



SERVANTS QUARTERS

NON-VIOLENCE ISSUE // www.servantsasia.org // **JAN 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.

“Peacemaking is the act of finding a third way that is neither flight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.”

- *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*

Call for Submissions

Our next issue of Servants Quarters will be coming out in May 2015. Stay tuned for our topic, but the deadline will be in March. We welcome your reflections, poetry, stories, art and photography and we look forward to hearing from you!

Editor Alyse Kotyk

Submissions Supervisor Tom Wartenweiler

Graphic Designer Charlotte Browning

Proofreaders Anna Wood and Trudy Smith

We welcome your feedback.

Send any thoughts to Alyse at editor@servantsasia.org

Looking to keep up-to-date on what Servants teams are up to?

Email davidprieb@servantsasia.org to be added to “The Inside Edge” mailing list!

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THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Non-Violence Issue

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from the **Editor**

Dear Servants friends, family and supporters,

This morning, as I was walking to work, I passed an encounter between a police officer and a member of the Downtown East-side (DTES) community here in Vancouver. For those of you who aren't familiar, the DTES is the poorest urban neighbourhood in Canada and is one that is often known for its high crime rates and cycles of addiction. As a result, it's not uncommon to witness altercations between the police and members of the community on an ordinary stroll through the neighbourhood.

This one, in particular, struck me as rather violent. There were three cops standing over a man who had a broken leg. One was keeping his arms behind his back while another was holding his face into the rain-soaked sidewalk. My response was visceral: I felt angry at the callousness and obvious aggression of the law-enforcers. This man was on crutches;

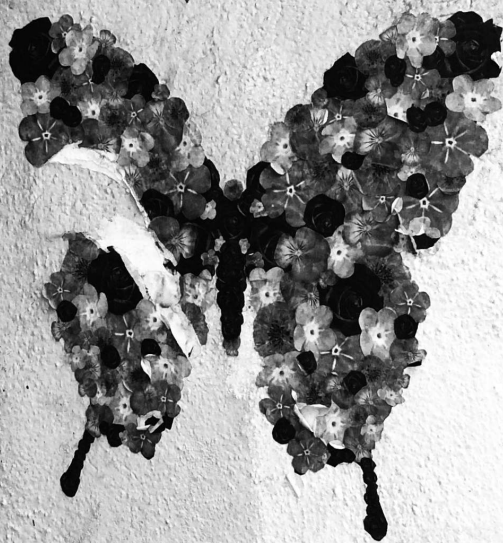
how could he have really caused extensive harm to anyone?

As I continued past the scene I slowly came to recognize that I did not have access to the entire story. For either "side," I did not fully understand how or why they had reached that point and therefore I could not say what the best solution would have been. Perhaps the law-enforcers weren't being violent at all and perhaps I had read the circumstances incorrectly. Put simply, while sitting at a comfortable distance from the situation I was certain there was a better, less violent way that things could have played out. But if I had been in the thick of it, what would've my actions been? While I didn't have any immediate answers, it certainly made me consider my perspective on non-violence.

Non-violence is a complex topic and in this issue you'll read about the journeys individuals within Servants are on with it. May these honest reflections encourage growth in your understanding and may we, together, find ways to take steps towards love-filled interactions in our daily lives.

With peace,

Alyse Kotyk
Editor, Servants Quarters



FORGIVENESS

in the

Thick of Things

by Trudy Smith, Vancouver


“You can no more win a war than win an earthquake.”

Those were the words of Montana Republican, Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress, explaining her lone vote against America’s entry into World War II in 1941. Those were the words that explained my thoughts on this Veteran’s Day/Canadian Remembrance Day, seventy-three years later, as my teammates and I prepared for an evening of worship and prayer with our neighbors in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Knowing that many of us in the room had family members of loved ones who had fought in wars, we discussed our genuine respect and concern for all those whose lives have been affected by war in one way or another, and explained that it was this love which leads us to oppose the ideologies and systems that create war in the first place. We then spent time praying for veterans, especially those whose unresolved physical or emotional trauma marginalizes them in society, plunging them into poverty and homelessness. We prayed for people who have lost loved ones in war, for the communities that have

been destroyed by fighting, for the land that has been ravaged in battle over the years. And then we sang, in repentance and hope, reading prophecy about swords being beaten into ploughshares and asking for God to lead us into peace.

