

CO-OPTED?

KI/Ā N G Ā T A H I

The ZINE of the South Pacific Christian Anarchists



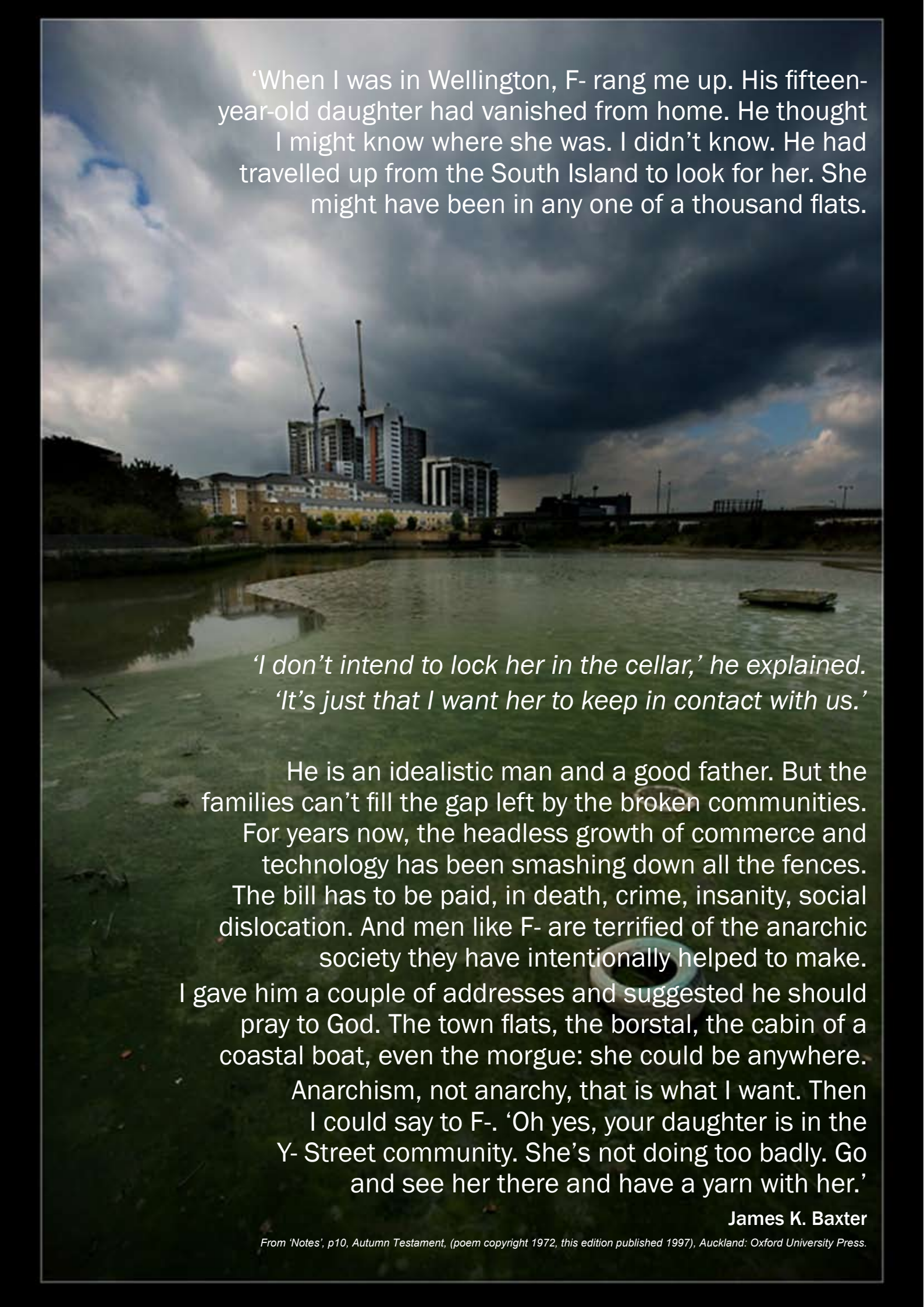
What the ** is
Christi-Anarchy?**

Subversive Spirituality

Social Enterprise

Ploughshares at Waihopai

SPCA Gathering July 2009



‘When I was in Wellington, F- rang me up. His fifteen-year-old daughter had vanished from home. He thought I might know where she was. I didn’t know. He had travelled up from the South Island to look for her. She might have been in any one of a thousand flats.’

*‘I don’t intend to lock her in the cellar,’ he explained.
‘It’s just that I want her to keep in contact with us.’*

He is an idealistic man and a good father. But the families can’t fill the gap left by the broken communities. For years now, the headless growth of commerce and technology has been smashing down all the fences. The bill has to be paid, in death, crime, insanity, social dislocation. And men like F- are terrified of the anarchic society they have intentionally helped to make. I gave him a couple of addresses and suggested he should pray to God. The town flats, the borstal, the cabin of a coastal boat, even the morgue: she could be anywhere. Anarchism, not anarchy, that is what I want. Then I could say to F-. ‘Oh yes, your daughter is in the Y- Street community. She’s not doing too badly. Go and see her there and have a yarn with her.’

James K. Baxter

From ‘Notes’, p10, *Autumn Testament*, (poem copyright 1972, this edition published 1997), Auckland: Oxford University Press.



Editors Comments

“I am such an anarchist as Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount have made me.” - Leo Tolstoy

South Pacific Christian Anarchists (SPCA) is an ad-hoc, broad and largely undefined community of people - mostly living in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand - who enjoy getting together and sharing stories about living and working in ways that try to share power, eliminate hierarchies, are consistent with the Sermon on the Mount and take the gospels seriously.

The Zine

This publication aims to provide some helpful information regarding what we see as the anarchist tendencies of Jesus' teaching and how his message has been followed and/or distorted by various people since. We hope that these pages will influence thought, generate discussion, stimulate protest and encourage action. And that action might reclaim something of the Anarchic Jesus who wants to save the repressed from the system, and bring more of the grass roots community, socially-aware, Jesus-following movements that are already humming in many pockets of Australasia. Communities of people that embody co-operation, freedom, and liberty? Sounds quite anarchic really.



The Inaugural Edition

We have chosen the name KIA NGAA TAHI - CO-OPTED as the title of what will hopefully become an occasional publication of the SPCA. The names represent two core themes, firstly that we are all Co-opted by something and secondly that the Unity of Diverse people embodies a glimpse of God.

CO-OPTED is a loaded term but we use it to acknowledge that we have all been co-opted by something. Sometimes we don't even know it; sometimes it is beneficial, sometimes it is harmful. This Zine tries to ask the questions that are easy not to ask. Like who is this radical Jesus? What was so radical about him that the state ended up killing him? How did his followers get co-opted by the Roman Empire - the ones who killed him in the first place? How did the teachings of someone as radical as Jesus get co-opted by the state, the church and even wars? What

is a radical Christ-centric spirituality? How can we reconstruct church to follow this radical Christ?

'KIA NGAA TAHI' means to be united, connected, to come together and cooperate. Without connection, through our shared struggles and dreams, the challenges we face can leave us lonely and embittered. We have found strength in the meeting points of our annual hui, online forums, random emails, and hopefully – this zine. Despite our differences of country, culture, upbringing, politics, language, doctrine, neighbourhood and lifestyle we can still find a point of unity.

Many generous contributors have contributed, and we four volunteers have collated, spell-checked, edited a little. The contributions speak for themselves, not necessarily for the South Pacific Christian Anarchists, whoever they may be, not necessarily for God, maybe for good, but not necessarily for anyone. If you have a burning desire to either submit an article for the next edition, or edit SPCA zine #2, drop us a line at spchristiananarchy@gmail.com. Contributions from readers are encouraged but may be edited for clarity and/or length. This zine was born out of discussions at both the second and third annual SPCA hui, so bring your thoughts along to Melbourne in August and you can make the next edition happen! A note to future editors: it took a lot longer than we initially anticipated to put this thing together. Bloody anarchy!

Noho ora mai raa

-Caleb, Kay, Tyler & Manu

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The Politics of Church Billboard Evangelism

This is the story of a simple black sign on Willis Street, Wellington outside St John's in the City Presbyterian Church. It displays simple messages to the public of an engaging, religious nature.

Ross Davis, St. John's in the City, Wellington, NZ

During a sermon by Dr Chris Marshall about the Sermon on the Mount, I had a new idea for this sign. It was influenced by an awareness that the Labour-led government of the day had been cited by the United Nations as further confiscating Maaori property rights through the Seabed and Foreshore Act. Matthew 5 says "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth." My idea was linked to that:

"Blessed are Maaori for they will inherit Aotearoa" or alternatively;

"Blessed are Tuhoe for they will inherit Tuhoe ... ano."

