream churches through its theological views and its everyday treatment of gay identifying Christians. These are some examples from research that scratches the surface of current discrimination:

- . 38% of young people had experienced unfair treatment on the basis of their sexuality despite the fact that such treatment is illegal throughout Australia. ('Writing Themselves In Again' xiii)

- . 44% of young GLBTI people reported verbal abuse and 16% reported physical assault because of their sexuality. ('Writing Themselves In Again' xiii)

- . Homosexuality remains illegal in 86 countries

- . The penalty for homosexuality is the death penalty in 5 countries

- . Australia just passed legislation to allow schools and churches to continue discriminating against homosexual people. They are legally allowed to exclude them from leadership positions, or any positions, because of their sexuality.

The 'Writing Themselves In Again' report also had some disturbing findings on the health of GLBTI Christians in Victoria:

"Christianity remains a last bastion of resistance to what is regarded in legal and health arenas as a normal part of human sexuality. Young people who were Christians, who attended Christian schools and/or belonged to Christian families were very well aware of this problem and wrote about their anguish. In most cases they were forced to choose between their sexuality and their religion. In many cases the rejection of their sexuality and the embracing of their religion resulted in young people hating and harming themselves. Leaving their faith for many was a painful but necessary road to recovery – a sad loss for the church and a survival choice for the young person." (2005, ix)

Blessed are the meek – who get angry but who never get aggressive

How can the GLBTI community, GLBTI Christians, and Christians who support them respond to homophobia within the church without becoming aggressive? On a personal level, can I forgive individuals and churches for their part in creating homophobic institutions and communities?

Jesus gives a picture of an inclusive community as a place where people can get upset about injustice without reacting in equally hurtful or aggressive ways. This could involve not engaging in conversations where people inflict judgmental or hurtful opinions.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – who seek justice

How can Christian churches and communities make their spaces inclusive of people with diverse sexualities? These are just a few suggestions that can help transform the culture of a community.

- . Take a look at the hetero-normative assumptions around you, and assess your own homophobia.
- . Advertise that your space is gay-friendly (but only if it really is.)
- . Question churches and communities about the ways they include or exclude GLBTI Christians.
- . Participate in GLBTI events and actions.
- . Openly support political decisions for GLBTI rights - eg. Same-sex marriage bill.
- . Do not support theologians or church leaders who hold homophobic views or teachings.
- . Intentionally include the voice of those marginalised in the community because of their sexuality.
- . In daily conversation challenge the homophobia that may exist in your community.

Blessed are the merciful – who are compassionate to everyone in need

Sometimes people may be cautious of GLBTI people in a Christian community because they represent a complicated issue for Christian theology and culture. Similarly, GLBTI people may be cautious of being confronted with a homophobic message, or individuals who insensitively reveal their judgments and opinions about homosexuality.

To show mercy is the opposite of showing judgment. Rather than self-righteousness or anxiety, it is possible to come from a place of compassion to understand the experiences of GLBTI people in your community. If a trusting relationship exists, you could use conversations to gain insight into things such as;

. How have Christians treated them in their life?

. Do they experience discrimination in their workplace or family?

. Do they feel comfortable in the community and how do they think their community can respond to their needs better?

. How has the experience of homophobia changed their view of themselves, their mental health and general wellbeing?

Blessed are the pure in heart – who are whole-hearted in their desire to do right

Trying to create a safe Christian community for gay people is not an exercise in political correctness – it should come from the heart as a desire to understand the needs and experiences of another person. It is harmful to engage with GLBTI issues if it is tokenistic. As mentioned previously, a genuine interaction with people who have been excluded in a community may inform reasons to push for change in your community.

Blessed are the peacemakers – who work for peace in a world at war

The current situation is based on divisions: The GLBTI community and the Christian community rarely communicate in a positive way – it's almost like a cold war that occasionally erupts in divisive and disturbing ways. Is it possible to move beyond these segregated spaces to a place where conversations can be fostered and mutual hostility can be dissolved?

There are a multitude of situations that can be created to bridge this gap, but It should be done thoughtfully - Public conversations and partnerships should happen only within the context of acknowledging injustices. For example: Public debates should not reinforce the dominant power dynamics and GLBTI people should not be invited into environments where they may hear hurtful messages.

Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness – who suffer for just causes

Today, many church leaders are too scared to advocate for the rights of GLBTI Christians because of the consequences on their career. It is heartbreaking that the church institution's official theological doctrine guides people's attitudes, when Jesus taught us not to conform to social norms of the world.

Heterosexual Christians need to be prepared to face disapproval from their church and their peers when they ask questions or take action about the church's treatment of GLBTI people.

To Conclude...

When I look at attitudes towards GLBTI people within the framework of Jesus' teachings I notice that there are no attitudes of violence, discrimination, moral superiority or exclusion. Basically - none of the attitudes that many secular and religious institutions would have us take on.

For me, it's significant that the actions that stem from this piece of scripture are able to be practiced by people with a diverse range of personal or theological opinions about homosexuality. Sounds a bit radical...

References:

Andrews, Dave. 2008, 'Plan B,' Authentic.

Hillier, Turner, Mitchell. 2005, 'Writing Themselves In Again' ARCSHS, LaTrobe.



Mural, North Fitzroy

Illegal Bible Study at Pine Gap

Simon Reeves

Last Tuesday on the 27th October Chris, Johnny and I headed to the Pine Gap US Military Spy Base 20kms outside of Alice Springs. This was my first visit to Pine Gap and the experience was more significant than I expected. Kaylene,

Barwon and I only had a couple of weeks in Alice Springs and when Chris asked me what I would like to do whilst here, I mentioned that I had heard much about this Spy Base and would like to pay a low key visit, just to have a look etc. Chris suggested it might be interesting to do reading from the Gospel of Mark whilst there (as we are keen followers of the Gospel of Mark) as often the place and context you read Scripture profoundly influences the message. This I thought would be a great experience but also quite low key. It turns out that you can't do low key at Pine Gap.

We found the unmarked turn off quite easily from Stuart Highway as Johnny had attended a couple of the protests in previous years. We drove along Hatt Road in the empty darkness around 8pm, outside of Alice Springs which is in the heart of Australia's Outback and Wilderness, 1500kms from a Capital City, heading to a site known as one of the world's largest ECHELON ground stations, home away from home to the US National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency and a place where missiles and other weapons are guided to their destinations in places such as Iraq to harm, kill and destroy. Needless to say I felt a deep sensation of heading into the surreal, which was ironic as, on one hand we were entering the vicinity of what is largely an invisible piece of our society, yet on the other hand is a place that is deathly real.

As we got deeper in we passed two signs indicating we were approaching the Joint

Defence Space Facility and should turn around now. We'd never seen such signs before on a public road and wondered about their legal status. We drove on; surely they were just warnings for lost tourists? Surely we had a right to look at a facility built in the country we live?

As we approached the last bend we came in view of the entrance to Pine Gap. Lights flooded the road and illuminated the huge wire fences that were only shadowed by the enormous gates and security measures (bit like Jurassic Park really...the theme music stuck in my head for days after).

We pulled up underneath a third sign about 100 metres from the gates that indicated if we passed this point we could be imprisoned for 7 years, which wasn't in my list of things to do in Alice Springs.

As we turned off the engine someone asked if we had a plan, to which we all said 'nope'. But we did have some Bibles and we got out and sat in the back of the Ute tray, Aussie style, underneath what I'd like to say was the beautiful night sky, but instead it was the scores of security lights burning wastefully into the night.

No sooner had we got comfy, looked at one another and comprehended where we were, we heard an alarm and noticed the gates opening slowly to an Australian Federal Police vehicle. "Is this for us?" we asked. Surely not, we were not even close to their 'prohibited land' and hardly causing a threat as three blokes with a bible sitting in the back of a Ute. But you guessed it; this was our welcome to Pine Gap. I didn't expect a cuppa, but things weren't looking up on our arrival at Pine Gap.

Two officers hopped out of the vehicle and enquired about our business at Pine Gap. Apparently reading the Bible is not the business of Pine Gap and it is actually



prohibited, and we were asked to leave the vicinity. We politely questioned the police as to why we were required to move on when we were sitting here peacefully and not even wanting to enter the secured area?