In our house, this weekly event after Tuesday night community dinners is called Creative World Justice. The purpose is pretty much what it sounds like—to worship, learn, and brainstorm together about the creative steps we can take towards promoting justice in the world, as individuals and as a group. We alternate between learning nights and worship nights, and we’ve recently begun a series exploring nonviolence: its basis in scripture, examples of successful nonviolent actions in history, and practical applications for dealing with conflict and threatening situations in our own lives. Awkward as it initially seemed, we soon realized how fitting it was for Remembrance Day in Canada and Veterans’ Day in the United States to fall in the middle of this learning process: nonviolence is especially relevant in a context where violence is celebrated and sanctioned. Collective reflection on history so often becomes a means of reinforcing national allegiance to violence, but this occasion gave all of us a chance to think critically about how to reframe the act of remembering, turning it into an opportunity to grieve the bitter fruit of violence and to reflect on the desperate need for a new way.

At the beginning of this series,



I had the privilege of leading a discussion on nonviolence in the Bible, particularly in the life of Jesus. I had read these verses so many times over the years, and I had often taken part in theological discussions and detached, intellectual conversations in which I had discussed violence on an impersonal, even hypothetical level. I would hold the world's problems at arm's length, arguing back and forth about historical wars, current large-scale conflicts that are far enough away to exist for us only in newspaper headlines, or potential scenarios of aggression or crime in which self-defense would be necessary.

But that night, Jesus' words and example of forgiveness and enemy love had never felt more powerful. The room was full of people for whom violence is a personal issue. Many of them grew up in violent homes, were abused as children, belonged to gangs when they were younger, had boyfriends or husbands who beat them up, or perhaps served jail time for beating up someone themselves. One woman came into the discussion reeling from the news that a close friend had been the victim of an extremely savage crime earlier that week—one which may yet take her life as it remains to be seen whether she will make a recovery in the hospital or not. Is it offensive or even ridiculous to talk about forgiveness against the backdrop of such vitriolic hatred and evil?

Jesus' teachings about forgiveness and nonviolence are difficult for us all, but especially for so many people in that room, whose lives have been shaped in significant ways by violence. I respected the courage of my new friends to take the words of Christ seriously and to grapple with them right in the thick of it all. I admired their humility and honesty in sharing the difficult emotions and the fragile places in their lives that have made it difficult for them to respond to violence in any other way than with retribution. Some of them are also very new on their journey with Jesus, and I was inspired by their passion to soak up this new way of being in the world.

In the face of so much raw honesty and pain, I was humbled myself by the reminder that this nonviolent path is not a solution that I have to hand out to people. It's not anything I have mastered myself, and it certainly is no short-cut or cure-all for the pain. It's a difficult and lengthy process of inner transformation, and it is a learning curve that we are all on together, stumbling and backtracking and finding our way forward again. But it is a potent anecdote to the fight-or-flight world and the survival mentality that we've all been raised with. In fact, it is exactly in the thrall of horrific violence that forgiveness and creative, compassionate resistance are needed: to overcome evil with good. //

Beyond *our* BOUNDARIES

by Idina, Southall

It seems that currently the media is full of stories that portray a particular demographic group as “the enemy.” It makes us feel safe if we know who the enemy is, and it makes our authorities appear strong and invaluable in defending us against them. In the past “the enemy” has been Jews or communists. In the UK the negative focus at this time seems to be on immigrants, and especially Muslims. Recent examples that have caught my attention are:

- Gaining popularity of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in UK politics, with its core message of anti-immigration, and thus inevitable stigmatisation of those with a different ethnicity or religion. As a reaction, even our defence secretary a couple of weeks ago claimed that “British towns are being ‘swamped’ by immigrants and their residents are ‘under siege’.” The greatest areas of support for these views are in the areas where no one from overseas lives. In London, support is minimal because our neighbours may be from many countries of the world, we know them and value them - more than 300 languages are spoken in London.
- Even the BBC is pitching religions against each other in a bid to make news. A recent

report, featuring footage from Southall, was headlined: “Swapping the Foodbank for a Temple.” The reporter stated that: “It seems many people are now preferring to go to a local temple for a hot meal than use a food bank.” They are well aware the Foodbank is run by a Christian charity, and gives out packaged food to those in desperate circumstances for them to cook at home. The Sikh Gurdwara gives out free hot, Indian food 7 days per week, which is wonderful, and a completely different service. Why compare these two provisions and make service to the most vulnerable divisive?

- We have seen the headlines about the atrocities performed by members of “Islamic State,” especially from Iraq and Syria. They are shocking and horrific, but care needs to be taken about what generalisations are made from these actions. I attended an inter-faith dialogue meeting a couple of weeks ago, where an honoured Muslim academic was speaking. He hesitated to use the name of the “Islamic State,” saying the organisation’s ethos is neither “Islamic” (in its use of violence and oppression) nor a recognised state. Ordinary Muslims in UK are being targeted on the basis of these reports. Metropolitan Police figures show that hate crime against Muslims in London has risen by 65% over the last 12 months.