[As a 'footnote'] (see Matthew 5:6 for more details)

(ano means again; and the second Tuhoe refers to the To-hoe nation to whom our National church returned some land recently at Maunga Pohatu)

The sign was something we could do to act on the words of Christ - one small way to be on the side of the meek and those who grieve the loss with their whenua from whence they came. It seemed to me that the hope Jesus spoke of is that many Maaori who weep now will be comforted - not in heaven but now.

It is my observation that in many recent cases the Maaori response to injustice and land confiscation has been meek... humbly coming through the court system for over a hundred years only to find rules changing to enable further confiscations. Unlike some Irish and Arab responses to injustice, the Maaori response has not been to hide bombs in telephone boxes or to blow themselves and others up. [Ed: it should be noted that many Irish and Arab responses to injustice have also been very meek] Maaori celebrate with us the independence from colonisation achieved by Samoa and others in the Pacific while waiting for their own independence in their own lands.

In the discussion following my proposal it was noted that the

original beatitude uses the qualitative term "meek", pointing to a combination of physical helplessness and spiritual dependence on God; "Maaori" however is an ethnic term.

It is perhaps significant that in his own situation, under Roman occupation, Jesus didn't say "blessed are Jews for they shall inherit Israel" - which would have sounded like an invitation to violent revolution. He no doubt believed Jews would re-inherit their own land - but they had to do so by taking the path of meekness, not simply by asserting their political, and indeed ethnic-religious, right to their own land by whatever means available. Jesus lived and taught in a politically volatile situation; he did not avoid political statements but he placed as much emphasis on the means of political change as he did on the need for such change.

as he did on the need for such change.

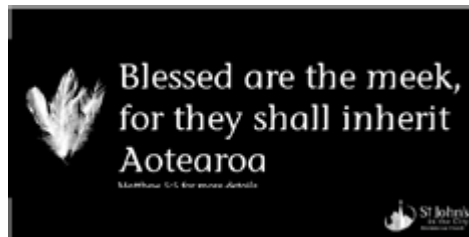
The local church did challenge my proposal and our committee consensus was to change the wording as suggested by Dr Chris Marshall to "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit Aotearoa", in the hope that the more subtle message may be more effective.

The sign went up at a delicate time in the discussions between the Government and both Taahoe and Tenth's Trust regarding their respective Waitangi settlements. One interesting comment from Morris Te Whiti Love of Tenth's Trust was that if we had "Blessed are Maaori for they will inherit Aotearoa" some would ask, "why do we need to inherit what is already ours?" Eugene Rider, a Black Power brother who liked the sign, said "the meek? - that's us isn't it? The peasants".

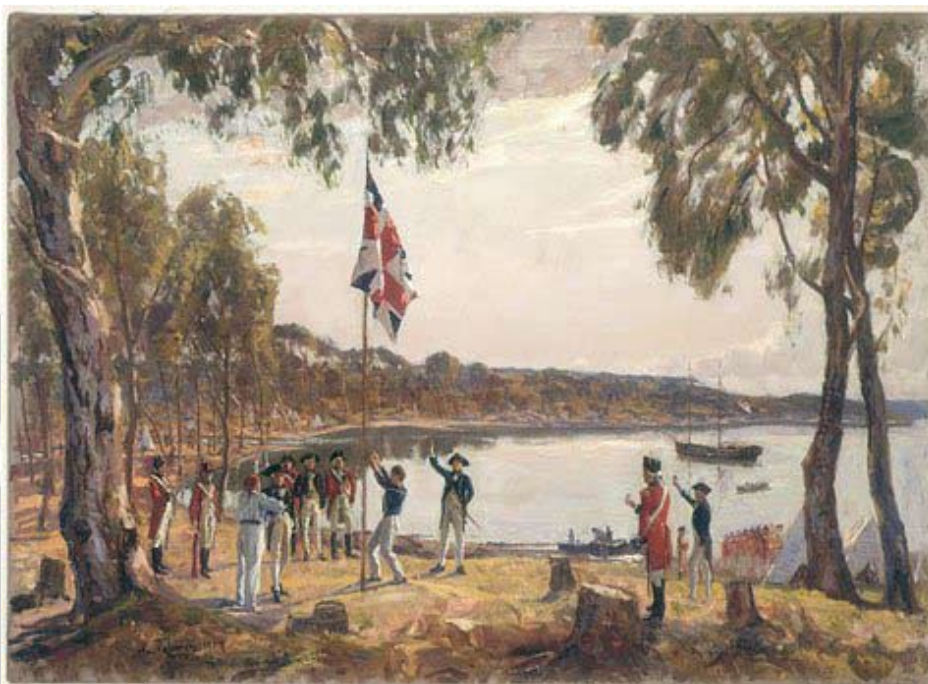
The sign took around 3 months to gain approvals and get up. My thanks to Chris Marshall who substantially added to and edited my comments for the church office to help answer any queries off the street. The balance had shifted from a call for justice for Maaori to something tamer and perhaps deeper.

Manu Caddie who was involved in the consultation process felt it had got so lukewarm it no longer sided strongly enough with Maaori but I was encouraged that much of the original intent was still there and it had pushed the church as far as it could.

Jesus' beatitude affirms that surely God, who is just, will return land to those who are meek/peaceful. In this way the sign could be seen to celebrate the return of some lands to Maaori in the current Waitangi Tribunal treaty claims as being consistent with the spirit of the beatitude, and looks forward to more justice for Maaori through peaceful and non-violent means. X



^ The Final Sign



< Ownership?

Anarchy in the Bible

So where do we find anarchy in the bible? This article will highlight some of the themes and passages which dissident Christians use to justify their opposition to authority and call themselves Anarchists, without discarding their Christian faith.

The Beginning

According to the biblical account of creation, God created us with freewill. This doesn't go very far towards making a case specifically for Christian Anarchism, but it is an important starting point to remember. Freedom is the basis of Anarchism and the reason for opposition to the authorities which dominate and repress. Jesus came to bring us freedom.

The Judges

During the time of the Judges, tribal assemblies made decisions rather than a central authority. The Judges were essentially raving prophets with the ability to speak God's truth. They held no power or position and only showed up when the Israelites had really mucked up. Judges 21:25, the last verse in the chapter, states that during that time there was no king, so the people did what ever they thought seemed right. If you read Judges you probably won't think some of the things they did were particularly nice, but never-the-less God allowed them to continue to work things out for themselves.

In Judges 9, a man called Jotham delivered a divinely inspired message to his brother who was trying to set himself up in a position of power. It is a story about the trees trying to choose a leader for themselves and ending up being ruled by a tyrant thorn bush. The moral of the story is that good, valuable people already have meaningful positions in society. It is the selfish individuals who seek positions of power.

The Kings

1 Samuel 8 is where the Israelites decide they want to have a King like everyone else. God tells Samuel that in desiring a ruler, the people are choosing to reject God. That statement shows a huge objection to human power structures on the part of God. Samuel warns everyone about the abuses of power that a King will commit, but they refuse to listen. In the end, the best person God could find was Saul, but he didn't take long to become a horrible despot (just as predicted.) The vast majority of rulers following Saul were horrible, evil bastards too – even David was pretty hopeless, he just looks good by comparison and played a mean harp.

During the reign of Israel's kings, God very seldom associated with the rulers. God's preferred place was with the crazy, ranting prophets who criticised and undermined the power of the kings.

Enter Jesus

Jesus whole life was lived in opposition to authority. He refused to accept the legitimacy of the power that religious and government officials held over people.

In the accounts of Jesus 40 days in the desert recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, Satan offers Jesus the authority to rule over all the kingdoms of the world. Even though Jesus would have undoubtedly been a benevolent ruler, he refuses the offer. He does this because he is told (and accepts) that he can't have earthly authority without first kneeling to the prince of darkness, a compromise he couldn't make and one we should steer clear of also.

In Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus tells his disciples explicitly that they are not to be like the rulers of this world. Rather than try to get into positions of leadership, he wants them to be servants. This is a theme that runs through chapters 19 and 20, advocating a reversed, upside-down hierarchy in which those who take the lowest place are valued the most. In Matthew 23:11-12 this upside-down hierarchy is mentioned again, but it is preceded by an explicit warning against having masters of any kind in verses 8-10. Jesus tells his followers that the only master they are to have is God.

There are many other passages such as those to do with working on the Sabbath, overturning tables, the question of taxes, and non-cooperation after his arrest (not to mention the sermon on the mount) which show Jesus making a mockery of those in authority and treating their positions and rules with a sincere lack of respect.

The Early Church

The remainder of the New Testament is where we find the most passages which are used to support the existence of the State and the use of hierarchy, even within the Church. It is interesting that we find them here rather than in the life of Jesus himself. In any case, let's have a look at them.

