

SERVANTS QUARTERS

SPIRITUALITY & ACTIVISM ISSUE // www.servantsasia.org // JULY 2015



Servants is an international network of Christian communities living and working in the slums of Asia and the West, participating with the poor to bring hope and justice through Jesus Christ.

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand and comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

And the Blessing of God, who Creates, Redeems and Sanctifies, be upon you and all you love and pray for this day and forever more.

- A Franciscan Benediction

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THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Spirituality & Activism Issue

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from the **Editor**

At times I feel like a pendulum.

During some points in my life I've wanted nothing but action: I want to do something about the injustices I see in the world around me, I want to live amongst the poor, I want to work tirelessly for just causes.

At other moments, my quiet, thoughtful side chooses to take over: I'd rather read, ask questions, wrestle with thoughts, pray, and write for no audience in particular.

It can be difficult to strike a balance.

In this issue of Servants Quarters you will read about peoples' journeys with this tension between spirituality and activism. You will hear stories of people who don't just want to talk about life in the slums, but enter them. You will hear about people who don't just

speak about their passion for the environment, but go to jail for it. You will see struggles and prayers for wisdom on how to move forward.

At Servants, we try to walk this line between spirituality and activism, holding them both as equally important. This isn't always straight forward, however, and as a team we often have to pull our strengths together to encourage each other in areas where we might fall short.

In humility, I admit that I have no answers for how to strike a perfect balance between spirituality and activism in our daily lives. But as you read through these pages, my hope is that you are inspired by the stories of others working through this struggle too. May you find opportunities for growth in your own life and may you feel encouraged in the truth that you are not alone on this journey.

With peace,

Alyse Kotyk
Editor, Servants Quarters



CONTEMPLATIVES — in Action —

by Paul Hing-Mather

“We need a spirituality which affirms and guides our efforts to act in ways that resonate with our innermost being and reality, ways that embody the vitalities God gave us at birth, ways that serve the great works of justice, peace, and love.” (Parker Palmer)

I used to think that Christians (in terms of preferred spirituality) tended to be either ones who waited, listened and worshipped (contemplatives) or ones who got on and worked for change in the world (activists). Servants’ journey over the last 30 years has been one of bringing these preferences together into what we might call a spirituality of “contemplation in action.” We are invited to see God (contemplation) as we work with God (action) and hopefully the two parts integrate such that we work with God as we see and hear God.

These days, our community seeks to bring these two things into play in a variety of ways, from praying together regularly, caring for children, marching for peace, taking time to soak in nature, and creating space to share stories of hope and

struggle with friends and neighbours. Each of these are acts of contemplation, as well as of action. A few weekends ago, we were involved in something rather novel. The council had threatened to remove all blackberry bushes from a local park area. We spoke against it as a protest against lack of consultation and to encourage the act of food foraging. They listened and the result was a blackberry festival which over 100 locals attended and where we celebrated together the often underappreciated fruits available in our locale, and where people connected and plotted further collaborative actions. How is this activism you might ask? We have a huge problem with unhealthy eating, we are overtaken by the blight of consumerism, and to top that, most people still are unconnected, feel they don’t belong and don’t have a voice.

Activism merely seeks to bring redress in areas such as the above where God longs for His kingdom to be revealed and grow. We need to understand these things as injustice, they are values and lifestyle options being deliberately encouraged by society at large, and we are called to understand the issues well (contemplation) and so act on them to bring about conformity to God’s heart and purposes (activism).

Let’s keep praying, and acting out our prayers. //

Paul, Wendy and family lived in Manila with Servants through the 1990s, and over the last 9 years have been living in a missional community of 12 adults and countless children in a large social housing neighbourhood with Urban Vision. Their 4 children have nearly all left home and they now care full-time for 3 younger ones. They try and keep themselves sane, healthy and “alive” through regular communal prayer, lots of deep reflecting and walks in the hills.



KEEP YOUR FIST *from* **Clenching**

by GRACE

When I think about the word, “activism” a song my brother wrote comes to mind. He penned the words and music while traveling in the Middle East, inspired by their group’s tour guide Angela:

Angela says: An activist is somebody who does something about things, instead of just waiting for somebody else to. I’d love to be an activist, but it’s hard to keep your fist from clenching.