Servants has had a team in Southall, West London, since 2008 and from the start we had a vision to facilitate bridges between people of different groupings. Southall has been defined as the “least British place” in the UK. The statistics show that at least 88% of residents describe themselves black or Asian. Although we live side-by-side relatively peacefully, it is rare that people from different religious or ethnic communities mix, except at the local schools. We have helped create some safe spaces for people of different communities to meet, for example at our community garden, a parent-and-toddler group and during outings to the beach. One recent occasion that especially seems to illustrate this was at our Thursday night gathering, renamed “Hope 4 All” (as our house number is 4). Each week between 15-25 neighbours gather at 7pm, bringing food to share with each other. The folk who come are Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, church and un-church Christians, British, Indian, Pakistani, pure vegetarian, meat-eaters, teenagers, children, babies, elderly, single mothers, single fathers, single others ... and probably just about every demographic you could think of! After the shared meal (Eucharist?) we generally have a social time, possibly including games, crafts or story-telling.

This year, as Diwali was on a Thursday, we chose to celebrate together. I am always humbled that some of our Sikh friends want to come to celebrate Diwali – their most important family festival – with us. This year we

decided to have short worship time to begin our evening, before feasting and then walking around our neighbourhood watching everyone lighting fireworks – a display that I’m sure rivals India! As we began by sitting on the floor in a circle and having a time of quiet, even the children joined in, and then each person in turn lit a candle while thanking God for an aspect of His light. Then we thought about Jesus as light coming to the world, and ways in which we can bring light to places of darkness, as He did. As we shared, everyone opened up and wanted to speak about their contribution. No one was excluded, we realised everyone had a gift of light to bring. It was truly beautiful! In the struggle against injustice and oppression, by coming in an opposite spirit, this is our small-scale, local response to promoting non-violence. As we live out our lives in Southall, we value and celebrate the diversity we encounter, and our shared humanity within it, and we long to encourage our neighbours to do the same. Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” Each of our neighbours, broken as they may be, who choose to move beyond the boundaries of their own cultural demographic, are blessed by it and bless others by doing so. They reach out beyond themselves and experience shalom. And I can imagine the Father gazing on his children who love Him and each other, who stand against the predominant culture of division and independence that separates us from being all we can be together, and smiling. //

a GENTLE, RELATIONAL **Revolution**

by Cathy D

We don't own a TV, and very rarely watch one at all, so it was a strange coincidence a couple of months ago that we happened upon a TV news analysis about Islamic State terror threats issued to Australians and citizens of other Western countries. Somehow it seemed similar to and also different from 9-11.

Similar in that I had the eerie feeling that the world is teetering on the edge of a turning point, and what happens next might significantly shape the world we live in for the coming years. It's very different in that the events of 9-11 took the world by surprise, and the USA and others responded to events that had already happened. We have seen that retaliation against actions already taken can be brutal and way out of proportion, and create long-term complications and conflict.

By contrast, not much has actually happened yet to Westerners as a result of the Islamic State, agitations, but very provocative threats have been made, with serious evidence of the ability to carry them out. I feel there is great danger in this atmosphere of threat and uncertainty – the potential for people or nations to do ruthless and regrettable things out of fear and hate, and escalate the situation out of control.

What can we, the little people without political clout or wide social influence, do? I think the base-line is to keep building relationships of trust, based on mutual respect and understanding. We need these relationships at every level, from friends and family up to international diplomacy. For me that means...

- Live towards the future we hope for – we won't ever arrive at the Kingdom of God, by means that aren't consistent with it. We can't impose peace through violence. Hate creates enemies, it doesn't eradicate them. If we want an outcome that is "good" in any way, our strategy must somehow embody Paul's instruction to "overcome evil with good."

- Keep it in perspective – this heightened threat of terrorism is to be taken seriously, but let us not forget that each day far more people are dying of poverty-related causes, or surviving in sex-slavery or forced-labour, than have been affected by Islamic State violence thus far.
- Listen and learn – uncertainty and threats make people afraid and prone to self-protection, hate and retaliation. That includes you and me. Let's acknowledge fear rather than ignoring it – listen to each others' thoughts and feelings and learn more about the issues from both sides. Engage empathetically with self and others, and engage rational understanding and thinking about the issues. Take James' advice to be "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."
- Participate in public processes – join in peaceful rallies, write letters to the editor, put something on your blog, visit your political representatives. Use the avenues available to you to speak up for peace and tolerance, and to promote creative long-term solutions to injustice and violence.
- Protect the vulnerable – is there someone in your neighbourhood

who is marginalised or part of a threatened minority? The guy who runs the local kebab shop? The woman wearing hijab at the park with her kids? Ask if they feel safe, invite them for a meal, give them your mobile number, help them feel connected and accepted.