The most obvious passage used to defend human power structures is Romans 13. At a glance it can seem to be saying that governments are divine institutions which should be obeyed thoughtlessly. But that would mean we are obligated to support war, torture, economic sanctions, genocide, nuclear weapons, executions, and all manner of things which governments do and which are entirely contrary to Jesus message of love for our enemies. So that can't be what he means, especially when you consider that Paul himself disobeyed the government countless times. What Paul must be getting at is that we shouldn't make things hard for our selves by disobeying the government unnecessarily – we should be tactical. Peter puts it well when he says in Acts 5:29, "It is better to obey God rather than human authority."

There is an assortment of other references which could be taken as pro-hierarchy, but they are much more ambiguous and all can be seen as extensions of loving your neighbour rather than support for earthly authority. (Tit 3:1, 2 Pet 2:10, Jud 8, 1 Tim 2:1-2.) There are many more references, especially in the life of Jesus, to the equality of all people, the worthlessness of material wealth and the effort we should put into helping strangers and disempowered people. All of these things defy earthly logic, which is based upon concern only for yourself through the pursuit of personal gain and the improving of your own position. Jesus' way is the way of love for one another, of shunning authority, of living communally, of living simply, and of laying down our lives for one another. To follow Jesus is, amongst other things, to live an anarchistic life.

'Anarchy and Christianity' by Jacques Ellul goes way further into this stuff, check it out. X

ONE DOME DOWN - Ploughshares Action at Waihopai Spy Base

For twenty years the twin white domes squatted in the valley of the Waihopai river, 25 km from Blenheim. Most people did not know they were there, or what they were doing.

By Peter Murnane

Surrounded by double fences and security cameras, these huge thirty-metre plastic balloons concealed dish-antennae that eavesdropped on satellites carrying private, government and business communications around the Pacific.

Who was listening? New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) manages the base for the National Security Agency (NSA) in Washington DC. Echelon computer "dictionaries" select specific target-words from the volumes of traffic to gather information on anyone considered a "security threat"- or to steal their commercial or political information.

There had been annual protests against the base, but on April 30th 2008 the nation awoke to the news that one of the big domes was down, punctured by the sickles of three protesters, Sam Land, Adi Leason and Peter Murnane. Their website (<http://ploughshares.org.nz>) described their deed as a Ploughshares action, using simple tools to symbolically disarm some



weapon of war in keeping with the biblical prophecies of Isaiah (2:4) and Micah (4:3). The protesters then wait, praying, to take responsibility for their non-violent action.

The Waihopai installation, a foreign spybase on New Zealand soil, has cost taxpayers more than \$500 million. It gathers information that helps the USA to wage wars. Rather than increasing national security, it actually diminishes it by drawing reactions of hatred and retaliation that those wars generate.

The bursting of its bubble turned media spotlights onto this top-secret base. The base's management distorted the truth: "the domes merely keep the satellite dishes weatherproof" (They conceal the direction the dishes are pointing and which



satellites they are spying on). “Thick fog prevented the security cameras from working” (there was no fog at the base itself).

When planning their attack the Ploughshares trio were at first daunted by multiple security systems protecting the base. Razor wire on the double fences could be cut easily enough, but the high-voltage outer fence seemed designed to set off an alarm if touched or cut. Even if they could bypass the video cameras, the infra-red beams projected along the inner fence would instantly set off an alarm... according to the catalogue on the website of the company that made them.

They would have to go over or under the barriers. Digging through riverstones- if it did not set off the alarms - would be slow. Going over seemed easiest. A cherry-picker seemed like an inspired idea, but not wanting to cause trouble or loss to a hire-firm, the team bought an old truck with a high-ab crane that when adapted could reach over the two fences, 4.5 metres high and five metres apart.

On the night chosen, it had been raining for 48 hours. Finding another opportunity seemed almost impossible, so they decided to continue. But the rain had its way: at 4 am, as the heavy truck crept through a vineyard towards the base, when turning a corner it slid off the track and down a steep bank. There was no hope of recovering it and the group were about to abandon their plans, but felt moved to keep going. Walking across the paddock outside the base’s perimeter they realized that the truck would have bogged here, even more hopelessly and in full view. Some failures are helpful.

The electric fence was their first major challenge. Their bolt-cutters had rubber grips on the metal handles, but would they insulate when soaking wet? The three paused to pray before cutting the first wire. There was no shock or flash, but as they climbed through into the space between the perimeter fences, sparks crackled ominously at the base of a fence-post.

Sure that the infra-red alarms on the second fence would bring guards running, the three hoped there might just be time to reach and puncture the dome, despite the third fence around it. But the infra-red beams did no more than the electric fence’s



alarm. Inside the base at last, the group ran towards the domes. The third fence, like the second, had vertical, 5mm steel bars. After buying the bolt-cutters, Sam had regretted choosing long handles, thinking them heavier than needed. But this “mistake” enabled them to cut quickly through the second and third fence. With smaller cutters they might never have reached the dome.

After two sickles had punctured the dome, falling air pressure set off another alarm and brought the two guards running out to investigate. By the time they found the intruders, these had



∧ A Typical Antiwar Non-Violent Protester

set up their shrine with candle and icons of Jesus and Bishop Oscar Romero, martyr of El Salvador. They were kneeling in prayer for the victims of wars made possible by bases like this.

They offered their sickles to the female guard who nervously approached them, and the key to the padlock securing the base’s front gate lest the police arrive too early. After their arrest they were refused bail: the judge imagined this unusual crime was part of a dangerous international conspiracy, so they spent five days and sub-zero nights in the unheated police cells.

The Waihopai Ploughshares group plead “Not guilty” to charges of “Burglary” and “Intentional Damage”, which carry maximum penalties of ten and seven years. Their defence will be that they damaged the dome - claimed to cost \$1 million - “to draw attention to and prevent worse damage”. English and Irish juries have acquitted groups on the basis of this claim.

The USA invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have caused more damage than the tragedies of “9/11” and the Bali bombing. Across Iraq they have spread “depleted” uranium (DU) from armour-piercing ammunition, whose radioactive particles in the air, water and food chain will continue to increase cancer and birth deformities for millions of years.

Information gathered at Waihopai and similar bases has enabled people to be imprisoned for years without charge or trial in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, or “renditioned” to be tortured abroad.

Already this Ploughshares action - a “brilliant piece of political theatre” - has widened public debate about the Base: Can we afford to be complicit in the evils it helps to cause? Should the GCSB be more accountable to Parliament? What are the limits to what can be done in the name of “national security”? X

If you would like to help the Waihopai Ploughshares team meet their costs for court and witnesses, donations can be made to: Bank transfer: Westpac, Account Name: TE WAIRUA MARRANGA TRUST, Account Number: 03-1703-0036346-04 - donations are not tax-deductible.

If you’d like a receipt: Cheques can be made payable to Peace Movement Aotearoa - Special Projects, with a note saying it is for Ploughshares Aotearoa, and your name and address to Peace Movement Aotearoa, PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141.

BUSINESS PROFILE: Blackstar Coffee



Owners: Marty Richards & Yvonne Andrews

Location: West End, Brisbane.

Years in Operation: Since 2007

Product: Fair trade coffee cart and roastery

Blackstar Coffee is a Brisbane based social enterprise providing real solutions to long standing employment problems experienced by people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

The core purposes of Blackstar Coffee are:

To provide community education regarding fair-trade coffee, moving fair-trade espresso into the mainstream consciousness of coffee drinkers in Brisbane.

To create small business and employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged communities (specifically - amongst the Hazara Afghan new arrival community).

To generate income for the development of community enterprise and community development in Brisbane.

To supply excellent, memorable espresso coffee, thereby increasing the reputation of the Blackstar brand and blend.



COFFEE IS THE SECOND MOST TRADED COMMODITY IN THE WORLD (behind oil) and Aussies are now drinking more coffee than beer. Per head of population Australia fast becoming one of the biggest coffee consuming nations in the world. And what is all this consumption doing for the farmers who grow green coffee? In most cases it means long hours, low wages & poor conditions.

SPECIALITY COFFEE - is a gourmet coffee practice that's had its roots in the Seattle coffee scene since the 80's and more recently has been developed by leading coffee brands based in Wellington NZ, such as Coffee Supreme, Café La Fare & Peoples Coffee. Having been trained at Peoples Coffee the BLACKSTAR staff are passionate about bringing the gospel of fresh, shop-roasted coffee to the people of Brisbane. Expect hand-made, artisan roasted coffee, uncompromising commitment to fresh roasting, training for baristas, state of the art espresso making machinery & more.

