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Bicycling across America

The first three nights of the trip I camped out. Once in New Jersey State Park, twice in the Pine Barrens. On the third night I was north of an Air Force base and lay in my tent, listening to the jets roaring into the gathering darkness. I imagined myself as the pilot of each plane, banking over the wilderness away from the city lights. I realized that I wanted to see the country, and that meant seeing the people. That night, I abandoned my original plan of camping in the woods. I'd head into towns and find the people. The next morning I packed up and waded down the river I had camped by. Out west I would start camping again when towns became sparse, but for now I prepared for a new challenge - asking people to camp on their land.

Asking to camp out may seem a trivial challenge, but I wasn't used to approaching strangers to ask favors. In fact, I wasn't really good at approaching strangers to ask for anything! The next night I took the path of least resistance and asked at churches, something I would do many more times. Although I was sometimes turned down, more often a local pastor would put me up.

The day I crossed into Pennsylvania was one of the more stressful on the trip. I had tried to visit Tom Brown, the outdoorsman and survivalist. Although I had called ahead, I was discouraged from visiting his ranch in the New Jersey hills. All his classes were booked into 1994. Nevertheless, I wanted to give it a try. Those other people had paid \$600 to be in the course - but I had biked up the mountain.

I was turned away by two of his assistant instructors. Later I realized my error - I had come to see Tom Brown. I should have realized my goal, even if it meant getting brushed off with two words. I had set myself a goal and fallen short by my own fault. That disappointment would soon be compounded. The front rack and tire began to rub each other. I had had problems for several days with it. I pulled into a gas station, having become lost and ending up heading into the city instead of skirting it. I picked up a phone and started to call home, ready to call it quits. Crying, I realized that I'd have to get the bike fixed no matter what, so I might as well do it here. I asked the gas station mechanic - yes, there was a bike shop just down the road. This was the first of three stops I would make at bike shops - everytime I found respect for what I was doing. For the first time in my life, I felt I was respected not for what I knew, but for what I did. It felt good.

The bike shop owner helped me bend and reattach the rack. He asked no money either for his time or the few parts he had donated. I left in much better spirits. By now it was 3 p.m. I was in downtown Easton, PA, and didn't feel like any more riding that day. I found a Masonic Temple, hoping to find a DeMolay Chapter. No such luck - in fact I never managed to actually find any chapters along the way. Those I saw listed on Temple directories never had contact people listed, and often I couldn't even find a directory. Kansas City wasn't much help - all they gave me was the Executive Officer's name and number. I tried that in two or three states and could not quite find the people to work through state bureaucracies. It's a sad comment on the state of our fraternity when we don't even provide contact information at the temples.

The owner of the shop next door came out and introduced himself. We talked for a bit and I told him what I was doing and that I was looking for a place to stay that night. He asked me into the shop and started calling places - a bed and breakfast, a local college. Finally, he found a YMCA that had rooms for \$12 a night. It was about 8 miles west in Bethlehem, PA. He gave me directions and I was on my way. Some nice people had helped me through one of my toughest days. I was through the day - and I was through New Jersey.

I stayed at the Y for two nights. Bethlehem is not what you'd expect from Steel Town, USA. It's a college town with a historic downtown, pizza joints, bagel shops and a refurbished shopping area.

When I left, I headed southwest into Lancaster County.

I stopped in a church near Blue Ball. No minister was around, but the people next door let me put a tent in their backyard. George had retired from sales and had gone back to farming, gardening a small plot behind his house. After my college course in crop production, I could at least have a conversation about fertilizers and plowing. Later, his daughter, who lived across the street called to ask why her dad was putting up a tent!

The early highlight of the trip came in Gettysburg, PA. It was getting dark and I wasn't quite in town yet as I passed a Christian Rescue Mission. I stopped and asked if I could stay overnight. The night manager said I could, and I moved my bags inside. I met Wayne, about 7 years older than I, a college grad who had lost his job and gone hiking up the Appalachian Trail. When his money ran out, he wound up at the Adams Mission.

We talked a while, went into town together, and got along pretty well. There were some junk bikes behind the mission - we decided to use them for spare parts, get one running, and Wayne would travel with me for a while. I stayed an extra day to work on the bike. In the rush to get the bike running, I neglected to lock mine.

The next morning it was gone. At the time, I remember I felt relief, since each day had become a battle to keep going and not dwell on the enormous task ahead. Within a few days, I had gotten a lift home from my parents and realized that I had to finish the bike trip. While waiting for the insurance money, I visited a commune in Virginia that had been on my itinerary and did some work to get extra bucks. A month later, I would make a point to pass through Gettysburg on my new bicycle. Wayne would still be there.

During the month between these two stages in my trip, I visited Springtree Farm Community in the Virginia hills. I stayed a few nights and really enjoyed it. This commune got started in the early 70s and has gone through some ups and downs. They had 6 people there full-time, plus visitors. All the food (well, almost all) came from the garden and orchard. The fruit crop was really kicking during my visit - cherries and strawberries out the wazoo. I helped plant, harvest and cook. I enjoyed a solar shower and a swimming hole. The relaxed pace gave me a chance to reflect and recharge. I left with some new friends and a fresh commitment to my trip.

When I restarted the trip at the beginning of July, I was soon glad I had visited Springtree when I did. I hit the Pennsylvania mountains in the midst of a heat wave. I made only six miles the first day out of Gettysburg, stopped mid-afternoon and slept the rest of the day, then walked around town and found out that it had been a field hospital during the Civil War. Those six miles that wiped me out - wounded soldiers endured them in horse-drawn wagons!

Instead of turning south into West Virginia as planned, I decided to head into Ohio and get through with the hills. This cut out Virginia completely, so I would have missed Springtree.

I did cut off a small corner of West Virginia, hitting Morgantown and spending a few days visiting one of my DeMolay brothers, a friend of a friend. It was nice to relax in a familiar college atmosphere for a bit. If you ever get to Morgantown, be sure to grab a meal at Maxwell's, a nice little restaurant in "downtown".

Next came Ohio. Riding down the highway one evening, I saw a man struggling to put up a sign - "Country Church". I stopped, gave him a hand and wound up getting food, a place to put the tent for the night, and an enjoyable service the next morning (it was a Sunday).

In Kentucky I spent a day "on the job" helping a stonemason I had met at a church in a small town.

Farther south I headed off the main road to visit the next community on my list. The hills got steep and the weather was hot, Hot, HOT! On one hill, I just collapsed and let the bike fall in the middle of the road. I vented my anger and frustration at an imaginary driver who ran over my bike. No drivers came along the remote road and gradually I calmed. I thought about heading back again, but that didn't feel right. No - I had to finish the trip and that meant I had to finish the hill. I said a prayer for faith and strength, then got back on the bike. I didn't stop until my destination.

New Age Community Land Trust is currently manned by two women. They practice permaculture, raising garden crops on raised beds (since the soil was so poor). They have no running water (except a gravity-drop cistern), rely on rainwater and a spring, have no electricity, use kerosene lamps, and cook with a woodstove. I really enjoyed the "rustic" experience. Something about raising crops, harvesting them and cooking them appealed to me very deeply. Also, Joanie had spent 3 years in seminary. She finally dropped out after concluding that the church was more interested in managers than in spiritual leaders. She mentioned that they never had a discussion about "faith struggles". This was certainly something I knew little about, but I would remember her words in Arizona.