Good relationships, like good bridges, take time and skill to build and maintain, but offer us opportunities to cross the walls and chasms that separate us. A long-term strategy to a better world of sustainability, peace and justice boils down to this: rather than polarisation and fragmentation, we need mutuality and connectedness. Take opportunities to build relationships with people who are not like yourself, across the divides of economic class, religious affiliation, national and ethnic identity. Build those bridges and walk across them – don't drive across them in armoured cars (impregnable self-defence) or armed tanks (ready to attack). When every Christian has a close friend who is Muslim, and every illiterate unemployed person has a close friend who is a wealthy professional, a lot of the world's problems will seem more solvable. //



the (un)Heroism *of* NON VIOLENCE


by Jason Wood, Vancouver

Nonviolence is one of those words that gets my blood going.

When I hear it, I see images from the movie Gandhi – legions of satyagrahis marching on a salt refinery in India, brutally clubbed down by guards yet continuing to press forward in disciplined non-resistance. Or I think of the Berrigan brothers, stealing into an American military base and damaging nuclear warheads to enact the words of the Hebrew prophets to “turn swords into plowshares.” Usually in my

mind, it’s something risky and daring – heroic, really. But lately I’ve been realizing that perception is a bit of a two-edged sword, if you’ll pardon my militant metaphor...

On the one hand, that’s what first drew me to nonviolence. Raised in a conservative Christian home, I began really personalizing my Christian faith during the years between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq. Among other things, I started wrestling with Jesus’ command to love our enemies. The US, where I lived



at the time, was bombing people on the other side of the world as part of the so-called "war on terror," and I couldn't reconcile that with my growing understanding of Jesus. But I heard nothing at church about this. In fact, many of my friends and elders there seemed to be largely supportive of the government's policies, making little distinction between an American and a Christian agenda. Something was amiss.

Yet as I wrestled with this remarkable contradiction over the coming years, I was blessed to have friends who had been involved in the military. Though we disagreed on much, these friends revealed discipline and courage. They had a desire to sacrifice their lives to make a better world. Their lives challenged me that simply "not fighting" is not enough. We have to be bold for peace. We have to be disciplined. And we must be ready to pay the same price for peace that soldiers pay for war: our lives. Figures like Gandhi or the Berrigans were living proof for me that such a sacrificial stand is possible. Love is a more daring way.

Where I get hung up is this, though: non violence isn't always so grand.

It can be a lot easier to imagine myself head-to-head with the police, defending against climate-wrecking fossil fuel infrastructure, than to dedicate myself to the many small sacrifices nonviolence requires. The sacrifice of frustrated dreams so I can embrace the reality around me. The sacrifice of being "right" so I can listen to my wife. The sacrifice of stereotypes of others and of myself. Recently someone vandalized ventilation fans for the greenhouses at work; fans we'd waited years to buy. I was pretty sure I knew who did it. I wanted to see myself as the hero, creatively and non-violently calling the guilty party to account. But truthfully, I was hurt and angry. I realized that even a pursuit of my own heroism ideal could be a type of emotional violence, denying my own pain and preventing the possibility of real forgiveness and healing.

So here I am, captivated yet convicted by nonviolence. I pray often for courage to get in the way of injustice and oppression, but more and more I pray also for courage to recognize and uproot their seeds within myself. Perhaps this is in fact the hardest work of all – to become people who embody peace. //



Loving *our enemies*

by Jonathan H

Therefore you are inexcusable,
O man, whoever you are who
judge, for in whatever you judge
another you condemn yourself;
for you who judge practice the
same things. - Romans 2:1

The most difficult aspect of my service in Bangkok's red-light districts involved my feelings towards the white foreigners who fill those streets. It was easy for me to make assumptions about these foreign men and what they were doing there. The books I'd read dealing with human trafficking and the abuses committed against

women in this environment intensified my animosity.

The first two times I spent the night in the red lights, I vacillated that might give me an excuse to act out physically against such men. I even came up with a plan to take a camera and get pictures of all the guys I saw, to be posted on the Internet and viewed by wives, girlfriends, coworkers and fellow churchgoers. These ideas were not Christ-like and they did not make me feel better, but I didn't know how to deal with what I was seeing.