FAIRTRADE - What is it? - Put simply it is an international trade justice system that exists to ensure that profits are returned to the farmers who grow the coffee. At BLACKSTAR we want customers to feel great about the product at all levels - not just how it tastes but also - how it makes them feel on a consumer values level. Fairtrade puts you in touch with the stories of where your product comes from, and how its production has affected producers.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE - is about creative, enterprise based solutions to long standing social problems. BLACKSTAR COFFEE aims to generate income and small business opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds - such as non English speaking, Indigenous and at risk young people.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - is a core principle underpinning the way we operate and where we place our business. We aim to create social and economic alternatives through modeling an alternative - BLACKSTAR COFFEE is a business that aims to be multi-cultural inclusive, worker owned, for 'everyone's' profit, promoting local community and sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY - all of BLACKSTAR'S coffees are purchased through the certified Organic system, a system that works in harmony with nature, keeping harmful chemicals out of our land, water and air, creating a healthy environment rich in wildlife, woodlands and nutri-

ents. The organic standards place great emphasis on building and maintaining healthy soil, nutritious crops and animal life.. X



The Subversive Spirituality Of Christi-Anarchy:

A Survey of Radical Biblical Politics - as incarnated in Jesus and interpreted by Paul.

By Dave Andrews (www.daveandrews.com.au)

“Even when they call us mad, we know we only preach the subversive witness of the Beatitudes, which have turned everything upside down” — Oscar Romero

A Judeo-Christian Perspective

In my view the Judeo-Christian Perspective is neither absolute, nor relative, but directive. It is not absolute - in the sense that it is the same message in different times and places. It clearly changes in relation to circumstances. But that does not mean that it is relative - in the sense that it is a different message in different times and places. The changes are more like improvisations on the same themes rather than different themes. There is a progression in the development of the central themes of the bible over time, and, I would suggest, it is the direction of that progressive revelation that provides a critical dimension for our deliberations.

At one stage in human history we were commanded to take ‘eye for an eye’ and at another stage in human history we were commanded to ‘turn the other cheek’. These commands are obviously not absolutely the same. There is a significant difference between taking an ‘eye for an eye’ and ‘turning the other cheek’. But I believe the intent behind both of these different commands was the same - and that was to limit the level of retaliation taken in a world caught up in relentless cycles of revenge. Those who take an ‘eye for an eye’ are no more likely to slaughter the innocent than those who opt to ‘turn the other cheek’. But, we cannot simply choose the biblical statement we prefer to rationalise our actions, because the call to take an ‘eye for an eye’ has been superseded by the call to ‘turn the other cheek’. We were called to move from unlimited violence to limited violence by the command to only take an ‘eye for an eye’. And we were called to move on from violence to non-violence by the command to ‘turn the other cheek’. The direction of this revelation - from unlimited violence to limited violence - and, then, from violence to non-violence - is crucial for considering prospective actions.

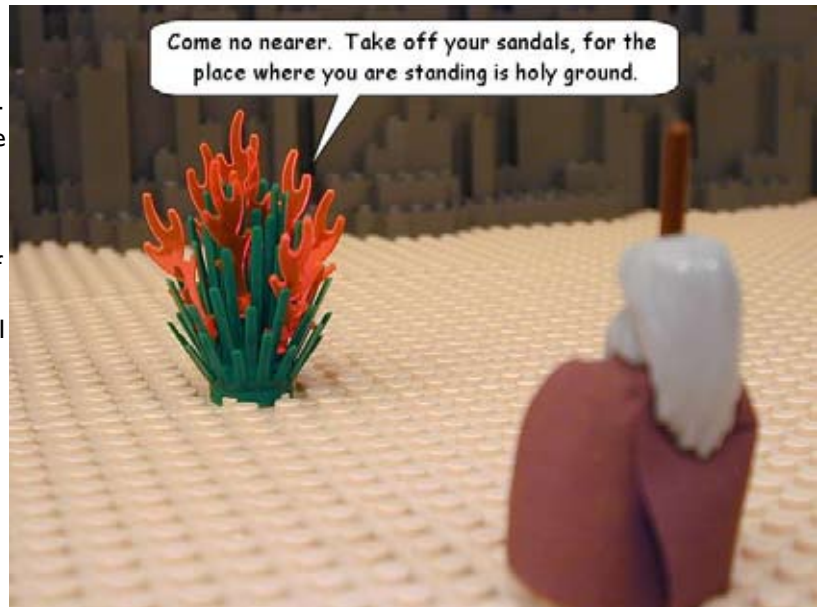
When we are considering subversive spirituality there are a number of texts in the Judeo-Christian tradition that can inform our discussion.

In Egypt the Israelites endured nearly four centuries of oppression. During that time, as far as we know, the people didn’t see any sign of liberation on the horizon. Then, one day, God comes across Moses. God knows Moses is the man for the job. He is the kind of man who will act; but, having been chastened by painful experience, is the kind of man who will act carefully. So God approaches Moses to ask him to help him intervene. And Exodus is the story of their struggle to liberate the Israelites from slavery in Egypt

“Let My People Go!”

Exod.3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. *2* There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.

Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” ⁴When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” ⁵“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.



⁷ The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey... ¹⁰So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

^{7:1} Then the LORD said to Moses, “I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. ²You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. ³But ... ⁴he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out the Israelites. ⁵And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it.” ⁶(And so ...) Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them.

Note: 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, in this particular situation, the call to action involves God’s people participating, body and soul, in a bloody struggle for total liberation.

The Exodus story is a very powerful paradigm for oppressed people to use in responding to their oppression. But we must take care in interpreting it.

Is the Exodus story a paradigm for praxis? A strategy for those who suffer oppression - to seize the day and liberate themselves right here and now?

Or is the Exodus story a paradigm for hope? A solace for those who suffer oppression for hundreds of years - that one day their liberation will come?

It is important to note that, in the original story, God guides the struggle!

Right from the beginning the organization of Israel as a nation was in stark contrast with the nation of Egypt that had enslaved them. They not only left Egypt's "pyramids of stone" behind; but also left Egypt's "pyramids of state" behind them. They sought to be a "holy nation" - "not like the other nations". They decided to have no "king", but the "King of Glory." Instead of a central government, they decided to have a decentralized federation of tribes. And disputes that arose were adjudicated by a series of judges.

"The Lord is King!"

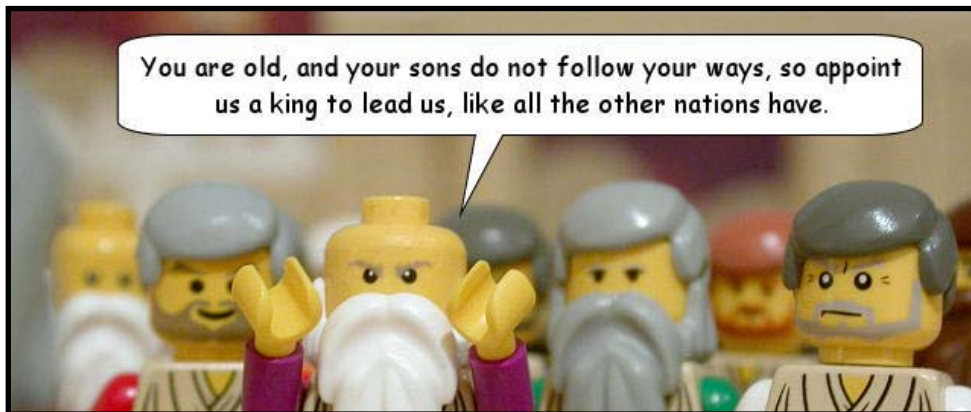
^{Psa24:7} Lift up your heads, you gates; that the King of glory may come in. ⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty.

^{29:10} (He) sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King. ¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people; he blesses his people with peace.

^{146:3} Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. ⁴ Their spirits depart, they return to the ground; their plans come to nothing. ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is (in) God, ⁶ the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever. ⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, ⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, he loves the righteous. ⁹ The LORD watches over aliens and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. ¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Until the day the people decided they wanted to have a king of their own.

"We want a king!"



^{Jud21:25} In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit in his own eyes.

^{1Sam.8:4} So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were

asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.

¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day." ¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." ²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."

Note: After the people of Israel were liberated, they set up a free society. A society that was built on the foundation of "trust", rather than "security". But when it came to the crunch, they abandoned the "politics of trust" and embraced the "politics of security". Opting for a monarchy, just "like all the other nations", though they knew, full well, their king would enslave them.

It's interesting to note God's response to the demand for a king. He knows that it represents a clear rejection of his political agenda. He says, sadly, "They have rejected me as their king". He is implacably opposed to a top-down, centralized, political economy that disempowers people, especially the people at the bottom of society. And he warns the people of Israel not to go back to the form of government that they left behind them in Egypt, lest they "become slaves". But the people

say they want a king regardless. And in a move that shows God is passionately committed to democracy - as opposed to autocracy - he instructs his representative to recognize the right of the people to decide on the form of government they want - and "give them a king" - even though he disagrees with the decision himself.

God accepts his rejection, but longs for a day when things will be different.

"A New Covenant."

^{Jer31:31} "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will anyone teach their sibling, or their neighbor, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD.

Note: God longs for a day when he will be able to re-establish his kingdom on earth. A kingdom characterised by acceptance, respect, and reciprocity. Where the rules are no longer external, but internal, 'written on people's hearts' and everyone,

'from the least to the greatest' (note the order), has access to power.