I stayed two nights, then left in the morning, when it was cool and the hills were manageable. Heading into Tennessee, I turned south to visit The Farm, a famous commune in the 60s and 70s. The Farm went through an economic crisis in the early 80s, emerging as a land trust more than a commune. The fields are no longer farmed seriously, camping fees are charged to visitors, and the Store, though maintaining a leftward bent, features your typical junk goods and high prices. Outside the store I met some teenagers who invited me over to their house. That turned out to be a much better call than staying at the Farm.

I have since been told that since these folks threw their beer cans in the back of the truck, instead of out the window, they were "Good Ole Boys" and not "Rednecks". The first night I was there, we went to pick up some sand at their cousin Steve's. Steve demonstrated the canon he had built in the back of his pickup truck. It ran off an acetylene torch rig mounted behind the cab. First Steve primed it with a small charge. Then he pumped gas into it for two or three seconds, as black smoke rose from the barrel from the primer. He lit the torch and touched the flame to the cannon. The bang would have made any rock band cringe. I was told he once fired a tennis ball half a mile.

Next, I swung back into northern Tennessee, to a visit another DeMolay friend from several years back. I had a fun weekend with Hart, his girlfriend and her 14-year-old brother, Brad. Both Hart and Brad have an interest in loud car stereo systems. Hart sells them and Brad plots to outdo Hart. "You get a '450', I'll get a '650'," he says with a flick of the eyebrow. "You get a '650', I'll get a '750'." Hart has a Bronco and Brad has a pickup truck which, err... sits in the driveway, since he, err... can't drive yet.

Heading west again, I crossed the Mississippi at Dyersburg, but not before the first and worst crash of the trip. I was riding in the evening and wasn't paying close attention to my riding. No cars were coming - I simply ran off the road. I ended up with a flat tire, a cut knee and a sprained wrist. The wrist caused enough pain that I stopped to have it X-rayed. Nothing was broken, but it bothered me the rest of the trip. I can still feel it if I bend my hand back.

I crossed into Missouri, the eastern part of which featured some of the worst drivers I encountered. These people just couldn't slow down, even though I had no shoulder to ride on. I even had people blowing the horn at me when the left lane was completely clear for them to pass! I saw some people sand bagging, and thought to myself: These floods have a benefit. They bring the people down to size. My basic impression of eastern Missouri was that the people forgot how their forefathers struggled to farm the land. Now everything is pesticides, tractors, and futures

quotes on the Chicago Board.

After leaving Missouri (and the Ozark Mountains - whew!) behind, I picked off a corner of Arkansas to visit Shiloh, a Christian Commune. It was here I felt most comfortable of all the places I visited. Shiloh is somewhat liberal as communes go - they let you keep private property, though any work you do while there is donated. They support themselves by running a bakery, which turns out the best commercial bread I've ever set my teeth into. The people were relaxed, welcoming and generally fun to be around, especially Kenneth, one of the young teenagers. I hope I took some of Shiloh's "state of mind" with me and look forward to visiting there again the next time I'm in Arkansas! It was during this time that my parents caught up to me with their motorhome. I traveled with them for a day or two, and was rather glad to part company. Though I miss my family and friends, I found the vehicle and campsite quite stifling after a month on the road. I slept outside at night, and marvelled at the other people packed into sites on the campground. Incidentally, they had so much trouble with the motorhome that I made it to California before they were back in Maryland!

In central Missouri I visited East Wind, the largest commune I saw. The community had about 70 members who ran a hammock and sandal business, as well as a nut butter plant. Through these industries the commune funded itself. By commune standards, they were wealthy - a small library, a videotape collection, dozens of buildings, electricity and running water throughout. Most food was purchased from outside, unlike the homesteaders, who tried to grow almost all of their own. I stayed a couple days and decided that East Wind was neat to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there. A work quota of 40 hrs/wk was demanded of each member. Of course, this time including cooking, child care, and various clean-up chores, but still I would come to such a place to escape the pressures of a regular work week. Also, I saw some political actions that disturbed me. One of the kids had a squirt gun taken away after the commune passed a bill stating that members of a non-violent community had a right not to see "violent" toys. So is a football a violent toy? This struck too close to freedom of expression for me.

Now I began to ride across Oklahoma, where the land started to open up and I started to see serious head winds for the first time on the trip. In Stillwater, I passed a Catholic Church and stopped in to ask if any monasteries were in the area. I hadn't thought of this before I began, but I figured since I was visiting communes, I should check out the oldest ones of all!

I was directed to St. Gregory's, about a day's ride south. I tried to call ahead but by the time I got hold of the Father I was to speak with, I was practically there, so I just rode over. I think my appearance with no advance notice hampered my welcome, but it was still a fascinating visit. St. Gregory's monks run a small college to support the abbey. Mass is every morning at 6 a.m (I got up once), followed by a silent breakfast. The monks talk during lunch, and dinner is eaten while a selection is read from a book (I got English history while I was there). Two monks stick out in my mind - Br. Dominic, who was always ready to help me out or show me around, and Br. Benedict, who I didn't talk to for long, but who impressed me with his spiritual commitment.

After Oklahoma, things started to spread out a bit. I slept in unlikely places like an airstrip, since towns spread farther apart. The highlight of Texas was a night spent on a "peace farm" across from Pantex, the U.S. nuclear weapons assembly facility. I learned some neat things about how H-bombs were moved around on tractor trailers, saw some pictures ("H-bombs in Rush Hour" sticks out) and came across a book called Peace Pilgrim. If you get a chance, check it out. It describes the life and teaching of a woman who spent much of her last 25 years walking across the country with God's message of love. She stopped counting at 25,000 miles on foot!

In New Mexico I climbed to and crossed the continental divide. The mountains were actually

easier than the Appalachians, since the younger Rockies don't have the rolling hills that keep you climbing the same height over and over. But above 7000 feet it can get cold! I remember the last day of August. I rode about 20 miles just after sunrise and my breath was freezing in front of me.

Arizona turned out to be the climax of the trip. My second day in the state brought me close to Winslow. It had been a tough and frustrating day, as I had fought a 20 mph head wind all the way and didn't make good time. By this point in the trip, I was looking forward to the end and starting to count miles and days. Also, insects came out at nightfall and I had to put up the tent on a quiet interchange off I-40. I didn't like putting up the tent, preferring to sleep outside. I wasn't in a very good mood as I put up the tent, inflated the air mattress and lay down to pray. In my mind's eye, I pictured myself saying to God, "just do whatever you want to me".

In the next minute, I had what I would describe as a mental lightning bolt. I suddenly saw that my problems were of my own creation - I was relying on myself instead of on faith. I was going to ride the bike; I was going to put up the tent; I had the money to buy food. I saw that what I needed to do was get rid of all that. The next day was Labor Day and everything was closed, so I rode on to Flagstaff. Here my bike trip ended.

I agonized for a day or two, then committed myself. On Wednesday morning, crying, I took the bike for a last ride. Finding a local church, I gave the pastor the bike and most all the gear, telling him to do what he wanted with it. With my last money, I bought a pack to carry, and paid for postage to mail my wallet, contact lenses, and a few other things home.

I hitchhiked 60 miles south to the last spot on my itinerary. Arcosanti, in the Arizona desert, is a design city being constructed by Italian architect Pavlo Solari and his colleagues. His basic idea is to abandon auto-centric design in favor of compact, dense structures that put people within walking distance of work and play. It's on I-17, about halfway between Phoenix and Flagstaff. Stop by if you're in the area - take the hour tour. It's worth it.