And how do you keep your head held high, when the tears that you cry aren’t thirst quenching?

Angela says: Being pessimistic closes doors in your head. I’d love to be an optimist, but it’s hard to keep your fist from clenching,

And how do you keep your head held high, when the tears that you cry aren’t thirst quenching?

I know that God is bigger than this,
But sometimes I feel like He is three-years-old playing in some sandbox,
Knocking over other little kids’ blocks.

Listen to the song and others at www.lightninglucas.com

By Angela’s definition of “activist,” I suppose I could be called one. Doing something about things instead of just waiting for others to. By this definition, in my short 26 years of life I have been an activist for a variety of different “causes.” The activism has ranged from recycling-awareness in my

kindergarten class, AIDS orphans in college, to trying to stop eviction and demolition in our old slum community (unsuccessfully), and fighting tuberculosis in our new slum. These days, with my thirteen-month-old son Jeremi in tow everywhere I go, I have become quite the pro-gentle birth and breastfeeding activist.

Sometimes it feels like a very lonely road, this “doing something” instead of just waiting around. And as my brother questions, how can you keep your head held high when the tears that you cry aren’t thirst quenching? The tears that our team cried three years ago for our neighborhood eviction. The tears that we cry for our neighbours, stuck in cycles of poverty and addiction. The tears that we cried two months ago when our student Fajar died of an undiagnosed and untreated fever. Tears for families suffering from TB. The tears of frustration at seeing moms force-feed week old babies and using sweetened condensed milk in bottles to “supplement” their milk supply. It seems like there are a lot of tears on this activism road.

How do I keep my fist from clenching? How do I choose daily to receive grace from God and to offer that grace to others? My son Jeremi has helped me with this, in my first year of motherhood. Challenging me beyond my wildest expectations: exhaustion, joy, frustration, love, fears, peace, questions, and grace all mixed up in becoming a parent. I have realized that I do not have it all together – and most of my “activism” projects have been stored until further notice (except for my work with pregnant women and advocacy for gentle-birth and breastfeeding)! Right now I am learning to open my hands, to let go of supposed control, to acknowledge that God is God and I am not. And God assures me that the tears that we cry are not lost in the sight of God—that God weeps, too, for our broken world. //

Grace lives with her husband Yugo and son Jeremi in Indonesia. She has been with Servants for five years, but often still feels like a beginner in this journey of following Jesus amongst the poor. She enjoys playing Dutch Blitz, baking bread, and writing – although these days Jeremi takes up most of her time.



Aceh, Spirituality *and* Activism

by Rob Bellingham

The theme of this issue, “spirituality and activism,” is another way of describing the relationship between “being and doing.” Post-tsunami Aceh, Indonesia amplified this tension.

The devastation was described as “the world’s worst disaster” and was on such a massive scale that all approaches to relief and rehabilitation were used just over and some restraint. Secondly, while Servants home teams and a month after the disaster, a volunteer group of five medics and I landed from New Zealand. The most urgent action was to stop the spread of disease, provide dignity for the dead and show respect for their families. The official relief phase of 3 months was a time of action, providing the basics of food, shelter and medical assistance. We joined a consortium of Christian agencies in doing this. But Aceh made us ask questions and led to reflection which stretched our spiritual resources.

In responding over the next 3 years, we faced two constraints. Firstly Aceh was called “the verandah of Mecca” and as the westernmost tip of the world’s largest Muslim nation, was very conservative. It had also been locked into civil war for 30 years since Indonesian independence. Expressing our spirituality required sensitivity and some restraint. Secondly, while Servants home teams and TEAR Fund were generous and willing donors, we felt more like Peter and John on the temple steps saying “silver and gold have we none” and were happy not to be a big agency building houses and boats, schools and bridges. Rather we became community development facilitators along a 30 km coastal strip west of the capital Banda Aceh. Our presence was as important as our actions.