Generation after generation reject God's agenda for love and justice. And generation after generation continue to construct political economies that enrich a powerful minority at the expense of the majority of the population.

Till, one day, God steps onto the stage of human history, in the person of Jesus Christ, to show us the way that we can live with love for justice once again. Jesus not only tells us about "the Way"; Jesus is "the Way" himself.

When the people try to make Jesus their king - he refuses, saying, he has not come "to be served", but "to serve", and to give his life as "a ransom" -the price he is willing to pay - to set the people free. He says that, while pagans may "lord it over" one another, it should "never be so among you".

"Not so with you!"

Mat23:8 "You are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers and sisters. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Mat20:20 "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. ²¹"What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." ²²"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. ²³Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." ²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave- ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Note: There are two ways of understanding power. Traditionally our dominant notion of power has been defined as the ability to control other people. The dominant notion of power emphasises the possibility of bringing about change through coercion - an approach that tries to make others change according to our agendas. While the traditional dominant notion of power means taking control of our lives by taking control of others, Jesus advocated a radical alternative to the dominant notion of power - taking control of our lives, not by taking control of others, but by taking control of our-selves. This alternative emphasises bringing change by conversion - an approach that does not try to make others change, but tries to change ourselves, individually and collectively, in the light of a glorious agenda for justice. It breaks the control that others have over us and liberates us from our desire to control others.

The dominant notion of power is popular because it often brings quick, dramatic results. But the dominant approach to power is characterised by short-term gains for some, and long-term losses for everyone else. Every violent revolution there

has ever been, has - sooner or later - betrayed the people in whose name it fought its bloody war of liberation. The alternative notion of power is unpopular because it is usually a slow, unspectacular process.

But the alternative approach to power is the only way for groups to transcend their selfishness, resolve their conflicts, and manage their affairs in a way that does justice to everyone.

The essential problem in any situation of injustice is - that one human being is exercising control over another and exploiting the relationship of dominance. The solution to the problem is not simply to reverse roles, in the hope that once the roles have been reversed, the manipulation will discontinue. The solution is for people to stop trying to control each other. All of us, to one degree or another, exploit the opportunity if we have control over another person's life. Common sense therefore dictates that the solution to the problem of exploitation cannot be through the dominant approach to power - with its emphasis on controlling others. The solution is in the alternative - the strong but gentle approach - which emphasises controlling our-selves, individually and collectively, through self managed processes and structures.

Some of us sincerely believe that if we are to help people, particularly the oppressed, we need to manage their affairs for them. But it doesn't matter how we try to rationalise it, controlling others always empowers us and disempowers those we seek to help. The only way people can be helped, particularly the oppressed, is for them to be empowered to take control over their own lives. This is why Christ explicitly forbade his followers taking control over others, no matter how dire the circumstances. Their job was not to seek control, but to enable others to take control over their own lives. (Matthew 20:25-28) It is a pity that many of us who claim to follow Christ have not followed his advice and disobeyed ecclesial and civil authorities who have asked us to do otherwise. We could have been saved the crusades and the inquisition.

"Nonviolence And Self-Control."

Gal5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³nonviolence and self-control. Against such things there is no law."



Note: It is a great irony to me that the greatest example we have in modern times of someone who did act on Christ's advice, did not claim to be a Christian. We need a lot more people who will experiment with the nonviolent revolution of swaraj or self-rule, like Gandhi.

It's interesting to note that Christ and his disciples used organic images to describe how the 'power of the Spirit' - the secret of swaraj or

self-rule - actually operates in our lives. Self-management is described as the 'fruit of the Spirit'. (Galatians 5:22) The capacity to manage ourselves develops quite unobtrusively - indeed, as quietly as fruit growing on a tree. The capacity to manage ourselves may develop unobtrusively, but is far more significant than we might ordinarily imagine. Like a minute seed, so small we can scarcely see it, that seems like it could never amount to anything great, the 'power of the Spirit' seems embarrassingly insignificant to begin with, yet grows into a capacity that is of

tremendous significance in the end. (Matthew 13:31–32) The capacity to control our own lives does not develop without opposition, but like a plant growing in the midst of weeds, ‘the power of the Spirit’ grows strong in an environment that could easily destroy it. (Matthew 13:24–30) How the seeds of transformation, that bear the ‘fruit of the Spirit’, grow in a community always was, and always will be, a mystery. (Mark 4:26–29) However, it is no secret that the seeds of transformation that bear the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ will not grow in a community if those of us, whose lives constitute those seeds, do not bury ourselves in the life of our community. ‘Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies it produces nothing, but if it dies it will produce much fruit, that brings much life to others.’ (John 12:24)

“We must obey God rather than mere mortals!”

Acts 4:18 “Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, ‘Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.’”

Acts 5:29 “Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than mere mortals!’”

Note: Peter and John wanted to cooperate with the authorities. But on occasion they felt they simply could not, in good conscience, comply with what the authorities were asking them to do. They felt morally obliged to obey God, rather than mere mortals.

“The things that are not nullify the things that are!”

1 Cor.1:26 “Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸He chose the lowly things of this world --and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are,”

Note: Before he was converted, during his days as a Pharisee, the Apostle Paul -known as Saul - was certainly well-known as a staunch arch-conservative, who would vigorously resist any radical change to his religious tradition.

In Philippians (3:5-6) Paul said that he was ‘circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless: as for zeal, persecuting (anyone who tried to bring radical change in the name of Jesus).’

In fact, the first time we meet Paul in the Bible, he is supervising the stoning of the Stephen (Acts 8:1) - whom the apostles saw as a ‘gracious’ man, ‘full of the Holy Spirit’, (6: 5) - but whom Saul, the ‘Pharisee’, saw as a dangerous ‘blasphemer’ who needed to be publicly executed as soon as possible (6:11).

However, on the Road to Damascus, Paul was personally confronted by the ‘once- dead-now-risen’ revolutionary Jesus, who pointed out to him that to oppress people working for Christ-like change was to oppress Christ himself.

‘As he neared Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. (Acts 9:3-5)

And for Saul, that realization meant that everything had to change! So he and his friends took their whole world to task, and set out to reshape it, bit-by-bit, according to the upside-down inside-out values of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. To the great consternation of the key stakeholders in the status quo, Paul and his co-conspirators were ‘able to do immeasurably more’ than one might have imagined they would have (Eph 3:20). They chose the “things that are not” - to nullify “the things that are” (1 Cor. 1:26-28). And time and time again they helped ‘foolish’ people confuse the ‘wise’ and ‘weak’ people confound the ‘strong’ (1 Cor. 1:26) in their quest to develop radically inclusive and egalitarian communities of faith in the midst of an established religious tradition which had previously disenfranchised them. They succeeded to such an extent that one horrified observer is recorded as saying - ‘these people have turned the whole world upside down!’ (Acts 17:6)

Emerging Themes

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

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.

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.

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.

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

>> *Continued on Page 16*



Te Whiti o Rongomai, Parihaka, and the shining example of non-violent resistance

by Kay Benseman

TE WHITI-O-RONGOMAI (c. 1830–1907).

Te Whiti-o-Rongomai, the son of a Te Aati Awa chief, initiated a landmark protest against the British militia in 1879. His campaign against the corrupt land confiscation policies of the New Zealand settler government was visionary and unprecedented amongst the Maaori warrior tribes who had fought British mercenary troops in desperate defence of their lands throughout the Land Wars.

Te Whiti was born 'Erueti', at Ngamotu, Taranaki – the region on the western coastline of the North Island that surrounds the majestic Mount Taranaki. Te Whiti was later educated at a mission school, where he diligently learnt Scripture. Despite the wars raging across the country, he lived peacefully, on the coast near Parihaka until 1865, when British troops burned his village. In spite of this provocation Te Whiti refused to take up arms, but in the following year moved his settlement inland to Parihaka. Earlier, in 1863, the New Zealand Settlements Act had authorised the confiscation of any land where Maaori were considered to be in rebellion, the Government then took 3 million acres of land, mostly in Taranaki and Waikato. In contrast to the battles all over Taranaki at this time, Te Whiti would not allow his people to fight. He preached a doctrine of peace, based on Old Testament teachings and influenced by the indigenous religious 'Hauhau' movement. Te Whiti argued that, as direct negotiation and rebellion had failed, Maaori should meet further encroachments peacefully, by 'civil disobedience', and by passive obstruction. He said, 'Though some, in darkness of heart, seeing their land ravished, might wish to take arms and kill the aggressors, I say it must not be. Let not the Paakehaas (sic) think to succeed by reason of their guns... I want not war, but they do. The flashes of their guns have singed our eyelashes, and yet they say they do not want war...'