I got another ride west to Prescott, from where I started walking south. I got into a national forest and lay down under some pines. I slept several hours. I guess I awoke around 3 a.m, judging from the moon. A mosquito was bothering me, so I started walking again. The moon was half full, so I had plenty of light and the road wasn't heavily traveled. I walked through sunrise, getting out of the hills and the national forest around 9 a.m. I napped a bit, then continued my walk across the mesa. The night had been only slightly cool, but the day was hot. I decided not to hitchhike, but to keep walking for a while, fasting. Foolishly, I had brought no water, so had to wait until I passed through towns to drink.

By late afternoon, I was coming into a small town and stopped at a ranch to ask for water. I was also offered food, and that was the end of my fast. That night, I slept until dawn in an abandoned building that was once a shop or restaurant. Morning saw me facing a long downhill to the desert, so I hitchhiked down it and into the town of Wickenburg. I was depressed and upset. I felt disappointment at having broken my fast. I was afraid to keep walking across the mesa in the heat. More than anything, I was afraid that if I kept walking, I would find my calling, and I was afraid of knowing what it might be.

That day, I broke down. I got money wired to me and was on a bus by that evening. I had discovered that a part of me, much stronger than I thought, wanted nothing to do with grand visions of any kind. I wanted my family and friends, didn't want to be rich, but didn't want to be poor, wanted to write software, play music, cook nice meals and certainly not wonder all over the country.

By the next day, I had made it to San Clemente, California, where a high school friend was living. Chris was gracious enough to put me up for a week I waited for my wallet to be mailed back to me. I don't know what it was - the two months on the road, the two days on the Mesa, or just being around someone who loved what he was doing. I realized that the big reason I found computers unfulfilling was that the work didn't challenge me physically. I saw that I had become much less assertive in groups than I used to be, more content to be with people just because I enjoyed their company. I found a deep respect for a young man I hardly knew, but who was ready to surf for the next 20 years even though he could never make a penny doing it.

I left San Clemente after a week that I really needed. It let me put my feet back on the ground. Right now, I'm in San Diego, toying with going to Mexico for the two weeks before a friend of mine comes out to visit. Then what? I don't know. I love the land here, the surf crashing into the rocks, but am already tired of the congestion. I'll see what happens after a week or two.

I realized something about friendship, too. Some people judge friends by their influence on you - "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." "Friends don't use drugs." "A friend would never tell you to drop out of school." But it's really much more than that. Just because someone may not be a fully wholesome influence, doesn't mean that they don't care. We're all human - we all make mistakes. Friends introduce you to new ideas, new ways of life. It's the prerogative of a friend.

Love,

Brent

The Spirit at Thirty

My earlier spiritual journey I documented in *Bicycling across America*. At the end of that account, I related how I had experienced a sort of revelation in Arizona, which could basically be summed up "*Your problem is that you think you can do everything yourself.*" I gave away my bicycle along with my money and almost all my worldly possessions, and started walking along the back roads of Arizona. After three days of this, having driven myself to walk forty miles with almost no sleep, I gave up. I walked back into Wickenburg, Arizona, contacted a good friend of mine, and got \$200 wired to me for bus fare to California.

In the eight years since, I have often wondered about that experience. Did I set a pattern for the rest of my life by giving up? Did I commit, then and there, some fatal error from which I can never recover? If I had kept walking, would I have experienced some life-changing revelation like those of the prophets? Did I abandon God?

In my nights of despair, I plead with the Lord to forgive me this and my other sins of omission. I beg him not to give up on me. I implore him to make me an instrument of his will, to grant me the wisdom to know that will, and to bolster me with the courage that I so often seem to lack. In depression, I muse that my life is already a failure, that I've already missed my fate, that everything from here on out is just a shell of a life, for "*the man who liveth not his dream is living death.*"

Then I pick myself up and carry on. I view my experience in Arizona as just one stumble among many, many that I've committed. I reflect on Christ's promise that "*he who believes in me shall not perish, but have eternal life,*" and trust that God will find in his heart the mercy to do his will in my life, imperfect as it may be. I haven't given up. Though the light was dim, and at times appeared to have vanished completely, I'm still moving forward.

Shiloh

Three years after the bicycle trip, in 1996, I returned to one of the places I had passed through on my bike - the Shiloh community in Sulphur Springs, Arkansas. A non-denominational Christian community nestled in the Ozark mountains, Shiloh numbers about a dozen long-time members, and various transients. The community provides the no-stop-light town of Sulphur Springs with its only industry - a commercial bakery in the basement of the community's main building, a one-time military academy on the crest of a grassy knoll. No doubt about it - Shiloh bakes the best bread I've ever tasted.

The community's led by Pastor James, the aging inheritor from Shiloh's founder. A quiet man, James reads heavily in mystical Christianity, and always conducted a meditation session at the outset of the community's morning meeting. Prayer, singing, and some kind of spiritual reading (usually of a mystical nature, never the Gospels) were always mainstays of the hour-long meetings. Never, during the two months I was there, did I witness James take or administer communion.

Probably the most dominant personality was the pastor's wife. In her late fifties and blessed with good health, Anna Lee managed the bakery, often donning a white hair net and helping work the assembly line. She was also one of the chief proponents of the community's philosophy, which she usually summarized in the "Four Rules": no smoking, no alcohol, no drugs without a doctor's prescription, no sex outside a heterosexual marriage.

I made several friends at Shiloh, Paul Clough and John Knoderer, the local computer programmers, and Anna Lee herself, I think. Most significant were two local teenagers I got to know - Jeremiah, a

seventeen-year-old whose family rented a house from the community, and Robert, a thirteen-year-old who was good friends with Paul's son, Micah.

Jeremiah's interests included fast driving, loud rock music, and smoking marijuana. We hit it off right away. I tried to be a bit of a calming influence - teaching him how to start a stick-shift on a hill instead of just grinding the gears; driving slowly through town and saving Speed Racer for the highway. I remember him using my computer to research Marylon Manson on the Internet and asking if I thought demonic influences are real. I replied in the affirmative, and Jeremiah later told me that he had destroyed all his Marylon Manson CDs.

Robert, on the other hand, was a quieter boy who played Dungeons and Dragons with his friends and came up to visit me and browse the Internet almost every day, enjoying the interactive role-playing games, the net's Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs). Robert would also practice on the piano while Jeremiah and I would fool around on the guitar. I adored Robert; found him quite attractive, really. Yet I was afraid of a sexual relationship developing, not because I was worried about the police or what people would think, but because I myself am very reluctant to explore gay sexuality, especially with a thirteen-year-old. The bottom line was that, to my lasting regret, I never told him how I really felt about him. Putting sex aside, the truth is that I loved him. Yet I never put my arm around him, never said the words, "I love you". Teenagers need to know the difference between love and sex, I think, otherwise it's easy to get them confused. Coming from a broken home, I think Robert needed love, and I desperately wanted to give it to him, but that I could never quite manage.

Finally, somebody smelt the marijuana smoke from Jeremiah's and my near-daily smoke-outs, and all hell broke loose. After being confronted with this charge at the community meeting, a vote was taken that I was to leave in a week and not have any contact with the children in the meantime. I began preparing to leave, but the part about the children I ignored. Jeremiah's father came to the next community meeting to voice his support for me, but Pastor James refused to let either of us speak and ended the meeting. The next day, one of the older ladies came into my office while Robert was there, told him to leave, and in about the nastiest voice you could imagine, told me "we're not going to let you hurt these children". I left, but not before literally wiping the dirt from my shoes, as the disciples were told by Christ:

And if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your message, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or that town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that town.