The issue came to a head on my third night on the streets, while we were standing outside of an NGO's office waiting for the women inside (a mix of NGO staff and women who were working on the streets) to finish their meeting. An intoxicated Englishman stumbled up to the window I was sitting in front of and began peering in at the women through a gap in the curtain. I told him that he needed to leave. He looked at me dismissively and continued leaning over me, trying to look in.

I got really angry.

I stood up to my full height and said in the most intimidating voice I could muster, "You need to leave now." He again refused, and it was clear that my attempt to intimidate him had only turned the situation into a battle of egos. I was taller than him, but he was heftier and full of the confidence of alcohol. So as I leaned forward and continued to demand that he remove himself, he pushed his chest into me and stated that he had more right to be there than I did. It became obvious that both of us wanted the encounter to turn physical, and were only waiting for the other one to throw the first punch so that we'd have a "legitimate excuse" for our violence.

My coworker tried to get involved, but the man just spewed venomous language at her that was worse than anything he'd said to me. The stalemate didn't end until the Thai woman who ran the bar next door came outside and gently coaxed the man back into her bar.

Nothing was gained by the encounter.

After that incident I began seeking advice regarding my feelings towards the men I was encountering in these dark places. The most significant words came from a friend of mine who had been serving women there for several years. She told me that her feelings had been much like mine in the beginning. The shift had occurred

for her when she realized the pain the men themselves had been through in order to end up looking for relationship in a place like this. She saw that in many cases these men too had emotional scars, many of them also had a history that involved being a victim, and she began to be able to love them as more broken people who had found themselves in a broken place.

I am learning to view men like these with compassion and love rather than hate. Part of the reason for this is simple truth - many of my assumptions were false. Not every man I saw was looking to buy someone, and not every couple was the result of a financial transaction. Some of the foreigners may even have been on Bangkok's streets for the same reasons that my wife and I were. But even for those men who do engage in the abuses I hate so much, anger and desire for violent confrontation aren't the solution. There is a brokenness in these places that I only understand in part, but God sees in full. He knows how these men are hurting, he knows the pain that drives them to seek love and acceptance and control in places like Bangkok, and He desires for them to live a fuller life. If I could see them with His eyes, I would see wounded souls made in the image of God, and I would see the potential for so much more than the gutters they are dragging themselves through.

If I could look at these men through God's eyes, I would also see much more of myself than I

realize. I have my own brokenness, and I've acted it out in my own sinful ways. It is easier than I want it to be for me to imagine other paths that could have led me to the red lights. And if I had I gone down that route, it would not have been hateful stares and verbal confrontation that brought me to God's truth, but the kind of compassion that envelops its target in love and can still say, "Go and sin no more."

Lord, I know you love the men on those streets with every bit of the intensity that you love the children we spent time with, the women suffering there, and those of us who call you Savior. I know you desire to forgive them of every bit as much sin as you've forgiven me. Give me eyes to see and a heart to love in the same manner that you do, and through your love may they one day be able to see themselves as children of the most high God and know the women in their lives as the same.

These pages are to tell you,
my brother, my sister,
not to run away from people
who are in pain
or who are broken,
but to walk towards them,
to touch them.
Then you will find rising up
within you the well of love,
springing from resurrection....

If you walk with Jesus along
this path,
he will lead you
to the poor, the weak, the

lonely and the oppressed,
not with fear and despair,
not with feelings of guilt and
helplessness,
not with anger and revolt,
not with theories and preconceived solutions,
but with a new and deeper
peace and love and hope.

And he will reveal to you the
new meaning
of pain and darkness;
how joy springs
from the wounds of brokenness.
He will reveal to you
that he is hidden in
the poor, the weak, the lonely
and the oppressed.

He will reveal to you the way
to refind,
rebuild, renew and receive
the relationship of gentle love
and fidelity
that is at the origin of all existence.
It will be revealed as a tiny seed
but one from which can grow
new life for the world.

Let us walk together along this
path
with our sisters and brothers
in this broken world of ours.
Let us walk together along this
path
with Jesus,
and discover that it is a path of
hope. //

- Jean Vanier, introduction to the
Broken Body

the JIHAD of Jesus

by Dave Andrews

*An excerpt from an up and coming book *The Jihad of Jesus* written by Dave Andrews published by Wipf & Stock*

Jesus of Nazareth, whom we know as Jesus the ‘Masih,’ ‘Messiah’ or the ‘Christ,’ demonstrates a life of radical, non-violent, sacrificial compassion as the only way of life that can save us from destroying ourselves and our societies.

Many Christians, Muslims and Jews use the retaliation advocated in the Hebrew Bible to justify their eye-for-an-eye reactive violence. After all, Moses himself said, “if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Exod. 21:23–4). But as Mahatma Gandhi has been often reported to have famously said: “An eye-for-eye and tooth-for-tooth would lead to a world of the blind and toothless.”