At first, we were city-based as were most agencies, but then relocated to the target area in an application of the incarnation principle. Dedy Prasetyo, the program leader was a brilliant community networker and had experience with street kids in Java. Maybe the most important question we asked, a year after the boxing day 2004 catastrophe, was “what

would most lift the ‘esprit de corps’ of this community?” The result was a soccer competition involving all the communities with 16 teams and 300 supporters swelling to 3000 by the time the final was played – it was a mini World Cup.

At another village, water was supplied to a mosque as well as a school, and the nearly 100% participation of the able bodied youth and men digging trenches was an example of spirituality transcending creed, as Christians and Muslims worked alongside each other. Both God and neighbour were honoured. In the era of ISIS could this happen anywhere again?

With schooling greatly disrupted, programs and play equipment significantly enhanced joy and hope, and post-trauma counselling helped children cope again.

Ten years later, I have concluded that the context in Aceh demanded activism, but a kingdom outcome depended on a deep spirituality. //

a TALE OF TWO Chapattis

by Claire Boot

Our friend, Krishan, told us this story about Guru Nanak:

During his travels, Guru Nanak visited a remote village. A poor carpenter invited Guru Nanak to his home. Guru Nanak accepted, and shared a simple dinner with the carpenter and his family.

There was a wealthy landowner in the village and, when he heard of Guru Nanak's visit, he also invited him to his home. But Guru Nanak refused. The landowner invited him again, but Guru Nanak refused again.

Finally, the landowner grew angry. He asked Guru Nanak why he ate the food of a poor carpenter, but refused to eat with him, a much wealthier man.

Guru Nanak took a chapatti from the carpenter's house in one hand, and a chapatti from the landowner's house in his other hand. He squeezed both chapattis. Milk flowed from the carpenter's chapatti, but blood dripped from the landowner's chapatti.

Guru Nanak explained that the carpenter's food resulted from his own honest hard work. But the landowner's food came from the harsh treatment of others.

The landowner was shocked. He decided to change his ways. He became a follower of Guru Nanak and, from that time on, treated people with fairness and respect.

Claire has been part of the Southall team since 2010. During our community evenings with our neighbours in Lent, we're enjoying hearing stories from different faith traditions. And, after we've heard a story, we're particularly enjoying acting it out together!



Mission & PROTEST

by David Cross

I've recently pondered the relationship between mission and protest. While they might appear as strange bedfellows, I've come to realise that our witness to the kingdom, in the midst of poverty, can expose areas of injustice that prevent the poor from experiencing true transformation. I've found that too often, we, the church, fail our urban poor neighbours when we buy into the belief that the poor are helpless, or lazy, somehow responsible for their situation and, importantly, need our help because they couldn't possibly initiate transformative community projects themselves.

I've heard these beliefs repeated amongst seminary students here in the Philippines, where I'm writing, and also back in my home country of New Zealand. Because of this, I think

they represent some of the dominating myths, prevalent in Christian churches throughout the West and Majority world. While we may read this and scoff, failure to guard ourselves against perpetuating these beliefs in our own practice can lead to some troubling results. In a worst case scenario, our ministries might show signs of paternalism and self aggrandizement. Our friends will participate out of obligation and they will view their role as menial or second class. However, it need not be that way. My purpose in writing, therefore, is to encourage us all to a spirituality of hope. This acknowledges the latent gifts and skills in a community and seeks partnerships to share the work of the kingdom amidst the challenges of slum-living. It also recognizes

God's Spirit as present and an agent in the transformative process.

As an incarnational mission, Servants embodies spiritual hope in communities often left forgotten. But we believe that God is present in these places and working among the willing for the transformation of lives and communities. Therefore, as we practice transformative mission among the urban poor, implicit in this work is a protest against expectations of failure and beliefs about the poor that perpetuate their marginalization. Immersion among the poor often reveals the poor to be highly motivated to improve not just their own circumstances, but their communities as well.

Take the example of our friend who is a member of the community group initiated through our local church (based in the slum) to address the risk of flooding. She attended all meetings and engaged fully in the group's efforts. She did this, on top of working a full day packing charcoal for sale to people who use it for their cooking fires. This work might earn her around \$2 or \$3USD but it is enough to feed her family that night. Her example is testament to the longing of slum residents to participate and contribute towards transformation for them and those around them. Indeed, this woman represents many others who are passionate about contributing towards positive change in their community but also need to provide for their family. Perceptions of laziness among the poor only reveal our distance and ignorance from

the daily realities they face and the pressures that poverty bears down on them. However, those of us close enough to journey with the urban poor as friends, know many of them to be highly motivated to pursue change in the community around them but they often just lack the opportunity or a catalyzing moment.