Matthew 10:14-15

Friends, let me exhort you never to lay down any curse, even if you proclaim the Gospel and be rejected in everything. We are taught to love our enemies, not to curse them. That curse I laid has brought so much grief into my life that at times I can not fathom how I could possibly have cursed the town where two of my best friends lived. It's most obvious effect was on me! Even though I wanted badly to maintain contact with my friends, I took the curse very seriously and broke off all contact with Sulphur Springs. After two years, my nagging concern for my friends began to win out over the curse. I wrote Robert a letter for his sixteenth birthday; it was returned undelivered, as he had moved. The next year I actually returned to the town, and it took another year to track down my friends. Jeremiah had married, had a kid on the way, but was in most ways the same person; we now stay in touch. On the other hand, Robert had changed completely, becoming very materialistic and selfish, and wanting nothing to do with me. Can I blame him? During the years when he needed me most, I was nowhere to be found. He was the closest thing I ever had to a little brother. I fear I've lost him forever.

The Drug War

Early in 1997, having returned from Arkansas, I lived with a college friend of mine who was waiting tables at a Glen Burnie restaurant. He was also a small-time drug dealer, keeping marijuana and cocaine in the house in addition to the usual alcohol. At any rate, the police found out and the house was raided. Five days later, we were evicted. What followed was the most profound faith struggle of my life.

I developed a plan to end the Drug War. A handful of people, I reasoned, could sit on the subway tracks of the Washington Metro system and block the trains. Removing them, especially from an underground station, would be difficult, since the tracks are recessed and there are high voltage rails which would have to be shut down before the police could act. Yet was it right thing to do? I vacillated and agonized for months. One day I would be absolutely sure that it had to be done; two days later I would be just as sure that it was wrong; three days after that I would again be convinced that I had to act.

In the midst of this crisis, I sought re-baptism. Through my prayers and contemplations, I recognized that Jesus had been baptized, not as an infant, but as a grown man, at the outset of his ministry. I decided to pursue the same course, though not for the redemption of sin (perhaps a serious error), but in search of an answer from God for this political campaign that I was complementing. Just as Christ received a sign at his baptism, before pursuing his ministry, so I sought a similar sign at mine. While this may seem incredibly arrogant (it seems so to me, in retrospect), I can honestly tell you that I entered into the venture with the profound conviction that if God wanted me to pursue this campaign, he would give me a sign at my baptism.

I fasted for a week, then traveled to Ohio, where I had met a minister during my bicycle trip who baptized by immersion. After attending his service, I asked him afterward for baptism. Since he was busy that afternoon, he said that unless I could wait a few days, it would have to occur immediately. And that's exactly what happened. He announced the baptism to those of his congregation still mingling after the service, we drove to a nearby lake, and with perhaps fifty witnesses, he baptized me in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I received no sign.

I drove home to Maryland telling myself that I didn't have to do it, that I had no calling from God, that there was no obligation for me to pursue this campaign that so deeply troubled me. While I had many more doubts and agonies over it, I believe my baptism in Ohio was probably the turning point in my decision to scrap the campaign. In a moment of paranoia (*What if the police busted me again?*) I burned the notebook I had prepared in planning the campaign, and mostly got on with my life.

I would return to the drug war again. In early 2000, I had what you might call a relapse. I had rejected civil disobedience, but still considered the possibility of a speaking and protest campaign. I published *It's the Drug War, Stupid*. Looking back on that document, I have to tell you that what disturbs me most about it is not the anger it relates, because that was real, but how political it is; how totally coaxed it is in political rights and strategies; how God has been completely edited out.

Some of what I proposed in that essay came about, though I had no part of it. The "shadow conventions" of 2000 highlighted the drug war as one of their issues, and were labeled as "ultra-left" by a society that split its vote between Al Gore and George W. Bush. I'm increasingly coming to a disturbing conclusion - that the majority of the people of this country want a war in their own land, against their own people, and are absolutely committed to a policy of "zero tolerance".

Monasticism

I'll probably end up as a monk, if not in name than at least in lifestyle. My earliest direct exposure to monasticism came on the bike trip, when I visited a Benedictine monastery in Oklahoma. St. Benedict, the founder of this order, spent three years living in a cave, his only nourishment being bread lowered to him on a rope by a friend. Later, he founded the monastery at Monte Casino and the Benedictine order. He lived about 1500 years ago.

More recently, I've read a biography of St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order. St. Francis' response to the Christian gospel was similar to St. Benedict's, but also much different. Both men took their religion very seriously, and neither were content to just sing about heaven on Sunday mornings. Yet while Benedict cloistered himself in a monastery, Francis took to the road. After giving away all his worldly possessions, he began traveling around Italy by foot, preaching the gospel and begging for his food. Any money he received, he gave away immediately.

I don't completely subscribe to Francis' philosophy; you won't catch me sprinkling ashes on my food because I think it tastes too good! Yet we are in agreement on many and the most significant points. I consider it a religious obligation to give to beggars, and recently have found myself on various occasions without a penny to my name. Yet I have no intention of getting a job just to produce money; I have plenty of important work to do, and frankly, pride. I despise the capitalists and will not support their nightmare system by working for them simply because I'm forced to if I want to eat. Like Francis, if I lack benefactors, I will simply go hungry. Yet God knows what we need, and will provide it - I'm not starving away, thanks to those who give to me and particularly Bruce Caslow, my most significant supporter over the last few years. It's Bruce that paid for an apartment in Washington when I couldn't afford the rent; Bruce who was always tossing twenty bucks my way when I didn't have anything to eat; Bruce who was always there to review an essay or discuss my spiritual trials.

I think we need both the Benedictine and the Franciscan ideals in our lives; we find both motifs in the life of Christ. Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness, withdraws onto a mountaintop to pray, spends all night in prayer. We need to withdraw into seclusion, perhaps best the seclusion of nature, to experience God in solitude. Christ also travels from town to town, stays with friends in Jerusalem, sends forth his disciples and tells them to take no money, or packs, or extra clothing. We also need to come down from the mountaintops and express our love of God through our fellow man. Honestly, the great saints seems to know this. Francis at times withdraws into seclusion, and Benedict finally left his cave. Ultimately, we don't need a ten-acre monastery or public vows to life as brothers in Christ. The monastery was wherever Jesus went, and the most important vows are the ones we make to God.

New Age Christianity

I've been exposed in the last year to New Age Christianity, most particularly through Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations With God* books. For those unfamiliar with this, Walsch claims that his books are essentially channeled from God. He would take a pad of paper, write a question, and wait for an answer to come into his head. Sometimes no answer would come, and he would put the pen down until the next day. When an answer would come, he would write it down and then ask another question. He wrote three books this way.

The basic tenet of these books is that *We Are All One*. When the Bible states that God made us in his image, it means this spiritually, not physically. We are, each of us, a little piece of God, which God created in order to experience the universe as individuals. Those who become completely

self-aware, such as Jesus, realize their own oneness with God and, through faith, find power even over death.

This theology is radically different from traditional Christianity. It claims, among other things, that there is no Devil (we invented him ourselves); that we reincarnate again and again; that Jesus was not the only one to rise from the dead, and that we, like him, can conquer death, through faith; that spiritual masters generally don't marry, not because they don't have sex, but because they can't make an exclusive commitment to one person.

Late 2001 found me back in Arizona, contemplating suicide in order to meet God. He raised Lazarus from the dead; he raised Christ from the dead; he can raise me from the dead - he can raise anybody from the dead! After three days of a water-less fast, I gave up. I just didn't know if this was what God wanted from me. Of course, I was doing it because I wanted to find out what God wanted from me!