By the mid 1860s the Government was under pressure to provide quality farming land for European settlers already in transit on ships to New Zealand. In 1879, when the Government surveyors began work on the confiscated land, Te Whiti launched his campaign of direct action, beginning with ploughing up settler roads and pastures that were on their confiscated land. The men and women of Parihaka were trained in non-violence and passive resistance and set about methodically removing the survey pegs on their land, building houses across new roads and demonstrating their ownership by feeding the British soldiers bread and kumara. During that period of non-violent unrest, hundreds of Maaori were arrested and kept in prison without trial. Parihaka became a stronghold of Maaori opposition to the

loss of tribal lands. This was becoming an 'embarrassment' to the might of the Military leaders who knew that "If Te Whiti takes up arms it will take a very short time to deal with Te Whiti. He is much more troublesome to us as a prophet than he ever would be if he took down his firelock and used it on the settlers."

The conflicts between the people of Parihaka and the settler-backed government came to a head in 1881 when at dawn on the 5th of November, the peaceful village was invaded by 1,500 settler volunteers and members of the Armed Constabulary. These soldiers were welcomed by the waiting 2,000 people of Parihaka, including the children who came out skipping. The leaders of Parihaka along with hundreds of their people were arrested and then imprisoned in the South Island, many in freezing cold caves where they died from exposure, disease and malnutrition. The destruction of Parihaka began immediately, the army destroyed the houses, crops and livestock. Women and girls were raped leading to an outbreak of syphilis in the community. Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and Toku Kaakahi were returned to their people after three years imprisonment, where they rebuilt the community. Te Whiti died at Parihaka on 18 November 1907. The Treaty claims for this land confiscation are yet to be resolved but even that can't suppress the wairua of Parihaka which is now celebrated in their annual Peace Festival in January, read more at <http://www.parihaka.com/Festival/2008/Festival.aspx>, then see you there next year! X



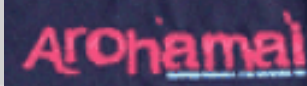
Official site: www.parihaka.com

Petition

There is currently petition underway to get Parihaka Day formally recognised by the government. Watch out for it. If you would like to collect signatures for this please contact: spchristiananarchy@gmail.com and we can pass your details on.

"Arohamai" Tee-shirts

Which have been developed in consultation with Parihaka available from: www.emmaus-road.org.nz/attachmentfiles/parihakateeshirts.pdf



Some rapid reflection on the day of action at the Bank of England

by Ciaran O'Reilly (written 8 April 2009)

On April 1st I turned up at Liverpool St. tube station to hook up with folks and a horseman of the apocalypse to head for the Bank of England. Three other apocalyptic horseman, with accompaniment, would be converging from other starting points to converge on the Bank of England.

It had been nearly 10 years ago, pre-Seattle, that I had gathered with 20,000 folks at this tube station for June 18th, 1999 - a kind of kickstarting of the anti-capitalist movement in the first world.

I guess I was looking to see if this movement still existed since the Bob and Bono NGO hijacking at Gleneagles 2005. At 11 a.m. gathering time there was little evidence that it still did - but hey punctuality was never a strong point!

At Liverpool St. station this fine April Day the media and cop contingents appeared to have numerical parity or supremacy over the committed and curious. I didn't like our chances of taking to the street let alone getting to the Bank of England. The media hype leading up to the G20 in London was designed to scare people off the streets in this period of economic and environmental collapse. Anyone who surfaced was displaying great courage. At Genoa '01 it had become obvious that they were willing to kill this movement. There are pockets in this society where they can get away with killing you....jail is one and the mainstream media had made these summit protests another.

But take to the streets we did and our numbers seemed to grow as we made our way. As we got closer to the Bank of England I suspected that we would be held prisoner for the day like May Day 01 in London...a tactic the police call "kettling". I value my liberty but I thought it was worth giving it up for 5-15 hours to make a statement against the G20 and capitalism.

The crowd's arrival at the Bank of England was quite euphoric and the creativity of folks was very impressive. Sound systems and artists kept morale up, statements of truth were written on bank walls and a guy (working with no net!) leveraged himself between pillar and bank to scale up and hang a banner. The dulcet tones of Billy Bragg could be heard emerging singing the Internationale and the Diggers song.

An hour and half in people began to realise they had been taken prisoner by the cops. Cop lines would not allow anyone to leave. I figured that cop priority was to keep dissidents away from the G20 world government leaders so they had ceded this symbolic territory for the day, written off the area around the Bank of England. It felt like a big sit-in and given our lack of resources an achievement - when the media/manufacturers of consent and security forces of the state are so heavily budgeted.

I tried a bit of street speaking but mostly had chats with folks. Had a good chat with some black bloc kids (I didn't see any older ones). The Royal Bank of Scotland left unguarded and unboarded up had provided the photo op the tabloids were looking for to justify \$10 million of security expenditure, fur-



ther erosion of civil rights and the media hysteria.

The cop kettle was unpassable but not that tight around us, crowd density from 11am-4pm was like a festival - I was content to do my time. For others, the first duty of being a prisoner is to escape. And at 4.30 pm the cops retreated down one road and for a time one could leave through a shopping arcade that came out behind another police line. Tired and dehydrated I took the opportunity. Most people did after five hours of incarceration.

At some point after I left the cop kettle got tighter around those who remained and the cops more aggressive. On my walk back past Liverpool St. tube station I dropped into the Climate Camp which had established a base with scores of tents. The vibe was very fluffy and I assumed the cops were happy to keep them there away from the G20 at the east London Excel centre.

Wrong again by 7 pm as Ian Tomlinson was being killed on his way home from work the Climate Camp was leveled thus...

I always thought these gatherings were valuable as an exhale of a movement, that the inhale was the daily grind of grassroots activism. This morning as we were concluding the London CW community meeting the phone rang. An anarchist activist homeless/housing group were alerting us to the eviction of a Turkish family in a tower block around the corner. The four of us ran around (first in circles) and found the right tower block, we joined the one activist advocate and a relative of the family as the cops had broken into the unit. As time went by another 8 cops and 8 activists arrived on the scene - these young people knew their stuff in terms of housing law and it appears the cops were acting quite illegally. So beyond the co-option and state

The Subversive Spirituality Of Christi-Anarchy:

...Continued From Page 12

The Code Of Conduct

The code of conduct, laid down by Gandhi in 1930, included the following requirements:

Never harbor any anger, but suffer the anger of an opponent.

Do not submit to an order given in anger, even if threatened.

Refuse to return assaults.

Refrain from insults.

Protect opponents from insult or attack, even at the risk of life.

Do not resist arrest.

If taken prisoner, behave in an exemplary manner.⁵

The Rules Of Engagement

The rules of engagement - outlined by Gandhi - were elaborated by Bose, as follows:

There must be self-reliance at all times. Outside help may be used in the engagement, but not as a substitute for personal responsibility.

Engagement should be proactive, not reactive. Constantly monitoring the engagement to make sure that the actions are always constructive.

Education of the public, the participants, and the opponent, in the art of constructive action are an integral part of the process of engagement.

Any demands for changes that are made, must be reasonable requests.

Not the maximum, but the minimum demands, consistent with the truth.

The opponent should not be expected to make any more changes than the participants are prepared to make in the resolution of their conflict.

If the opponent is unwilling to change, participants should be willing to move slowly, but surely, into the successive stages of a campaign.

There should be a persistent search to find a peaceful settlement at every stage of the campaign - to destroy the enmity - not the enemy.

In working out a settlement, participants need to cooperate with their opponents as much as they can, without compromising their principles.⁶

The Stages Of A Campaign

The stages of a campaign - developed by Gandhi - are listed by Shridharani:

Negotiation. Every effort must be made to redress a grievance, or resolve a conflict through the established channels for mediation and arbitration.

Preparation. If mediation and arbitration fails, then participants need to prepare themselves, through prayer -and fasting - to take direct action.

Agitation. Direct action takes many forms - from meetings to marches - but all of the many forms of direct action need to be strictly nonviolent.

Presentation. If there is no response, the opponent should be presented with a serious proposal; and an ultimatum, if no response is forthcoming.

Demonstration. The participants need to demonstrate their commitment to the cause, where appropriate, by public boycotts and general strikes.

Non-cooperation. Depending upon the issues involved, non-cooperation might involve either nonpayment of taxes - or noncompliance with a law.

Civil Disobedience. Noncompliance with a law involves civil disobedience. Laws should only be disobeyed if central to, or symbolic of, the grievance.

Parallel Governance. If the grievances are still not addressed, then the participants should assume responsibility to deal with them themselves.⁷

It seems to me, that no-one has ever enunciated a more Christ-like set of principles for conducting a campaign of non-violent resistance to political oppression than Gandhi did when he laid out his 'code of conduct', 'rules for engagement', and 'stages of a campaign'. And we would be well advised as Christians, to follow the lead of our Hindu guide in this regard, if we would want to follow in the footsteps of Christ. X



^ Pretty sure this is not what he had in mind.