A hope filled spirituality will honour the poor as beneficiaries of the Kingdom. It will recognize the dignity Jesus gives to the poor and how they teach us about hoping beyond hope. It responds to their longings on their terms and accords dignity to them through recognizing the unique contribution they make in mission and furthering the Kingdom. In this sense, through embodying hope, our friends symbolically stand in protest against stereotypes placed on them. They shatter long held myths and teach us to see them more as God does.

This leads us to trust. We will trust our friends and hold lightly the tasks before us. We hold it lightly because it is in God's hands and we have the opportunity to bless His work or curse it. In the manner of John the Baptist, our role will be to discern the movement of God and contribute with empowering actions. And, like John, we will become less so that our friends are promoted and their achievements celebrated. As we learn to be people of hope we also learn to be people of gratitude and, as such, we are thankful for being able to join with God, His Spirit, and His people in transforming mission. //

The vulnerabilities of slum life in the Philippines have seen David take a keen interest on how Disaster Risk Reduction strategies can help slum communities become more resilient. He is married to Maria and they live with their two young boys in a Malabon slum.



The Conspiracy of the SPIRIT

by Dave Andrews

For many “spirit” is by definition “immaterial” – “no thing” – “nothing” at all. But for us, like Harrison Owen, author of *The Power Of Spirit*, “spirit is the most important thing.” [i]

Harrison Owen says even though we find it hard to define or describe “spirit,” we all know what it is when we come across it.[ii] We can all recognize when *community spirit, team spirit or the esprit de corps* is present – or not.[iii] We all know from our own experience that “when the spirit of a people is strong and vibrant wonderful things can happen.”[iv]

According to Genesis, the Spirit of God, who inspires the human spirit, is God “*incognito*,” lingering with in

tent, secretly seeking to bring order out of chaos: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. *The earth was formless and void, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*” (Gen 1:1-2). Jesus says, where the Spirit is, there is life, for it is the Spirit that gives life (John 6:63). In fact, the words used in the bible for “spirit” are the Hebrew “*ruach*” and the Greek “*pneuma*.” Both these words refer to *moving air* like *wind* or *breath*, which you cannot actually see or hear or smell or touch, but – without which – you cannot live.

Our sacred texts say people can be in touch with Spirit wherever we are, no matter how good or how bad the situation we find ourselves in: “*Where can I flee from your spirit? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, you are there*” (Ps. 139:7-10).

1. The Spirit is always present.
2. The Spirit will makes things happen.
3. We need to be present when it happens.
4. We need to be open to the ebb and flow of what happens.

5. We need to go with the flow.
6. We need to help others go with the flow.
7. We need to create processes that allow us to go with the flow.
8. We need to create structures that allow us to go with the flow.
9. When the flow is over, we need to recognize that it is really over.
10. We need to grieve the end of the old—and wait for the new move. [v]

Harrison Owen says the signs people are open to the “spirit” are *passion* and *responsibility*. And I would suggest the signs that people are open to the healthy, wholesome, wholly, “Holy Spirit,” in their “spirit,” are *passion*, *compassion* and *responsibility*.

The fruit or key performance indicators of openness to the Spirit are: “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Gal 5.22-23).

- At a personal level there will be
 - love – passion and compassion
 - joy – awareness and appreciation
 - peace – trust and tranquility.
- At a relational level there will be
 - patience – persistence
 - kindness – sweetness, not bitterness
- At a social level there will be
 - goodness – generosity
 - faithfulness – fidelity
- At a political level there will be
 - tolerance – and non-violence
 - self-control – and self-management.

Our role is not to generate the work of the Spirit, but to notice it, validate it, celebrate it, participate in it and

collaborate with it, cooperating with the Spirit that manifests itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, tolerance and self-control.

An Appreciative Inquiry [vi] approach can help us help people cooperate with the Spirit.