In the two nights after I abandoned my fast, I had two vivid dreams. In one dream, I was seated at a small table outside a restaurant, but I didn't like the other people sitting around me, glaring at me. I walked inside the restaurant, where I found a huge banquet laid out, but the people were speaking in a foreign language. I returned outside, but there found that the people were gone, the tables had been taken up, and it was raining. Returning inside once more, I discovered that the people were speaking Spanish, a language I understood, but much of the banquet was gone. I specifically remember that the champagne had been replaced by Diet Coke.

In the other dream, I was an astronaut floating in orbit, tethered to another astronaut. I cut the tether and returned to Earth, while the other astronaut keep going out into space. When I got back to the ground, people kept asking me, "What were you thinking?" "Why didn't you keep going?"

I can't quite figure what to make of this. If true, it means that we can pass through death, and if our faith is strong enough, be resurrected. If false, then it represents a temptation of the Devil and a path only to our own self-destruction. Russ Wise notes that *The New Age offers man the same deal the serpent offered Eve in the garden. If you eat of this fruit, you will become like God.* The fundamental question it poses is simple - is Christ a guide and teacher, to be followed and emulated, or is he the unique Son of God, whose miracles can not be duplicated?

Edgar Cayce

At a seminary, it'd be interesting to conduct a class on *Modern Prophets*. What do we make of Nostradamus? Edgar Cayce? Joseph Smith? *A Course in Miracles*? *Conversations with God*? We can't just ignore them - the claims they make are too serious. Yet we've been taught there will be false prophets, so we can't just accept them at face value, either. They require careful consideration.

Cayce lived in the early twentieth century, and would enter a sleeping, hypnotic trance in which he'd respond to questions with answers from a "Source" that appeared to have extra-worldly knowledge. The Source revealed that reincarnation occurs, that among Cayce's previous lives was that of a priest in ancient Egypt, that the construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza was actually a prophecy in stone that records the exact moments of Christ's birth and death, as well as the imminent entrance of humanity into a new age symbolized by the King's Chamber, etc, etc.

In addition to the New Age ideas here, like reincarnation, I find Cayce disturbing because of some of the prophecies he made that I tie into my own life. He prophesied his own return "in the capacity of a LIBERATOR of the world in its relationships with individuals; for he must enter again

in the age that is to come, or in 1998". At the time of my contemplated drug war campaign in 1997 I knew none of this, but in retrospect I ask myself if that wasn't the "appearance" that was to have occurred a year later, in the election year of 1998. And just when is "the age that is to come"? Is it a subtle shift, like the turn of the millennium, or the change from the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius? Or is it a dramatic change, to be characterized by political upheaval, environment disaster, or global unrest?

In retrospect, I wish I'd never read any of this! I'd rather just not know, and stumble along, making the decisions as best I can without have all this extra stuff nagging at me in my head. Others have similar doubts about Cayce; some of his prophecies just flat out never occurred.

Arrogance

Early in 2001, I had a dream in which I saw a newspaper tabloid on a supermarket checkout stand. Its headline gave three prophecies for the coming year - disaster for the United States, war in the Middle East, and the appearance of a great saint. Of course, my ego thrusts me into the later role. Am I a great saint? If so, how do I "appear"?

New Age Christianity and the Cayce prophecies raise even more disturbing questions. Could I duplicate the feats of Christ? Be the reincarnation of St. Peter? Become a Messiah? This is the fundamental question raised by these teachings - was Jesus the unique Son of God, or all we all sons of God, who can seek to obtain the same level of faith and power?

Is this insanity? Not exactly. I don't actually believe that I am Jesus, or God, or a Messiah. Yet the reading I've done raises these disturbing questions. It's more an intellectual insanity, generated by competing theologies, than a physiological one with some chemical imbalance at its source.

The Spirit at Thirty One

In another dream, I was running through a cave-like maze of passages, fleeing in terror from some attacker. I soon realized, though, that my attackers weren't really attacking me at all - they were mocking me and my books. Mocking my attempt to learn Spanish by reading it. I emerged from the cave and decided to return to the place I was fleeing from. Perhaps I thought I had killed someone, in fact, it was only a flesh wound. There was really nothing to run from at all; then I awoke.

So what am I running from? From my failure at Wickenburg? From human society? From the Drug War? From God? And what do I make of all these ideas and theologies I've been exposed to? Ultimately, I can't answer these questions, and I doubt that anyone can. Only God holds the answers. So, through prayer, I've asked God to reveal these answers to me, and I trust that this way, I'll get the answers from the only source that holds them.

In the last year, I've given up on spending all my time in front of a computer screen, thinking I'm going to save the world through a website. I've hitchhiked across the United States, down into Mexico, and back. I've become a lot more comfortable having no money, am willing to go hungry if need be, and don't feel tied down to a nice apartment and a pile of possessions, though I regret that I can't fit my piano into my backpack. I'm on my way now to spend at least a few weeks in the Appalachian Mountains, fasting and praying. Certainly Jesus did this at critical times in his life, and many were the saints and prophets, from Abraham to Francis, who found God in seclusion, in the wilderness. Hopefully, I'll find these answers, too. In any event, I haven't given up. The spirit at thirty is still searching...

"It's the drug war, stupid"

I want to talk about fighting back.

Three years ago, my house was raided. My roommate, a really decent fellow, and something of a party animal, was honestly also a small-time drug dealer. I don't mean he made a living selling drugs; he just had plenty of marijuana and cocaine around, and would sell it to those of his friends who wanted some. He worked a full-time job, waiting tables in a restaurant, and would stay up partying after work until two or three in the morning. I've seen him give away a hundred dollars worth of drugs just passing it around to the people in the room, then do the same thing again the next night. I doubt he ever made much money on drugs. He didn't stand out on street corners hawking crack to teenagers. Like I said, he had plenty of drugs around, and would sell to people who knew this.

One of his friends, or should I say a friend of a friend, got busted and cut a deal with the police. He became what the search warrant called a "confidential informant". He persuaded his girlfriend to call her friend, my roommate, and arrange a small transaction. Wearing a wire, he came to our house, bought \$50 worth of cocaine, then walked back to the detective waiting in a car outside and handed it over to him.

A few weeks later, the house was raided. I was the only person home, working in the kitchen as I recall, when the knock came at the door. "Police officers executing search warrant!" they announced, pepper sprayed the dogs, handcuffed me against the wall and began their search. I didn't resist, but there was no need for me to cooperate. I said little, and sat handcuffed in the living room, reading the search warrant, while they combed the house. I knew what they were looking for, and knew they would find it in my friend's possessions. There was nothing in my possessions, so I was arrested, jailed, released, and eventually had my charges dropped in exchange for taking three months of counseling. Five days after the raid, we were evicted.

I wanted to fight back.

I wanted to hurt people the way people had hurt me. I want to violate society. I toyed with the idea of crashing a plane full of explosives into the DEA headquarters, but never saw myself as much of a terrorist. For a while I fantasied a plan to organize a militia and take over the Delmarva Peninsula, but that was just a pipe dream. I settled on something simpler, like walking up to a D.C. Metro station, sitting down on the railroad tracks, and refusing to let the trains go though until I was arrested and dragged away. Then I started thinking about all the ordinary people who'd just be trying to go somewhere on the Metro for their lunch hour, and all the people who'd be screaming and cursing at me while I screamed and cursed at them.