Thus Jesus argued for a totally different approach to that taken in the Mosaic law. Jesus explicitly, specifically and repeatedly contradicted the Mosaic law that legitimated retaliation. He said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist (or retaliate against) an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:38–9). Jesus told his disciples ‘you should always be ready to die for your faith, but never

kill for your faith’ (Matt.16: 24).

Jesus treated the Hebrew Bible, what Christians call the ‘Old Testament,’ as his authority (Matt 5:17–20). But he interpreted the Law according to the Prophets, especially Isaiah, whom he quoted at the start of his ministry (Luke 4). Jesus’ devotion to peace-making was inspired by Isaiah’s vision for peace. Jesus knew by heart “how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace” (Is. 52:7). He knew a bringer of good news would be strong-but-gentle, he “will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets – a bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not quench” (Is.42:2). The hope he had for his people was that: “no longer w(ould) violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders” (Is. 60:18).

When I asked my dear friend, Jewish Rabbi, Zalman Kastel, what he personally found most confronting in the teaching of Jesus, he quickly replied, without any hesitation, that it was his commitment to unflinching nonviolence in the face of violence, which was based on his commitment to love everyone – friend and foe alike – with no exceptions. Jesus said, “But to you who are listening I say, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-use you. To him who strikes you on one cheek offer the other cheek also. If anyone takes away your cloak, do not stop him taking your tunic, too. Give to everyone who asks you; if anyone takes away your belongings, do not demand them back again. As you would like men to act towards you, so do you act towards them. If

you love those who love you, what special grace is there in that? Even sinners love those who love them. If you are kind to those who are kind to you, what special grace is there in that? Even sinners love those who love them. If you are kind to those who are kind to you, what special grace is there in that? Even sinners do that. If you lend to those from whom you wish to get, what special grace is in that? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to get as much back again. But you must love your enemies; and do good to them; and lend with no hope of getting anything in return. Your reward will be great and you will be the sons of the Most High, because he is kind both to the thankless and to the wicked. Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful" (Luke 6:27-38).

The famous Scottish theologian, William Barclay, wrote: "There is no commandment of Jesus which has caused so much discussion and debate as the commandment to love our enemies. Before we can obey it we must discover what it means. In Greek there are three words for 'to love.' There is *eran*, which describes passionate love, the love of a man for a maid. There is *philein*, which describes our love for our nearest and dearest, the warm affection of the heart. Neither of these two words is used here; the word used here is *agapan*, which needs a whole paragraph to translate it.

Agapan describes an active feeling of benevolence towards the other

person; it means that no matter what that person does to us we will never allow ourselves to desire anything but his highest good; and we will deliberately and of set purpose go out of our way to be good and kind to (them). This is most suggestive. We cannot love our enemies as we love our nearest and dearest. To do so would be unnatural, impossible and even wrong. But we can see to it that, no matter what a (person) does to us, even if he (or she) insults, ill-treats and injures us, we will seek nothing but (their) highest good."

This passage has in it two great facts about the ethos of Jesus.

Firstly, the ethos of Jesus is positive. It does not consist in not doing things but in doing them. Jesus gave us the Golden Rule which bids us do to others as we would have them do to us. That rule exists in many writers of many creeds in its negative form. Hillel, one of the great Jewish Rabbis, was asked by a man to teach him the whole law while he stood on one leg. He answered, "What is hateful to thee, do not to another. That is the whole law and all else is explanation." Philo, the great Jew of Alexandria, said, "What you hate to suffer, do not do to anyone else." Socrates, the Greek orator, said, "What things make you angry when you suffer them at the hands of others, do not you do to other people." Every one of these forms is negative. It is not unduly difficult to keep yourself from such action;

but it is a very different thing to go out of your way to do to others what you would want them to do to you. The very essence of the ethics of Jesus is that it consists, not in refraining from bad things, but in actively doing good things.

Secondly, the ethos of Jesus is based on (doing) the extra thing. Jesus described the common ways of sensible conduct and then dismissed them with the question, "What special grace is in that?" So often people claim to be just as good as their neighbours. Very likely they are. But the question of Jesus is, "How much better are you than the ordinary person?" It is not our neighbour with whom we must compare ourselves; we may well stand that comparison very adequately; it is God with whom we must compare ourselves; and in that comparison we are all in default.