1. Instead of focusing on people’s problems or people-as-problems, we need to inquire about peoples’ best (inspired) experiences of love, joy, peace etc.
2. We can ask them to tell us stories about their best (inspired) experiences of love, joy, peace, reliving their peak (inspirational) experiences in retelling the stories.
3. We can also ask them to reflect on what they – and those around them – were doing at the time that made those peak (inspirational) experiences possible.
4. Then we can ask them to consider what they could do from now on that would make it possible to have those peak (inspirational) experiences more often.
5. Then we can encourage them to practice their best (inspired) options, trusting the practice will realize more love, joy, peace etc for more people, more often.
6. Whenever it is appropriate, we can suggest that they get other people to join them and together develop peer support groups to help them do their best.
7. And we need to celebrate the fruit of their labour with them any chance we get. //

[i] Harrison Owen, *The Power Of The Spirit* Berrett-Koehler Publishers San Francisco 2000, 1
 [ii] Harrison Owen, *The Power Of The Spirit* Berrett-Koehler Publishers San Francisco 2000, 7
 [iii] Harrison Owen, *The Spirit Of Leadership* Berrett-Koehler Publishers San Francisco 1999, 52
 [iv] Harrison Owen, *The Power Of The Spirit* Berrett-Koehler Publishers San Francisco 2000, 1
 [v] Harrison Owen, *The Spirit Of Leadership* Berrett-Koehler Publishers San Francisco 1999, 56ff
 [vi] Based on ‘Appreciative Inquiry: Igniting Transformative Action’ by Bernard Mohr in *The Systems Thinker* Pegasus Communications Feb 2001, Vol 12 No 1, 1-5.



the ROAD to **Burnaby Mountain**

by Jason Wood

Last December I got arrested.

It's not the usual behaviour expected from a white, middle-class, at times quite conservative Christian. Growing up in the evangelical church in North America, getting arrested was something that happened to Christians in other countries: maybe believers reading their own Bibles in the Soviet Union or persecuted Christians in China or the Muslim world. While many of our brothers and sisters in the faith were suffering elsewhere in the world, here we had comfort, freedom, democracy. Here the law worked for us.

So we thanked God for blessing us here in North America. We prayed for the persecuted elsewhere, and we resolved to be even more grateful for the freedom and opportunity we'd been given.

Well – that's one response. It's just that . . . I've always found it a little unsatisfying. It seemed a bit too easy when the centre of our faith is a man dying on a cross at the hands of the powers that be.

So I started digging deeper, asking unsettling questions. Like, how do we have what we have? And who is “we” in the first place? The more I've learned about my own place here in Canada, the more I've become convinced that the “we” may be a particularly white, middle-class “we.” And that the “how” is far more nuanced and often darker than a simple divine blessing.

Stanley Park in our city of Vancouver is a prime example of this. It was constituted by the government, forest cleared, roads built, all while residents of the Squamish village of Xway Xway, who had dwelt on the land for thousands of years, were never consulted or considered. A predominantly white settler population benefited, never daring to ask at whose cost. And this is not an isolated experience; it's just one example of a whole structure of power relations that carries on to the present day.

I've been forced to conclude: What I have experienced as a blessing,

someone else may have experienced as a curse. And disturbingly often, the fault lines between the two strike through rift valleys of race and class. The police may protect my freedom, but what if I was poor and black? Or Native and a woman? Or homeless and undocumented?

As a Christian, this presents me with a choice. I can live satisfactorily enough with the privileges of my race and socio-economic background, thanking God for being where I am, who I am; for systems that more often than not work for my benefit. Or I can take the plunge into the realities of that Other not so far away, letting my welfare be tied up in theirs. I can choose to suffer, weep, and struggle alongside those who have experienced discrimination in the same places where I have known acceptance and power.

Isn't this what it means to follow Jesus? The most high God, taking on flesh, becoming utterly vulnerable so that we might know God in the depths of God's (and our) powerlessness and suffering. One who died on a cross He didn't deserve, revealing injustice and evil for what they are, and in so doing overcoming them – "leading them in a victory procession," to use Apostle Paul's words. Liberating from the law by submitting to it. It didn't simply end with Jesus; it's a way of being that we have been invited to join in and adopt as our own.