However, they wanted to take down our drivers license details.

"Why?" one of us asked?

They responded: "To getchecked."

We asked, "checked for what?"

They said "To get checked."

So I guess they'll be 'checked'.

While they examined and noted our beautiful license photos we took the initiative to do our Gospel reading of Mark 13 real fast. They then searched our vehicle and took its details down and thanked us for our cooperation. We said no worries and hoped that we had made

their night a little bit more interesting.

When we returned home we spent some time reflecting on our experience and marvelled at the appropriateness of the reading of Mark 13 (which was found and read under extreme pressure!). We remarked similarities of the disciples stating sarcastically in verse 1 'Look Teacher what large stones and large buildings' and the huge temple of war on our left. We noted the irony of the 'signs' (v4) as we sat underneath one threatening to take away 7 years of our life.

We read the constant urgings of Jesus to 'be aware (but not alarmed [wait that's John Howard])', to watch out, to stay awake in this time of wars and rumours of wars. To stay awake is a repeated discipleship metaphor for Marks Gospel and incredibly relevant for us as we sit in a country that has been in perpetual war for the last 8 years. We also reflected on Jesus' warning to his disciples 'you will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues and stand before governors and kings' (v9) while we stood before the

Australian Federal Police and were searched, questioned and our behaviour reported to 'higher authorities'.

However, verse 14 hit us like a ton of bricks and as Chris read it in the midst of the police reporting our presence we turned to look at Pine Gap - 'But when you see the desolating sacrilege setup where it ought not to be...flee to the mountains' (except it was dark and we couldn't see the mountains!) Interestingly, one can see pine gap from the nearby mountains, and also be far enough away as to not elicit the attendance of the Feds.

Gap - 'But when you see the desolating sacrilege setup where it ought not to be...flee to the mountains' (except it was dark and we couldn't see the mountains!) Interestingly, one can see pine gap from the nearby mountains, and also be far enough away as to not elicit the attendance of the Feds.

After setting out for a simple look at Pine Gap and a quiet Bible Study our encounter made us aware that we had experienced something significant. To go to such a place as Pine Gap, to open up the Bible where it is not allowed, to challenge the culture of war with Scripture gave us a little taste of the prophets of old and also the prophets of new such as Martin Luther King. And for once in our life we didn't fall asleep during a bible study!

Maybe more bible studies and church meetings should be held in the places where God's love has been made criminal, illegal and even traitorous. Where the threat of arrest is imminent and the message of Jesus Christ to not harm one another, to love our enemies, to forgive one another and lay down our lives has been forgotten.



Gay Vs Christian

Matt Pearse

You're gay and Christian and you're wanting to come out to your Christian friend. But you're worried about how you'll do that. Here's some tips for you:

It might be a good idea to just talk generally about “gay” stuff around your friend. This will give you an idea about how they might be when you come out to them. Do you have enough support from other friends if this friend doesn't take the news well?

Reading about other “coming out” stories can help you prepare for your own.

When you come out remember that you've had a long time to process this, whereas your friend has only just heard it. Don't expect them to be your “straight ally” when you march in the pride parade next week. Give them time, remember you weren't as accepting of yourself when you first realised you were gay.

For some of your friends, you being gay will challenge their notion of the inerrancy of the Bible, the bed rock of their faith. You might want to have some literature ready if you can't have this debate with your friend.

Be prepared to be surprised. You don't want people to judge you, so don't judge them. Some friends you thought would struggle will be fine with it, others you thought were open minded won't return your calls.

You're straight and Christian and you want your gay Christian friends to feel comfortable being honest with you, even though your not sure if you're “ok” with it. Here's some tips for you:

If you suspect that your friend is gay, maybe bring up some gay things in conversation. This will show your friend that you're open to talking about it. Saying they deserve to go to hell probably won't help.

Read up about Christian / Gay books articles and web sites so you're more informed.

If a friend tells you that they are gay, this is a very intimate gift they have given you. This was not easy for them to tell you, so just listen. Listening and letting them feel heard is the best gift you can give back to them at this time.