What is the reason for this ethos? As far as Jesus was concerned "the reason is it makes us like God, for that is the way he acts. God sends his rain on the just and the unjust. He is kind to the person who brings him joy and equally kind to the person who grieves his heart. God's love embraces saint and sinner alike. It is that love we must copy; if we, too, seek even our enemy's highest good we will in truth be the children of God." [i]

John the Baptist introduced Jesus at the beginning of his ministry as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). We know the word 'Lamb' is not meant to be taken literally. After all Jesus was a 'Man' not a 'Lamb'. However,

the word 'Lamb' is used to describe the kind of 'Man' he was. He was a 'Lamb' of a 'Man' – pure, simple and peaceable – not deceitful, duplicitous and dangerous like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Jesus, the 'Lamb of God,' sought to develop grassroots communities of 'flocks of sheep' (John 10:11–16). 'Sheep' was a seemingly innocuous, but essentially counter-cultural term, that Jesus used to describe people who lived with 'wolves' – who preyed on other people – but, who refused to become wolves themselves – even if it meant that the wolves might rip the flock to pieces because of their refusal to join the pack and prey on others.

"I want you to live your lives as sheep, even in the midst of wolves," said Jesus. "Be shrewd. But always be harmless" (Matt. 10:16). "Always treat other people as you would like them to treat you," he said (Matt. 7:12). "Even do good to those who do evil to you. Love those who hate you and bless those who curse you" (Matt. 5:44). "Don't ever be afraid" he said to his flocks, "of those who can kill the body, but can't kill your soul" (Matt. 10:28).

And Jesus, "the Lamb of God," practiced what he preached. He may have been "the light of the world." But the world didn't want him. "The people loved the darkness rather than the light; because their deeds were evil, and they didn't want anybody to expose them." [ii] So the people decided to 'scapegoat' him. And, as Jesus predicted, they eventually 'seized' him, and he allowed them to lead him away like a 'sacrificial lamb' and 'slaughter' him.[iii]

Jesus said: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The idea of someone being willing to sacrifice himself on behalf of his friends can be as powerful a metaphor in the twenty-first century as it was in the first century. There is much about the way the Jews might understand this metaphor that non-Jews find difficult to understand. But the idea that Jesus was willing to 'sacrifice' his life for his friends is a powerful story. That even now, touches people with love, in the deep, dark, hidden recesses of their soul, where they feel most abandoned and most alone.

Gale Webbe, in *The Night and Nothing*, said, "There are many ways to deal with evil. All of them are facets of the truth that the only ultimate way to conquer evil is to let it be smothered within a willing, living, human being. When it is absorbed there, like a spear into one's heart, it loses its power and goes no further." [iv] As Scott Peck says in *The People Of The Lie*, "The healing of evil can only be accomplished by love. A willing sacrifice is required. The healer must sacrificially absorb the evil." [v] On the cross Jesus absorbed the evil. He took it into his heart as assuredly as the spear that was thrust into his side. And, it went no further. He cried out, "Father. Forgive them. For they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24). There was no reaction. No demand for revenge or retaliation. There was only grace. And so the cycle of violence stopped right there and then, with him, forever.

According to Khalid Muhammad Khalid, Jesus was the supreme example. He said Jesus 'was his

message.' He was the supreme example he left. He was the love which knows no hatred, the peace which knows no restlessness, the salvation which knows no perishing." [vi]

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The gentle figure of Christ - so patient, so kind, so loving, so full of forgiveness that he taught his followers not to retaliate when struck, but to turn the other cheek - was a beautiful example of the perfect person." [vii] Jesus, the "martyr, was an embodiment of sacrifice," and the cross "a great example of suffering." [viii] "Jesus lost his life on the cross." But Jesus didn't lose the battle. "Jesus won. As the world's history has abundantly shown." And, consequently, "the example of Christ is a crucial factor in the composition of my underlying faith in nonviolence - which rules all my actions." [ix] And it should rule all our actions too. //

[i] W. Barclay. Daily Study Bible – Luke 6 <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/view.cgi?bk=41&ch=6>

[ii] John 3:19-20

[iii] Math. 20:17-19

[iv] G. Webbe *The Night and Nothing* Seabury Press New York 1964 p109

[v] S. Peck *The People Of The Lie* Simon & Schuster New York 1983 p269

[vi] Khalid M. K. Ma'an 'ala-l-Tariq: Muhammad wa-i-Masih Cairo 1958 pp188-9

[vii] Gandhi, M. *The Message Of Jesus*,: Bharitya Vidya Bhavan Bombay 1971 foreword

[viii] Gandhi, M *Ibid.*, 7

[ix] Gandhi, M *Ibid.*, 7

WE IN SERVANTS ARE COMMITTED

to **Non-Violence** & **Non-Militarism**

by Kristin Jack

As we state in our “Commitment to Action and Belief:”

We believe The Way that Jesus has modeled and taught us is a way of humility, forgiveness, reconciliation and loving service (Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 23:32-34) and therefore a way that refuses to employ violence, coercion or manipulation in pursuing its ends (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:9-21; 2 Corinthians 2:17, 4:1-3, 5:11). We repudiate violence and militarism as works of the Evil One that destroy life and steal resources from the poor. Instead, we believe that Jesus calls us to follow his way of peace-making and reconciliation, and so bear prophetic witness to his coming Kingdom (Isaiah 2:2-5, 9:2-7; Matthew 5:7-9, 5:16, 5:21-25, 5:43-48, 6:14-15).