Footnotes:

1 Mark Strom, *Reframing Paul* p183 (Endnotes); Parker Palmer *The Courage To Teach* p180; Gandhi, M. *The Message Of Jesus*.; Bharitya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1971 (Foreword)

2 *Ibid.*, 7

3 *Ibid.*, 7

4 M.Gandhi *The Science Of Satyagraha* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1970 p129

5 D.Tendulkar *Mahatma Vol.III* Jhaveri and Tendulkar, Bombay, 1952 p17

6 N. Bose *Studies in Gandhism* Indian Associated Publishing Calcutta, 1947 p175

7 K.Shridharani *War Without Violence* Harcourt, Brace New York, 1939 pp5-42

Film Reviews

Grow Your Own



Starring Benedict Wong, Eddie Marsan, Philip Jackson, Omid Djalili, Diveen Henry, John Henshaw, Olivia Colman. Directed by Richard Laxton. Written by Frank Cottrell Boyce, Carl Hunter 1hr 37mins | [PG] | UK

The guy in the DVD shop who rented me this said that a lot of people had brought it back disappointed - they thought it was an instructional video for DIY marijuana cultivation.

It's actually a mild mannered British comedy/drama (more drama than comedy) about an English community that is not amused when a family of immigrants is allotted a plot of land on which to grow their own vegetables. These allotments consist of a tiny patch of land with a small shed and room for growing some vegetables.

The plot and characters are not the greatest - but there are some familiar challenges for anyone who has been involved in neighbourhood organising. Perennial themes of unity in diversity, class conflict (between residents and the telecommunications corporation who want to plant a cellphone tower in a plot) and inter-generational and inter-cultural relationships all contribute to making this a worthwhile watch... unless you just want a DIY on grass-growing. -MC

Book Review

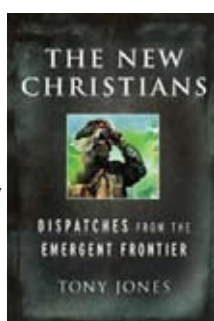
'The New Christians' by Tony Jones

I met Tony Jones when he was in Brisbane in 2008 and was inspired by the way he spoke about the rise of the emergent church, and how that fits in to mainstream Christianity as well as the rest of society. So I got a hold of his new book, and read it over a few days.

According to Jones, emergent Christianity "is an effort by a particular people in a particular time and place to respond to the gospel as it (once again) breaks through the age-old crusts".

Unlike some books on emergent Christianity, which can read like misspelled tracts from unhinged street evangelists, 'The New Christians' is different for two reasons. Firstly, it respects its audience's intelligence (unusual for American religious books) by providing an unapologetically cerebral look at emergent church theology. While intellectual accounts of spirituality can sometimes be dry and as boring as my old Lutheran high school, Jones manages to make it extremely engaging.

Secondly, instead of trying to create more hype about alternative theology, or recruit me, Jones's book turns inwards to analyse what is already happening, why it is happening, and what could happen in the future. It reads more like a sociological investigation than a book about churches. Important questions are asked, such as 'why



The Real Dirt on Farmer John

Starring John Peterson, Anna Nielsen, John Edwards, Lester Peterson (archival footage). Directed by Taggart Siegel 1hr 12mins | [M] | USA

I lived on a small farm for most of my teenage years. I remember when we moved onto the farm in the early eighties we had to live in a caravan because the interest rate on my parents massive overdraft had just hit 24% and they couldn't afford anything else. Much of this film charts the struggle of one independent farmer against both the onslaught of multinational agribusiness and the narrow-mindedness of small rural communities.

Set in the tiny town of Caledonia, Illinois, about 75 miles west of Chicago, The Real Dirt On Farmer John tells the story of one man, his farm and his family. But Farmer John is not your average mid-west farmer. As a performance artist, writer and farmer, John Peterson has been known to ditch his overalls for latex tights, heels and a tutu.

Farmer John Peterson turned his enterprise into an organic cooperative called Angelic Organics. He was soon invited to become a community supported agriculture (CSA) farmer: "I realised that my whole life had been about community—enabling people, bringing -MC



are most people who are attracted to emergent Christian theology, middle class and highly educated? And 'how can the emergent church movement protect itself from being commodified?'

Unfortunately for New Zealand and Australian readers the book is focused on the current situation in North America. While there are differences with alternative theology movements in the southern hemisphere, there is still a lot of valuable information in 'The New Christians,' even if you just understand the American part of what may be a global theological movement.

Meanwhile the mix of interviews with key players in the emergent church movement, his own fluid writing, and the pretty layout make the book easy to read. Jones is not afraid to make people think, and that's why you should get a copy of his book.

- Fiona Murray

Fiona has been known to lurk in christian communities in Brisbane, the UK and New Zealand (mainly as procrastination from finishing her social work degree) but currently lives a semi-reclusive lifestyle in Melbourne which is far more comfortable.

Tony's website is: www.tonyj.net



More Books: Theological Writings on Anarchism

from an Annotaed Bibliography of Anarchist Writings prepared by **Michael Elliott** for 'Education for Social Change' Seminars, Christian Action on Poverty, New Zealand, Used by CO-OPTED with permission.

Berdyaev, Nicolas: *Slavery and Freedom*, London, **Geoffrey Bles, 1953**

Influenced by both Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Berdyaev claimed to be a philosopher rather than a theologian. All his explorations however, are carried out within a theological context. In this work he concludes that master and slave, ruler and subject, oppressor and oppressed are victims of the same spiritual affliction. The essential contradiction of human existence is that has an immense drive towards freedom and a deep love of slavery. A personalist and an existentialist, Berdyaev declared that "only the free man is a personality and he is that even if the whole world would wish to enslave him".

Other works of Berdyaev worth consulting on anarchist themes are *The Realm of Spirit and the Realm of Caesar*, *Solitude and Society and Philosophy of the Free Spirit* (translated into English as *Freedom and the Spirit*)

Eller, Vernard: *Christian Anarchy: Jesus' Primacy Over the Powers*, Grand Rapids, **Eerdmans, 1987**

Hailed as "one of the most refreshing and important contributions to Christian political and social thought in the last twenty years", Eller's work draws on his Anabaptist/Brethren tradition and introduces the Greek term *arky* which in St Paul's writings is translated "principalities". The anarchist is the person who is "not" "arky", and in the case of a Christian cannot be subject to any arky other than Jesus who is THE ARKY. The book is valuable for its excellent discussion of the theological writing of Karl Barth and its relationship to anarchist perceptions, but in that it argues for a form of spiritual anarchy which is "submissive" and not carried forward into practical action, many Christian anarchists regard it as ultimately mischievous.

Elliott, Michael: *Freedom, Justice and Christian Counter-Culture*, London, **SCM Press, 1990**.

My book takes the view that it is the task of both the Christian and the Church to promote the counter-culture of the values of the Kingdom of God as a critique of whatever dominant consciousness finds expression in the modern state. Having outlined a new way of reading scripture and the critiques churches have developed of both capitalist and socialist modes of organisation, I argue that in the basic ethical concepts of scripture and in the ministerial practice of Jesus, we are provided with models of anarchist thought and behaviour.

Ellul, Jacques: *Anarchy and Christianity*, Grand Rapids, **Eerdmans, 1991**

This short and readable book presents one of the best contemporary cases for Christian anarchism. Ellul, formerly a professor of law and the sociology and history of institutions at the University of Bordeaux has written more than forty works, many of them libertarian classics. In this book he looks at anarchy from a Christian standpoint, and then goes on to explore through selected books and passages, the Bible as a source of anarchy.

Tolstoy, Leo: *The Kingdom of God is Within You and Peace Essays*, London, **Oxford University Press, 1935 (republished in a new translation by University of Nebraska Press, 1984)**

Tolstoy (1828-1910) is the most famous advocate of Christian anarchism. Against the justification of violence by Propaganda of the Deed anarchists, he insisted that the Christian doctrine of non-resistance to violence, abandoned by the Church at large, provides the only basis for achieving peaceful social change.

Government is Violence, ed **David Stephens**, London, **Phoenix Press, 1990**.

This collection of essays on anarchism and pacifism provides an accessible introduction to Tolstoy's thought. In addition to extracts from major works like *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, key essays such as *Thou Shalt not Kill* which specifically addresses the issue of anarchist violence are included. "I am such an anarchist", Tolstoy maintained, "as Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount have made me".

Also

Andrews, D. *'Christianarchy: Discovering a Radical Spirituality of Compassion'*, Lion, 1999

'This isn't just another undressing religiosity from the idea of following Jesus but Andrews states Christianity must be thrown out. His uncovering of the brutality and violence of Christianity's histories is concise and easy to read and his deconstruction of ideological underpinning of Christianity is challenging. This book will be hated by the religious and the status quo and written off, if not burned. But for those who earnestly seek a holistic spirituality of peace; it will become a close friend. It returns the figure of Jesus to the marginalised and to the oppressed from the clutches of those who would use the symbols for control and oppression. Read it... I dare you.' - Jarrod McKenna

Tripp York "*Living on Hope while Living in Babylon: The Christian Anarchists of the 20th Century*", 2009

"Though Christendom has come to an end, it appears that old habits die hard. Jesus promised his followers neither safety nor affluence, but rather that those who come after him should expect persecution. Christian discipleship and tribal nationalism, however, despite any legal separation of church and state, continue to be co-opted into the nation-state project of prosperity and security. This co-option has made it difficult for the church to recognize her task to be a prophetic witness both for and against the state."