Be careful if you feel the need to challenge your friend with the truth of the Bible (as in; “You shouldn't be gay”). Sure they have a choice about their behaviours, but they can't choose how they feel. They may interpret your care as an attack on their very self.

Be prepared to be surprised. Your gay Christian friend will still be the same person, just happier and more themselves. They probably won't be the stereotyped person you thought all gay people were.

If this is a friendship that you value be prepared to stick by your friend as they work out how they feel about this. Are you giving your friend an ultimatum to reject their belief system and be totally ok with you being gay, or them holding to their beliefs and you ending the friendship. Is this fair?

Be proud of yourself at coming out in a Christian environment. Its not easy!! Your bravery will help to break down the stereotypes that many Christian people have of queer people

If this is a friendship that you value then it isn't ok just to start ignoring your friend just because they're now out about their sexuality. Your friend has taken a leap to be honest with you, it would be good if you could hang in with them even though you may find it challenging.

Be prepared to stand up for your friend. They may experience discrimination and abuse in their Church community for coming out. Whether you agree with them or not, no one deserves to be ostracised and gossiped about.



Cricket Anarchy

Phil Yew

Some of you reading this may be wondering what an article on cricket doing in a magazine about christianarchy? After all isn't sport just another projection of the empire which is used to dull our minds and distract us from living authentic lives in the face of systemic evil? Isn't cricket in particular an elitist sport and just another way in which men stroke their egos with dominant displays over other men?

My answer is yes, yes and yes. Sport can be all these things and more if we are not aware of them, however, it has just as much right to be restored and redeemed as anything else in this world of ours and this is an article on an attempt to do this on the streets of Melbourne. My name is Phil and amongst other things I work for a community organisation called Urban Seed whom engage with social justice and life issues within Melbourne's CBD (e.g. homelessness, gambling, drugs, education and a whole lot more...). One creative way this engagement has happened in the last few years has been the introduction of Laneway Cricket to the laneways around Melbourne. My role is to organise and facilitate these events as part of Credo Cricket activities that happen throughout the year. So what's it all about?

Laneway cricket attempts to bring cricket back to its roots (much like the radical Christian movement), to the streets where the people on the margin are - and in the CBD this means the laneways. The laneways of Melbourne are its heart and soul. Surely if Christ was to come to Melbourne you would find him there with the homeless, graffiti kids, drunks and drug addicts of our age (please excuse the rash generalisation I'm merely pointing out that the laneways are occupied by those on the margins of our society). A laneway cricket game not only brings people on the margins together for a fun hit of cricket but also workers from corporate offices as well. Each side (6 players per side) is a mixture of what our

society perceives as 'sinners' and 'tax collectors' working together for a mutual goal.

Does this remind you of a popular story where these groups centred around another rectangular object, say, a table? Note: It's also not just for the guys there are plenty of women who play!

The rules are makeshift: one run per wall hit and 6 runs if you hit it over the lights, everyone bowls an over and everyone bats! There is a central umpire whom commentates and plays music, as well as plenty of lollies and drinks creating a great atmosphere in which to share some simple moments of life together, no matter where you are from and what you have going on laneway cricket is a game for all. And all who play appreciate the time together! Laneway cricket has also been used as a vehicle to create non-violent discreet action during the height of the violence perpetrated on Indian students in Melbourne. A match was arranged with police, Indian students and members of the Victorian team! The teams were mixed and it was a great way to discover something both nations have in common their love for cricket! There was plenty of media that day and within 7 hours had been in reported in 150 different news sources around the world!!

Although not perfect, laneway cricket is an attempt to provide a space for people whom wouldn't usually cross paths to engage and understand each other whilst sharing in a common activity. And in this way the ethos of Christ can be seen. It is a small thing, but wherever we are there are small activities like this which can be examples of Christ amongst our communities. Till next time, may you make many runs both on and off the field!

If you would like to set up a game or want more information please contact me at phil.yew@urbanseed.org or check our website @ www.urbanseed.org

1.<http://www.theage.com.au/national/going-into-bat-for-harmony-on-melbourne-mean-streets-20090619-cr9t.html>

Peacetreer Survives Transcontinental Journey in Very Small Car!