As you see, our most obvious reason for making this commitment is because Jesus taught it as an essential part of what it means to follow him (Matt. Ch. 5), and he modeled it in his own non-violent response to his enemies (e.g. Matthew 26:52).

But there are also good, pragmatic and strategic reasons. Hard-nosed research by conflict scholars reveals that political or social change pursued through non-violent means is not only more likely to succeed (when compared with

more violent methods), but also that in those cases where violent revolution does “succeed” in changing a system, it is very likely those seizing power will continue to use and perpetuate violent means of control, and to be dogged by ongoing attempts at violent overthrow by others. Regime or political change brought about by non-violent means on the other hand, is far more likely to result in a political and civil system that is democratic and non-violent [1].

So yes, we in Servants are passionate about wanting to see the overthrow of unjust systems, and about seeing the poor and oppressed liberated in the way that the gospel envisages (Luke 1:51 – 53 and 4:18-19), but we are determined to see that happen by the Spirit of Jesus, using the way of Jesus, following the words of Jesus. We are also pragmatic and practical enough to want to use strategies and methods that actually work, and increasingly the evidence is emerging that Non-Violence has far greater effectiveness (and far less cost) in terms of bringing about change – changed hearts, changed communities, changed social systems – than violence has ever had. //

[1] See the research article ‘Why Civil Disobedience Works’, by Stephan and Chenoweth, *International Security*, Vol 33, No. 1, 2008. See also the documentary and book series ‘A Force More Powerful’.

Kristin has copies of the Stephan/Chenoweth article if anyone would like to read it.

GROWING UP *to be a* **Child**

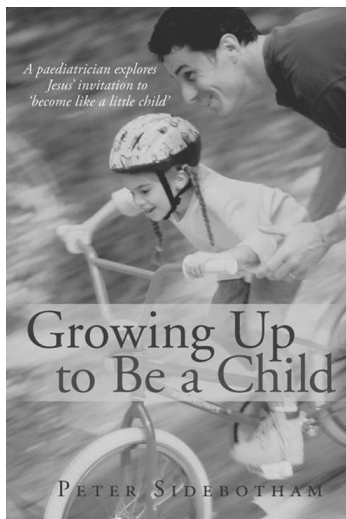
A paediatrician explores Jesus' invitation to "become like a little child" *by* Peter Sidebotham

This book, written by a consultant paediatrician, offers unique perspectives on child development and parenting, and on Christian life and discipleship. In it, the author interweaves his own professional observations and understanding of the processes of child development with a very personal engagement with his daughter as she grows, reflections on his role as a father, and on his own journey of faith.

Peter Sidebotham, who will be known to many in Servants, looks at a child's development from the point of view of the Shema prayer: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. He uses that as a basis to explore what it might mean for Christian disciples to "become like a little child."

"A beautiful and worthy book. Readers will find this a delight to read."
Scott Bessenecker, Associate Director of Missions, IVCF

"The personal nature of the book is a winner. It is generous and inclusive. A lovely book."
Elaine Storkey, President of Tear Fund



"A beautiful account of a father's love for his daughter, weaving the spiritual, personal and professional into a testimony of God's abundant gift of life in all its fullness: moving and inspiring."
Keith Sinclair, Bishop of ' Birkenhead

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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.

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.

Servants Canada

Chinatown PO Box 88195
Vancouver, B.C.
V6A4A5
Tel: 604 288 1424
canada@servantsasia.org

Servants UK

78 Yeolands Drive
Clevedon
Avon, BS21 7XL
uk@servantsasia.org

Servants Australia

PO Box 259
Red Hill
Brisbane
Australia 4059
Tel: +61 7 3367 3802
australia@servantsasia.org



servants

Servants USA

133 N. Friendswood Drive,
PMB 343
Friendswood, TX
77546. USA
Tel: 1 800 605 4630
usa@servantsasia.org

Servants New Zealand

PO Box 6382
Dunedin 9059
Tel: 0800 580 547
nz@servantsasia.org