I gave up on fighting back.

W.H. Auden wrote, "Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return." The lesson has not been learned by those who finance and conduct the war on drugs. It's hard to imagine a world where only the police bust down doors and storm into people's homes, yet everyone else is peaceful and non-violent. There is a cycle of violence in our society. Armed men bust into people's homes — criminals, yes, but also the police. Police violence is not limited to bullet-ridden corpses in New York streets. Armed search and seizure has become a standard tactic in the war on drugs. C.O.P.S. has to be one of the most violent shows on television, and the nightly news often runs a close second. The reason? Simple. Armed force has become an acceptable means of social reform in our society, and the drug war is leading the vanguard.

No legitimate government is omnipotent. To prohibit an individual's actions, a real harm to others must be present. To justify the use of force, those targeted must themselves use force. Those who see the war on drugs as a popular crusade believe in a mirage, one that only needs to be walked up to and confronted to expose it. The war on drugs is a war. Nothing more, nothing less. We've seen war in Bosnia, war in Iraq, war in Vietnam. Now we're seeing war at home, and there's nothing glamorous or heroic about it in the least. Everyone's cracking down, getting tough, fighting back, and having "zero tolerance" for "them".

Yet a survey of the main political campaigns websites' reveals almost no mention of the war on drugs, and any discussion of violence tends to focus on gun control, not government restraint.

I've decided to fight back in a more constructive way.

I propose a political campaign to focus against the war on drugs. Why? First, the drug war is a poster child for intrusive, violent, unconstitutional government. Also, it is prominent and controversial. There's no need to raise the drug war in people's conscience, because it's already there. Everyone's heard about it, and everyone has some kind of opinion about it. Enough people are opposed to it to provide an initial base of support. If these people can't be mobilized to protest against it, the fault lies with the organizers. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, it's something I feel passionately about because it's touched me personally, and if you've read this far, I hope you feel the same way.

What is needed, first and foremost, is to create the war on drugs as a national campaign issue. The candidates are not talking about it, and the way to get them talking about it is to stage effective media events that highlight it.

I propose a series of protest rallies at the DEA's headquarters in northern Virginia. Nothing violent or even confrontational; there's no reason not to talk to the DEA and police in advance and hopefully find a mutually agreeable format. The key will be to attract enough people to get media attention. The way to do this is to stage a series of rallies, not just one, perhaps one a week, and make them entertaining and interesting enough to bring people back the next week. Have a couple dozen people pounding the pavements for the week in advance of each rally. Pass out flyers on local college campuses, at sporting events and concerts, at clubs and bars, and put ads in local newspapers and on the Internet. Expect something like a 1% return. One thousand people would be an excellent target number for the first rally; this means approaching 100,000 people. If twenty people can hand out 1,000 flyers a day for a week in advance, this goal can be obtained.

Once the rallies have begun creating the drug war as a campaign issue, a rapid and subtle tack is required. The issue is not drugs, it is violence. The issue is not whether people should use drugs, but whether the government should force people not to use them. The issue is not whether the government should pass laws against drug use, but whether force and coercion should be embraced as means of social reform. Always the question should be turned back into, "Do we want armed men busting into people's homes because of what they smoke?"

After a few weeks or perhaps a month of rallies, discussing and debating the issues, it will be time to tack again and present a solution. Not an outright condemnation of the drug war, but a call for a vote on the drug war, a national referendum to decide the issue. This can be implemented by an act of Congress placing an item on the November ballot and repealing the drug laws if a majority of nation's people vote against the drug war. Whether such a vote actually occurs is unimportant, it simply must be proposed. Any discussion about the drug war is then shifted to a discussion about a vote on the drug war. Anyone then opposed to our position has aligned themselves against a popular vote on a controversial issue, and this must be fully exploited, by hammering at it

repeatedly. "A vote, a vote!" should be the constant rallying cry.

If we can successfully reach this point, ideally by late summer 2000, we'll be over the hump. By creating a discussion, the political parties and candidates will be forced to respond, primarily at their party conventions. Two major courses of action present themselves. If the major political parties are willing to pursue reform, and in particular if the sitting Congress is willing to authorize a national referendum on the drug war, then we already have a voice in the government and should simply canvas the country, campaigning people to vote down the drug war in the referendum, and use this leverage to encourage further reform. If the major political parties take a strongly anti-reform position, then we should attempt to form a broad liberal-conservative coalition, based on the principles of restrained, constitutional government, and probably in concert with the Reform and Libertarian parties, in an attempt to turn the 2000 election itself into a de facto referendum on these issues.

What's the next step? Organizing the organizers. Those interested in discussing this document are invited to a meeting:

Monday, April 24, 2000 at 8 P.M.

94th Aero Squadron Restaurant
5240 Paint Branch Parkway
College Park, MD 20740

10 minute walk from College Park metro station

Head west from platform (Kiss & Ride side)
Turn left on River Rd
Turn right onto Paint Branch Pkwy
Restaurant on left

Capitalism and Christianity

Is capitalism an un-Christian philosophy?

The answer to this question depends heavily on how you define your terms. "Capitalism" and "Christianity" are both complex words that mean different things to different people. Debating over the meaning of these words is largely pointless; it's like arguing over whether a glass is half empty or half full. I'll present my definitions up front, to make my meaning clear. If these words mean different things to you than they mean to me, then your answers may vary.

By Christianity, I refer to the religious and philosophical system taught by Jesus of Nazareth, and recorded primarily in the Bible's four Gospels. I do not selectively endorse any one denomination or division of Christianity, nor do I reject any. The Bible *is* confusing, and there is room for honest disagreement among Christians. In my opinion, the key to Christianity is to believe in one man, Jesus Christ. To believe that he's the son of God, that he came to this world and gave his life that we might be saved. To believe that one of the greatest gifts he left behind are his teachings, recorded for all time in the Gospels. To believe that his system, his philosophy, and not any other one devised by man, is the way to live your life. The parts we understand, we must strive to live in our daily lives, no matter how difficult or seemingly unreasonable. If any part of Jesus' teachings were trivial or unimportant, he wouldn't have bothered with them. If the ways of the world take precedence to you over the Gospel teachings, or if you simply don't care what the Bible says, then read no further, as this essay will have little to say to you.

Capitalism, likewise, has several different connotations. In the course of writing and discussing this essay, I've identified three major interpretations of the term. Let me define them as follows:

- **capitalism¹** - a laissez-faire economic system, characterized by the separation of economy and state, "anti-socialism", free markets, free trade, relatively light taxation, and a minimum of government interference in commerce
- **capitalism²** - an industrial model of production, well illustrated by Henry Ford's assembly line, characterized by heavy specialization of both capital and labor, economies of scale, with the cost of goods reflecting the distributed costs of production
- **capitalism³** - a pseudo-religion of greed, characterized by pursuit of self-interest, often associated with the claim that each individual, by advancing his own self-interest, ultimately advances the good of society

For the remainder of this essay, I'll use the superscripts to indicate which meaning of capitalism I'm discussing.

I have no real objection to capitalism¹ or capitalism², and in fact reject socialism completely, but this isn't the meaning of capitalism I wish to discuss. Likewise, to some people capitalism means a commitment to hard work and self reliance. I don't really object to this, either, having no problem with either working hard or taking pride in your work, though I do feel that "self reliance" can be easily twisted into an insistence that others rely on themselves.