Its not every day that you get to push start a car at 5am in the middle of the Nullabor. Or sleep in a room with 20 other people. But all in all the nation-traversing trip for the 2009 Christian Anarchist Gathering was a wonderful experience for the four Peacetreer representatives of Matt Pearse, Harry Wykman, Bonnie Wykman and Geoff Bice. Whilst confirming the reality that there is too much time you can spend with your beloved community members in a confined space, the benefits of the trip easily overwhelmed these minor issues as we met with so many like-minded folk. And no wonder everybody loves Melbourne! Its so damn cool! It actually appears to have some culture and conscience to it, unlike the manufactured trendiness and tilt-up concrete of the suburban Perth we love so dearly (but it is worth visiting. Really, you all should come!).

Other than feeling the encouragement of remembering we are not the only freakazoids in the country banging on about the likes of peace, activism, dumpstering and Jesus, there were some key conversations that continued on throughout the return nullabor odyssey. In particular, we felt challenged to keep engaging with our local Nyoongar people as they struggle to rise above the impacts of our colonising culture. We are now looking into Aboriginal organisations we may be able to financially support as a way of paying some 'rent', as well as continuing to connect with some of the local families we know - relationships we sometimes too easily neglect. So a big thanks to Manu and Graham for their inspiring lives reflected in the decolonisation session.

It was also fascinating to hear from Marty and his story of ethical entrepreneurship (that took a long time for me to spell). This prods us further into our own visions of paying our bills through the life-giving work of our hands in local, sustainable, generally good, business.

We also garnered much encouragement from the stories of folk participating in various levels of social-political activism and the need to keep being faithful for the sake of those who need our solidarity.

From the Talisman-Saber crew, to stories of the Jahwork mob subverting their local military recruitment drive, we are inspired by your persistent peaceful calling to account of the powers that surround us.

There was also a great sense of appreciation for the openness and receptivity to the discussions around diverse sexuality and gender. For a topic renowned for its divisiveness it was so nice to feel the openness for discussion and the interest in gaining greater understanding.

Along with all the positives, we also shared in the frustrations of the difficulties of hosting such an event in consideration of the environmental impact involved in the travel and are keen to support initiatives that help to minimise our carbon footprint (yay for dumpstering!). We would also be keen to see some extra support given to the hosts and facilitators of the gathering. This is to ensure the sharing of the burden of hosting which seemed quite significant (thankyou to the CAVE crew!!!) and solidify thorough process for the running of discussions and making of decisions.

Finally, from our far flung outpost the prospect of generating greater interconnectedness feels really important. Its from this that the we would hope to see a strong network develop amongst us to enable the sharing of resources, knowledge and people throughout region. How to progress this from an ideal to an actuality is an item for discussion that we would be glad to hear input about.

Thanks again to all who put in efforts to host the event and for the continued commitment of lifestyle and insight that all attendees bring to the gathering. We have been deeply encouraged and inspired to keep following in the way of Christ. And if we do ever host a gathering over this way then you all have to drive here in small cars.

With peace and love,

Peace Tree Community, Lockridge, Perth, WA.

Reviews



'The Life You Can Save'

Peter Singer

The Text Publishing Company, 2009

I was walking through a bookshop with a friend who is heavily involved in Oxfam Australia, when she saw Peter Singer's latest book on the shelf. She picked up the book very curiously and said: "What is this book about? Heaps of people are giving money to Oxfam and saying it is because of reading this!"

Peter Singer is one of the most prominent philosophers in Australia, best known for his pioneering work in the animal liberation movement.

He's also (arguably) one of our most boring non-fiction writers. In his latest book 'The Life You Can Save' he sets out long moral arguments about how individuals can reassess the way they spend their money in order to redistribute the riches of the Western world to solve global poverty.

As the book states: "Most of us are absolutely certain that we wouldn't hesitate to save a drowning child, and that we would do it at considerable cost to ourselves. Yet while thousands of children die each day, we spend money on things we take for granted, and would hardly miss if they were not there. Is that wrong? If so, how far does our obligation to the poor go?"