Learning in solidarity with others

There's a danger here. Many white, middle-and-higher-class, often male folks like myself like to paint ourselves

into Jesus' role on earth. We like to see ourselves as saviours, offering the solutions the world so desperately needs. In so doing, though, we neglect to see how God is already present in those who are different. We refuse to affirm their leadership, using others' places of pain to boost our own ego. I am no doubt guilty of this at times.

The reality is, too, that we can never fully dissociate ourselves from the privileges we grow up with. No matter how I try, I will still likely have more money, freedom, and social capital at my disposal than the oppressed neighbour I seek to love. We need to remember that the goal is not abandoning privilege for its own sake. The goal is walking in deeper solidarity with one another, letting my neighbour's pain and struggle become my own, and finding a deeper freedom together.

For me, this has meant a journey of deepening in knowledge and concern about my Indigenous brothers and sisters. The story of Xway Xway is only one example of the relentless assault their nations have endured across this land, experiencing language, culture, land, and children all stripped away. I cannot change what has been done, but that is no excuse for inaction. I am impelled by conscience and, I believe, by Christ, to become a part of ensuring that the future is different from the past.

Arriving at Burnaby Mountain

This journey took me to Burnaby Mountain. There, pipeline company Kinder Morgan has been seeking to

triple the carrying capacity of an existing pipeline, the Trans-Mountain, by constructing a parallel one to transport raw bitumen and refined oil from Alberta's oil sands to the Burrard Inlet, where it would be shipped to overseas markets in East Asia.

Compared to the extensive review process Enbridge's Northern Gateway has endured, KM's pipeline consultations have been scant, with important parts of the review process hurried over and bypassed (Google former BC Hydro president Mark Eliesen's reasons for disengaging as an intervener).

Many in Burnaby and along the route feel that this project would pose an unacceptable risk to their land, water and livelihood, not to mention the climate impacts of continuing to expand fossil fuel infrastructure amidst increasingly dire calls for clean, renewable energies.

Beyond the lack of democratic input and the ecological risks, though, there is another reality.

Indigenous people are saying no. Despite centuries of attempts at colonization, assimilation and usurpation, Indigenous nations are still very real and still take their responsibility to the land very seriously. More often than not, they are on the forefront of land defence, the first impacted and the first to respond when a company or government acts with ecological hubris.

Whether the Grassy Narrows sounding the alarm on mercury poisoning in Ontario, the Mi'kmaq resisting fracking at Elsipogtog, or Fort McKay's efforts to publicize the cancerous effects of the oil sands on their community, Indigenous people throughout what is known as Canada are fighting to protect their nations and the ecosystems which sustain life for all creatures.

It's no different here. The three nations on whose unceded land the city of Vancouver rests – the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh – have all declared opposition to the Trans-Mountain expansion. The Tsleil-Waututh have filed a lawsuit against Kinder Morgan for its failure to treat them as a sovereign nation and acquire consent.

Yet Kinder Morgan plows on, with the express backing of the National Energy Board. In a country that has, slowly and rather reluctantly, signed on to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treating Indigenous nations as if they are simply another interest group to be heard or ignored is just not good enough.

I cannot change Xway Xway. But I can change this.

So, there I was on Burnaby Mountain. The courts had upheld Kinder Morgan's injunction against protestors who got in the way of their exploratory drilling. Police

were out in force. A zone had been cordoned off with yellow tape, surrounding KM workers. At the bottom of the hill, a diverse group of ordinary folks had assembled, ready to bear witness to the injustice happening just up the road.

A little after 11:00 in the morning, we walked up the road, chanting, “No pipelines on stolen Native land!” Then, after one man spoke about his concern for his children’s future and the future of the planet, about 16 of us crossed the police tape and broke the injunction.

We were promptly arrested, packed in a paddy wagon, and shipped down the mountain, where we would spend most of the day at the local police station, waiting inside holding cells to be processed. The police were quite respectful, joking with us at times, even bringing us water and granola bars as we prepared to enter the station. Spirits were high as people sang and laughed along the way. We carried that feeling of integrity, having married our beliefs to action.