I take serious exception to capitalism³. One of the most important functions of religion is to provide us with a value structure through which to judge right and wrong. Capitalism³ is a philosophy of life that can only be described as pseudo-religion of greed. It usurps the role of religion to provide a distorted morality. "Give to all who beg from you," Christianity teaches us. "What's mine is mine," the capitalist³ answers. "Love your neighbor as yourself," is the Bible's Golden Rule. "Take care of number one," is the capitalist³ response. "Sell all your worldly

possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow me," Jesus told one of his questioners. The capitalist³ just laughs.

Let's not be distracted by the capitalist³ talk of "freedom", either. Someone who takes a gun and robs a convenience store has freedom. He's just chosen to use it to evil ends. Freedom implies the ability to choose between good and evil, but doesn't provide us with a value system to judge between them. This is the function of religion.

So often, when a capitalist³ talks about freedom, it's really a clever attempt to intertwine capitalism¹ and capitalism³. Anyone opposed to capitalism³ is twisted into an opponent of capitalism¹, and the distinction between the two is glossed over or ignored completely. Anyone who opposes "capitalism" is depicted as a monster socialist who opposed to freedom and liberty. In fact, just because we support capitalism¹, a society largely free from government control over the economy, doesn't imply support of capitalism³, a dog-eat-dog world where men live like wolves and prey on each other as best they can. Freedom does *not* imply that everyone lives for himself.. unless that's what we choose it to mean.

These are my main objections to capitalism³:

1. **The values we promote.**

Don't underestimate the impact society's values have on people, particularly the youth. We need to teach and practice Christian values, to lead others clearly. Making money shouldn't be our primary goal, and we shouldn't allow money to interfere with our commitment to Christianity. Christianity's two greatest commandments are to "love God with all your heart and all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself". Nothing's wrong with working hard, as long as we've got the right goals. Our first goal in life must be to seek God's will for us and put it into effect in our lives. Our second goal must be to love and serve others.

If we have a product or service for which people are willing to pay, we can make money, but be sure not to turn away those who can't pay. Remember the Christian commandment, "give to those who beg of you"; let's be sure to honor it! Having money isn't the problem; the problem is what people will do to get money and then to keep it. The Gospels make it clear that generosity is one of the great virtues of our religion.

So many times, when someone comes up with some nifty new idea, they immediately start figuring if they can get a patent on it, slap some restrictive license on it, or just keep the details secret. Instead of immediately asking "how can we make money on this?", we should instead start by asking "how can we best serve God and man with this?" Make the commitment to God and others first; let the money come later.

2. **The kind of society we build.**

Let's face it - not all the people who try to start a company and make a ton of money actually succeed. Yet enough do succeed to make a difference in our lives - Microsoft, WorldCom, Exxon, GM, RCA. Imagine if as many people who tried to make a fortune instead set out to make the world a better place. Not all would succeed. Yet enough would succeed to make a difference, because it's the attempt that counts. Little by little, we'd find ourselves living in a world of love and hope. Instead, little by little, we find ourselves living in a world of greed and despair.

3. **The legacy we leave.**

What do we want our children to say about us? Do we want them to answer with pride that their parents sacrificed to make the world a better place? Or are we content to let them shrug and say, "*Yeah, they made a lot of money*"? How do we want our age remembered by history? Are we willing to risk being judged along with the conquistadors and robber barons? Or will we sacrifice now, so that we may be judged along with the prophets and saints? Let's decide that the future will look back on us and say, "these people did everything in their power for the good of others".

4. **The treatment of dissidents.**

By "dissident" I mean anyone who won't adopt the capitalist³ philosophy. My personal experiences in a capitalist³ society are far from pleasant. In my youth, I began quite adept with computers, and ended up working for some major computer companies in the early 1990s. Yet I couldn't stomach the secrecy with which the technology was developed, and I decided that any software I wrote was going to be freely available to anyone who wanted it. That decision cost me my livelihood and turned me into an outcast on the fringe of society. And for what? Because I wanted to write software and publish it for free on the Internet. We need to build a world where people won't be ostracized just because they won't go along with "the system".

A man cannot serve two masters. If he attempts to do so, the demands of his masters may for a while coincide, but ultimately will diverge. The two masters will demand two different courses of action, and then you have to choose. Christianity and capitalism³ are two different masters promoting two different value structures.

Christianity teaches us to "give to all those who beg from us". So long as we keep this firmly in mind, fine. Yet the capitalist³ philosophy is often one of selfishness. "I take care of myself; nobody else will take care of me."

Of course, the capitalist³ would no doubt raise a flurry of objections:

1. **Capitalism³ works...**

"...in the real world," I can almost hear you adding. Well, Christianity never claimed to work in the real world. In fact, Jesus taught that Christianity would be rejected by the world, and that his disciples would be persecuted and killed.

Consider also that capitalism³ is not the world's only "success story". Fascism worked. By the end of 1940, fascism had conquered all of Europe. Germany was fascist; Italy was fascist; Spain was fascist; Poland had fallen in a couple of days; France a matter of weeks. Fascism ruled the entire continent. Fascism was a "success". Hitler felt so confident he invaded Russia.

Communism worked. By the middle of the twentieth century, between Russia and China and their various satellites, communism ruled half this planet. Communism turned a backwards, rural nation into an industrial super power, put the first man into space, and cast its intellectual appeal to many of the world's left-wing thinkers. Cuba looked to communism. Angola looked to communism. Communism was a "success". Khrushchev pounded his shoe on the table and declared, "We will bury you!"

Other notable "successes" include Negro slavery; the conquest of native Americans by both the Spanish and the Anglo Saxons; the establishment of global empires by Britain, France, and Holland; and the military dominance of the Mediterranean by Rome for nearly a

millennium.

Clearly, judging "success" is a difficult matter, made easier by the passage of time and quite difficult without the hindsight of history. Yet even if communism or fascism had genuinely succeeded over the long term, neither of these societies I'd want to live in! Success shouldn't be measured just by the expedience of the moment, but by moral and ethical considerations. To blandly declare "Capitalism³ works," and to use this as a trump card to cancel all other considerations, to also to accept these other societies, because each, at some time and in some way, "worked".

2. **You have to survive.**

Total relativism. People had to survive in Soviet Russia; the way to do it was to become a communist. People had to survive in Nazi Germany; the way to do it was to become a fascist. This argument can be used to justify anything.

Jesus' answer to this question was not to worry about survival; let God take care of your survival. My answer is slightly different. We *do* have to survive, and the way to survive is to take care of each other and to build a society where people can take care of themselves, and walking into Safeway with a \$20 bill doesn't count. If you're dependent on another man for your food, freedom quickly becomes an empty euphemism. Government welfare programs simply replace one form of dependence with another.

The capitalists³ don't want freedom, except for themselves. You don't make a lot of money by setting people free. In fact, quite to the contrary, the way to make a big pile of money is to make people dependent. Bernard Ebbers didn't build WorldCom by making long distance communications free. The way to build a WorldCom is to put a switch on every telephone line in this country, then sending people a bill every month and turning off their service if they don't pay.

Under capitalism³, everyone "has to survive" because everyone is dependent on the capitalists³ for food, housing, clothing, transportation, and pretty much everything else in life. The Christian solution is to love our neighbors, and one of the best ways to do this is to make our neighbors self-sufficient.

*"Give a man a fish, feed him for a day;
Teach him to fish, feed him for life."*

3. **We don't have raw, naked capitalism³; it's regulated by the government.**

A good point, but not one want we'd like to carry to its natural conclusion.