Singer goes into incredible depth about the issues of global poverty - from statistics about the current situation to guidelines on how to decide if a charity is effective. While this information is useful, it's also very dry and takes a lot of effort to get through. The more interesting aspect of the book is Singer's exploration of the psychology of giving and the trends and culture of generosity in today's society.

This book is good if you want to be challenged intellectually about the possibilities for an individual response to global poverty. Unfortunately we're not all inspired by complicated logical arguments, and it's disappointing that Singer can't package his urgent message for a wider audience. If you are more interested in a community based or spiritual response to distributing individual wealth, (or reading something that won't make you sleepy,) then better look elsewhere.

'For The Bible Tells Me So'

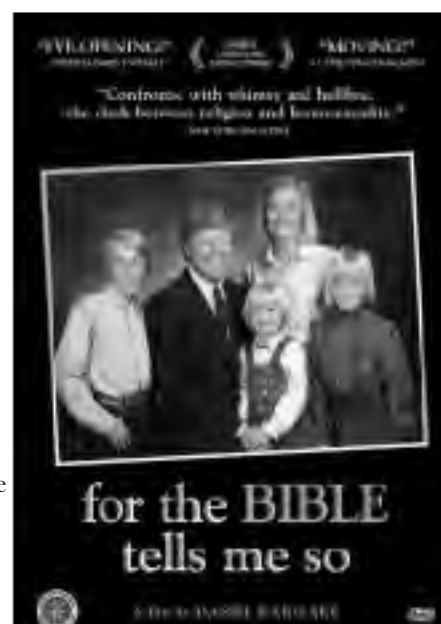
Beyond - Home Entertainment

2008

This DVD is an exploration of Christian hate and the way homophobia within the church has effected individuals. The documentary follows five families who are immersed in their local, often fundamentalist, churches and how this colours their reactions when their children come out as gay.

Hearing the family's journeys of initial fear through to a different understanding of the bible is powerful and hopeful as it analyses how much theology and church hierarchy impacts on everyday life. Highlights are perspectives from the first openly gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson and Bishop Desmond Tutu.

This is a great resource for anyone exploring the issues surrounding scripture and homosexuality, and is also an inspirational, disturbing and moving depiction of people grappling with the meaning of Christian love. It has also hit the mainstream, recently screening on ABC. The only downside is the American setting - there are many documentaries analysing the politics and dangers of the American theological climate, perhaps in a way that makes us see religious extremism and its aggressive brand of homophobia as something foreign. I wonder what a documentary would look like exploring the same themes from an Australian or New Zealand perspective.



South Pacific Christian Anarchists Annual Gatherings 2006-2009

For the last 4 years we have had gatherings to share, debate, meet, tell stories and try to encourage each other to live out the call of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount. Anyone is welcome to come and explore, listen and ask questions.

2006

Location: Poututerangi Marae, Te Puna

Attendance: 20

Highlights: Inaugural meeting (some people actually came!); Sam Buchanan's 'History of Anarchism in Aotearoa'; Bruce McKay's 'Ellul & Anarchism'; Harmeet Sooden's story; Josh & Amy's Peace Tree stories; Marty's social enterprise stories; great cooking by Omar and crew.

2007

Location: Mt Tamborine, South-East Queensland

Attendance: 40

Highlights: Second meeting (more people came!); stories from Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Queensland; Ciaron's history of anarchism in Queensland; Donna & Jim's Pine Gap story; Neil's rugby league game, Graham's creation narrative.

2008

Location: Onuku Marae, Akaroa

Attendance: 50

Highlights: Third meeting (oh oh, this was just supposed to be a joke); meeting Otautahi anarchists; stories from Onuku and Kai Tahu; cars breaking down; Edwina's Greenham Common stories; Amy's kitchen counselling; Vonney's art therapy workshop, great vegan cooking of dumpster kai by Russell and crew.

2009

Location: 'The Cave' AscotVale, Melbourne

Attendance: 60

Highlights: Ciaron's fireside stories; having lots of kids there; having one toilet between 60 people; lots of dumpster food.

2010

Location: TBC

Events are negotiated between countries to share around the carbon miles.



"In the name of god, stop a moment, cease your work,
look around you."

Leo Tolstoy