The cruciform way of Jesus

As I said, though, we can’t dissociate ourselves from our privileges. Earlier that week, a group of women had crossed the line in the evening, and their experience of the police was much different. I certainly believe that violence begets violence, so I’m not completely surprised when angry protesters yelling abusive names at the police tends to draw a more forceful reaction. But I’m also aware that, as a tall young white male, it might be

harder to mistreat me than an elderly Native woman – for instance – especially when the media are swarming in droves. I have a social perception of power working for me, and I need to be responsible for that.

On the one hand, our stand was small. I was charged with civil contempt of court, a charge that has since been dropped. After six or seven hours in a bare concrete cell, I was released on conditions that I wouldn’t violate the injunction again and I would agree to appear in court. Really, all I suffered was a few cold, boring hours in the jail cell and a small police record.

Compared to the ongoing struggles of Indigenous people and the much more serious consequences they often face in resisting the multiple systems organized against them, it was little more than a drop in the ocean. But even so, it was no less real, and it was not taken lightly. Besides – to quote a fabulous line from the movie *Cloud Atlas*: “What is the ocean, but a multitude of drops?”

Talking with my fellow arrestees, all of us felt this was one important way to take responsibility for the privileges we’ve been given – a beautiful land, fresh water, a family to protect. For me, though, it was more than that. It was also a step of Christian faith, part of learning the “cruciform way of Jesus.” Like Apostle Paul, when he wrote those words thousands of years ago, I want to know Christ, identifying with Him in His suffering, and through him my suffering brother or sister. Then, and only then, will we together see the power of resurrection. //

Prayer for ACTION

by David Prieb

Jesus, I am only one man, and I feel I have so little to offer. My steps feel so shaky.

But with You, I walk forward. May Your Kingdom come.

“How do I embody your Kingdom, Jesus? This world seems dominated by the kingdoms of violence, revenge, and fear. How do the gentle fruits of your Spirit overcome them? It doesn’t make sense to me. Jesus, how do kindness, goodness, patience, and love, stand up against such evil in our world?”

I hear you, my son. Despite it not making sense, I ask you to trust me.

My Kingdom is not of this world. Please, don’t base your level of obedience on your level of understanding. Embrace the mystery. A place of harmony, beauty, and peace is breaking forth into this world. Although you might not see how, the day will come when this Kingdom will reign above all others. Will you allow me to reign in your life, so

that my Kingdom can pour from you? Will you make yourself available to me?

Jesus, I am one man, and I have something to offer. My steps are steady.

With You, I walk forward. May Your Kingdom come.

“But Jesus, Your ways seem so slow. Isn’t there a way to speed up this process? You’ve asked me to be a transforming presence, but where are the results?”

I hear you, my son. Despite the slow pace, I ask you to trust me. Simple outward conformity isn’t my thing. I desire to transform hearts, and hearts can take time. Look at your own heart – there is still much work to do! My Kingdom will prevail in you and in others, but I refuse to use force or manipulation. It is through love that I am wooing humanity. This love, although gentle, is strong, powerful, and all-consuming. Oh, and it’s also confronting. The day will come when the kingdoms built on violence, revenge, and fear will have nothing to stand on. My love will erode their very foundations. This will happen, and I want to partner with you to do it. I am in no rush, so please, don’t hurry me along. Trust that the mustard seed is growing and spreading.

Jesus, I am a man, created to bear Your image in this world. I have everything to offer. My steps are firm and grounded. With You, we walk forward. May Your Kingdom come.

“But Jesus, this hurts. Walking with You is not as fun and exciting as I thought it would be. I feel tired, misunderstood, and alone. What is the point of this suffering, anyway?”

I hear you, my son. Despite the pain, I ask you to trust me.

My Kingdom shines the brightest during times of trial. The tough times in life refine us and challenge us to live out the allegiances that we claim. I never said this journey would be easy, comfortable, or pain-free. Why did you think it would be? Do you not remember the way that I was ridiculed, despised, and dismissed when I walked among those I loved? Expect the same. But also, expect that I will be with you. I will give you opportunities to display the fruits of my Spirit in ways you’ve never dreamed of. You will discover new depths of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Will you allow suffering to ripen these fruits within you?