Web

<http://www.kingdomnow.org/books.html>

Some links to key online books by author such as: Jacques Ellul, Ernest Crosby Vernard Eller, Walter Wink, Leo Tolstoy and John Howard Yoder. The site is a bit of a magenta overload, and bit Christian cring, but if you can get past that there is some great resources.

<http://propheticheretic.wordpress.com/>

A Christ-anarchy political site. From my brief look at it, it seems very current, maybe a bit intellectual. Links and blogs to many a good sources, much nicer nice site too, you can feel normal again surfing this site. Excerpt:

"The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, Instead, it will be analyzed, and sold back to the ones who start it. And the rest of the world can watch via podcast."

Child Poverty is a Problem in New Zealand: Why aren't we more concerned about this?

185,000 – Children in some degree of hardship

150,000 – Children in severe or significant hardship

That's 26% of children in New Zealand living in severe or significant hardship. And it's getting worse:

-Despite the better economy, between 2000 and 2004 the proportion of all children in severe or significant hardship increased by a third, to 26%

- The costs of essentials such as housing and food are rising rapidly and there has been a sharp increase in people accessing food banks in Christchurch.

- New Zealand has one of the fastest growing equity gaps – the rich are still getting richer and the poor poorer.

- In 2001 NZ ranked near the bottom of the rich nation's index measuring infant mortality, children's health and safety and teenage pregnancy.

- In some areas we have high rates of preventable third world diseases, they include, rheumatic fever, pneumonia, and chronic lung infection (bronchiectasis).

For a generation of poor children, the damage which poverty inflicts on their health and development will often last a lifetime. More of our infants die than in many other similar countries and our ranking in the world has fallen over the last three decades.

Research shows that the strongest determinant of future life success, is the first years of life lived in poverty. Poverty is part of a cycle that affects every aspect of a child's life and opportunities to succeed. Child poverty has implications for many social issues, such as crime, truancy, education and health. The government says a universal benefit for children is too expensive. Except the effects of poverty costs society (everyone) so much more, further down the line.

For example, a child ends up in hospital with preventable pneumonia: The child is stressed out and has poor nutrition; the house is damp and over crowded and the parents couldn't afford to take the child to the GP until it was too late. For this child, living in damp overcrowded housing means, they are more likely to have ongoing health problems. This will affect their schooling and long-term educational attainment, a strong determinant of life success.

And we already know many of the answers to child poverty. It is not rocket science. For example, when houses were retro-insulated in parts of south Auckland the incidence of respiratory illness in children went down by approximately 80%.

Should we blame the individual or societal/structural problems such as poverty on many of the issues in our society today?

Of course, the roots of many social problems, are both. On an individual level, we cannot ignore individual responsibility, everyone needs to be challenged, encouraged and inspired to

be responsible for their own lives and that of their families. But they also need a wider environment that supports this, if they are to succeed.

What can we do?

Help encourage people to see the next election as more than just one about tax cuts, or the price of petrol...

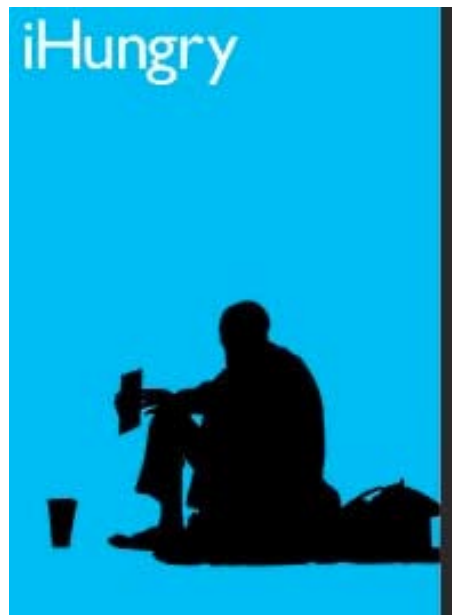
Older person's advocacy groups have been successful for many years in advocating for no reduction in universal entitlements for the elderly. Meanwhile, the elderly poverty rate, while still a very important issue, is a lot lower. But children can't vote.

Lets challenge all parties to come up with substantive policies to address poverty in New Zealand.

Such as:

Extending Working for Families Package to children whose parents do not work, or do not work enough hours (under 30 per week).

And, more resourcing for support for child needs across a range of areas such as health, education and early child intervention.



How can we influence the dialogue?

Spread the word through your networks, and mobilise the masses...

Find out more about child poverty in your community - talk to social service agencies and school teachers about the trends they see and what they think the most effective ways to address the issues are. Read local research reports and official Census/Statistics figures for your community. Organise residents research projects.

Get alongside a family that is struggling and see what kind of support they need. Maybe they just need somewhere safe and fun for the kids to go occasionally, maybe they have a useless landlord or an uncooperative WINZ case manager, maybe they need a job with better working conditions...

Read and make submissions your local authorities long-term and annual plans - what, if anything, are your Council and District Health Board doing to reduce inequalities in your community?

Email your MP or political parties – remember one letter to an MP is calculated as the equivalent of 10,000 voices – they care about what you the voter think! Tell them you want greater priority given to the needs of families and why. Suggest they promote effective measures for the relief of families on low incomes. Make sure you tell them you are a member of their electorate (if you are).

Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or publication. Politicians pay attention to emails they get, but they monitor news coverage closely as well.

Support the work of the Child Poverty Action Group (www.cpag.org.nz) who make reports to the government and United Nations on the NZ government's responsiveness to child poverty issues in Aotearoa/NZ. X

Greetings From Perth at Peace Tree Community.



Greetings especially from Teresa and Amy who were lucky enough to catch up with everyone at the hui in Akaroa 2008.

What have we been up to? Well, the big news is that Teresa and Jarrod are getting married on January the 1st in our own Lockridge community Garden! We are happy to welcome them and their son Tyson as the first instant family in Peace Tree. We're getting ready to fire up the pizza oven in the garden for that feast.

Amy and Josh are making plans to work in East Timor next year, doing English teaching, clinics, permaculture, peace-making, tree-planting, coffee drinking and whatever else we get thrown into. The long term idea or dream is to build a relationship with coffee growers and import their goods for a fair price and sell it in a local café that may exist in the (distant) future. They are thinking of going around the world after that to visit family and check out the Catholic worker movement a bit more closely and maybe a trip to New Zealand to catch up with the lovely folk over there!

Amy's claim to fame this year was being asked "were you on a Hack (alternative radio current affairs program) interview about Christian anarchists?" from someone she'd never met before!

Harry and Bonnie are looking at furthering their permaculture studies and small business work next year and hopefully they will make it to the next meeting with Geoff in Melbourne, road trip style!

Apart from that, a lot of dumpstering (we catered a wedding!), community work and the daily life grind...trying to stay afloat with our crazy anarchist ideas in our crazy culture. A few of us are hoping to get to the Anabaptist conference in Melbourne in January too- we see strong links to "christianarchy" there.

We love hearing about what everyone is up to and we welcome guests anytime so feel free to drop us a line or just turn up! We are in the process of (reluctantly) putting up a website so we can be contacted more easily.

Not 'thee' website but 'a' with further info: <http://msainfo.org/articles/peace-tree-community>



^ "Gee I feel safer with these guys around..."

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 dumpter kai by Russell and crew.



2009 **When:** 6:00pm Start – Thursday 6th of August, 2009 to 12pm Sunday the 9th of August, 2009

Where: The CAVE, (Ascot Vale Church of Christ). 78 St Leonard's Rd 3032, Ascot Vale, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

Accommodation: Everyone is encouraged to sleep onsite at the CAVE marae-style, as we have a big hall. Alternatively, arrangements can be made for billeting if required.

Cost/koha: No more than \$30. For those travelling from overseas, payment is not necessary.

Theme: This gathering is centred around the call of Christ within the Christian Anarchist tradition. The spaces created in this gathering time will involve robust discussion times, creative non-violent action, workshops and creative living/worship within this tradition. Participants at this gathering are encouraged to bring something with them to share with the whole group; thoughts, ideas, books or just yourself. People are welcome of all faiths, shapes and sizes to come - from all understandings of the Christian Anarchist tradition to share and discover something new.

If you would like to come, want more info or have any ideas about the content of this gathering please email spca.gathering@gmail.com. Or call Philip Yew (in Melbourne) on + 61 414321451