But realize, my son, that the more you ripen, the more easily you bruise. This is how I’ve designed it.

Within creation, the sole purpose of fruit is to aid the dispersal of the life-bearing seeds within. The importance is not primarily on the fruit, but rather, what the fruits contain. As you embody my Kingdom, the structures and systems of this world, in desperation, may unleash their violence upon you. But stand strong. Allow your fruit to mature and ripen, and allow yourself to be consumed. The powers will think they’ve won, but little do they know that the seeds of my Spirit have fallen. These seeds will grow strong and deep, fertilized by the soil of suffering on which they fell.

Jesus, I am a man whom You invited to die. I have offered everything. My steps cease.

Within You, we walk forward.

We walk forward.

We walk forward. //

David is a member of the International Coordinating Team within Servants. He can often be found in nature with his backpack on, sitting in a coffee shop having an engaging conversation, or playing at the park with his three beautiful nieces. He recently began having regular prayer walks around the military base near his home in California. This submission comes from his conversation with God as they’ve walked together.

SERVANTS NEW ZEALAND

Local News

SERVANTS NZ HUI

Our annual hui is an important event on the Servants NZ calendar, and provides the primary opportunity for the Servants NZ community to gather each year. This is a time when we can be challenged and encouraged in the work of God's kingdom among the poor, connect or reconnect with Servants workers and old friends, and reflect together around our journey in following Christ. This year, our hui will be held in late September/early October in the Wellington region. More information will be available soon, or you can contact our team at: nz@servantsasia.org.

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES

If you receive SQ and want to receive more regular local NZ news, please sign up for our email updates. Send your email details to: nz@servantsasia.org.

GET INVOLVED

We are currently looking for people to be involved in:

- Supporting the team in advocacy and administration, by being involved in a weekly/or monthly basis
- Coordinating the NZ Friends network
- Sending the quarterly magazine,

Servant Quarters, out by mail (great for someone or a group who wants to support, but don't have much time)

If you are interested in getting involved email us at nz@servantsasia.org, or contact Jess at jess@servantsasia.org or 022 013 7585.

WORKSHOP ON CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER PRACTICES

On Saturday 25th of July we will be hosting a full day workshop on contemplative prayer practice in the Wellington region. It will be facilitated by Chris Heuertz, who now co-leads the Gravity Center (focused on contemplative activism) but previously was the International Director of Word Made Flesh, a New Friars organisation, for 20 years. Please email us if you would know more at nz@servantsasia.org.

GATHERING FOR PRAYER

In Dunedin we currently have a group that meets regularly to pray for Servants workers (as well as to enjoy food and conversation together)! For information about these groups, or if you're interested in hosting a new prayer group, contact: nz@servantsasia.org.



LONG TERM OPPORTUNITIES

So, you've heard about Servants, and our vision, values and principles resonate with you. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of serving overseas with a Servants team, contact us early on so we can be in conversation with you as you discern God's will for your life. We are happy to answer any questions you might have as you consider applying. Servants currently has opportunities to serve as part of teams in Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Manila, London, Lucknow, Vancouver, and the emerging Myanmar team.

INTERNSHIPS

An internship with Servants is probably quite different to any other short term mission exposure you have experienced before. This is because the emphasis is not so much on what you do but on what you learn. The intention is that for a few weeks or months, living with a local family in a poor community, you will make a deep connection with the urban poor and allow God to open up a space in you to hear him afresh. This will occur not in a quiet garden or at the beach, but in a noisy, vibrant, cramped slum. Servants accepts a small number of people each year for internships in Cambodia, Manila, Kolkata, Jakarta, London and Vancouver. Contact your local Servants office for more information.

RE-IMAGINE INTERNSHIP is a new format of internship with Servants. It is different from our other internships as it runs at two set times of the year (July/August and Jan/Feb) in a different Asian city each time. It runs for 6 weeks and includes a structured group briefing in the first week, an immersion experience in a slum for the middle 4 weeks and a group debriefing in the last week. The next Re-imagine Internship that is open to applications will likely take place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in January/February 2016. Check for updates at <http://servantsasia.org/re-imagine-internship/>

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