Why do we have an Environmental Protection Agency? Basically, because a bunch of people decided that it was in their business interests to build factories that dumped all their waste into the nearest river. It'd be nice if the people building factories would design them to be clean, but then those factories would be more expensive, they wouldn't be able to compete, and the clean factories would all go out of business. Eventually, people got sick of not being able to swim in their rivers, clamored to their government for a Clean Air Act and a Clear Water Act, and now every factory in this country is regulated by the federal government.

Why do we have anti-trust laws? Basically, because people like John D. Rockefeller realized that their oil companies could make a lot more money if they also owned the railroad companies and charged competing oil companies ten times as much to use the same rail

lines. All the competing oil companies would have far higher operating costs and eventually go bankrupt. It was a smart business decision. Eventually, people got sick of having their oil prices dictated by a monopoly, the government passed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and now every major business deal in this country requires government approval.

Why is Microsoft now embroiled in an anti-trust lawsuit with the U.S. Justice Department? Because Bill Gates is acting in the heritage of Dow Chemical and Standard Oil. He's putting his own profit interests ahead of the better interests of society. So Microsoft keeps all their source code secret, engages in restrictive licensing practices, violates networking standards, and deliberately breaks the backwards-compatibility of their software. These are good business decisions, and the trend is clear. Eventually, the entire high-tech software industry will be regulated by the federal government.

The capitalists³ love to gripe about socialism, but capitalism³ itself is one road to socialism. The capitalists³, by a constant pattern of abuse, will create a society in which all aspects of everyone's lives are eventually regulated by the government.

We don't want raw, naked capitalism³, nor do we want massive government regulation of our lives. The only alternative is for people to take responsibility for their own actions and do what is in everyone's best interest. Otherwise, the only way we'll have a decent society is for the government to force it on us.

4. **Capitalism³ gave us everything we've got today.**

Maybe, but I won't argue the point. I don't think we have to give up our own modern technology to live as Christians. Even if we did, given the choice between a modern, advanced, rational, scientific world, and living a simple, primitive life according to teachings of Christ, which would you choose?

5. **You can't run a business like that.**

Then don't run a business! Run a charity, or a philanthropy, or a non-profit organization. If the word "business" gets in your way, discard it, because almost anything can be done in a Christian way. Jesus doesn't tell us what kind of house to build; he just gives us a foundation to build upon.

If you're running a restaurant, turn it into a soup kitchen. This doesn't mean you have to run off your regular clientele, move to the inner city, and spray paint graffiti over your logo. Just make sure that when somebody comes in without money and asks for a meal, feed them! It doesn't have to be the broiled lobster tail. Don't hide or disguise this policy; make it clear to your workers and customers. If you have trouble paying your bills, let your suppliers know about your Christian practices, and if necessary find new suppliers who will reciprocate in kind. Go directly to the farmers if need be, and move your operation to a friendly church's banquet hall if you can't pay your rent. If some people leave and don't come back, so be it. You can't please everyone, but make sure one of the people you please is God.

6. **That sounds very noble, but I'm sick of working every day and want to be my own boss.**

This is the great lure of capitalism³. "*Sign up for own system,*" they say, "*then you can work for yourself.*" Well, I signed up seven years ago. I ran my own computer consulting practice, then I found two partners and started a regular company that eventually grew to have about a dozen employees. To make a long story short, there's no better way to uncover the myths

of capitalism³ than to run your own business. You don't work for yourself. You work for the marketplace. You don't make your own decisions. You do what sells. Unless you're a sole proprietor, you'll have salaries to pay, a significant tax burden, probably rent and insurance as well. If you don't make money, you'll lose your employees, be evicted from your space, go out of business and still have the government chasing after you for back taxes. If you can manage as a consultant or sole proprietor, you're a lot better off, but don't risk asking yourself if this is the best you can do for others. The answer may cost you your livelihood.

Independence in capitalism³ is largely a myth. If you're not aggressive and somewhat ruthless, you'll always be a small player, still largely dependent upon the marketplace. The only way to become a big player is to go along with the program. It's like going into a restaurant and being told that you can order anything off the menu, so long as it's fish. If you love fish, that's great, but what if you wanted chicken? You probably won't come back to that restaurant, no matter how good the food, but the capitalists³ want every restaurant in town to serve only fish.

7. This isn't Christianity.

One of the great advantages of Christianity is the Bible. We don't have to take anybody's word for Christianity; we have Jesus' teachings, written down and preserved for us over 2000 years. To know Christianity, read the Bible, particularly the four Gospels, praying for wisdom and understanding. Don't take my word for it, or anyone else's. Remember that not everyone who claims to be a Christian will be saved. By the same token, don't let the ways of the world and the opinion of others distort your interpretation.

8. Christianity is based on faith, not works.

This isn't what Jesus said, and it isn't what James said either. Faith *is* the basis of Christianity, but we're clearly charged by the Gospels to put our faith into action.

9. This just doesn't make sense.

Jesus never attempted to justify his philosophy by invoking reason or logic. These are the tools used by human philosophers to justify their systems of thought. Logic worked very well for science; it laid the foundation for all the technology we use daily. Scientists had developed logical systems to explain physics, chemistry and biology, perhaps philosophers could also develop systems to explain and govern human society. Thus, in the last few centuries, we've seen fascism, based on the logical, rational, scientific ideas of Charles Darwin; communism, based on the logical, rational, scientific ideas of Karl Marx; and capitalism³, based on the logical, rational, scientific ideas of Adam Smith. On the other hand, Christianity isn't based on reason or logic, it's based on faith.

10. This is what "the people" want.

A tricky argument that attempts to intertwine democracy and capitalism³. Democracy can not be used as a trump to justify any course of action. Suffice it to say that capitalism³ must be judged on its own merits, not based on how many people support it.

Let's not put our faith in capitalism's false, worldly pseudo-religion of greed. Christianity is a real religion, with a real God, a real savior, real prophets, and real salvation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" to us. Will we accept him, and live his teachings in our lives, or turn him away?

Christianity and democracy in *Les Misérables*

Victor Hugo's epic novel *Les Misérables*, set in post-Napoleonic France, explores a broad range of political, philosophical and religious issues. Two of the novel's major philosophical themes are Christianity, personified by Valjean, and democracy, personified by Marius. In my opinion, *Les Misérables* represents Hugo's attempt to reconcile the two; he fails.

The entire first volume is devoted to the development of Valjean's character, and Christianity is the driving theme. First we meet the Bishop of Digne, known to the people of his town as a "just man", and Hugo reinforces this. The Bishop gives up his episcopal palace because it's needed by the hospital. The largest item in his budget is "for the poor". A sudden windfall goes to the soup kitchen and orphans. He spends all day with a condemned murderer before his death.

Yet all this is preparatory to the entrance of Valjean, an unredeemed convict and outcast taken in by the priest after being turned away from every inn. "This is not my house," he tells the stunned man, "it is the house of Jesus Christ." Valjean betrays the Bishop's trust, steals his valuable silverware and sneaks out the back door. Captured by the police, he is returned to the priest, who not only covers up for him by claiming that he gave him the silverware, but insists that he take the silver candlesticks as well, exemplifying Jesus' commandment that if a man should take your coat, give him your cloak as well. The Bishop then imposes a benediction on Valjean:

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good.
It is your soul that I buy from you;
I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God."

The Bishop's generosity triggers a profound spiritual crisis in Valjean, and he converts to Christianity. His is not an outward conversion of baptism or communion, but a deeper, inward conversion. Though he never sees the priest again, his life changes dramatically. Under an assumed name, he establishes himself in a small town, makes a clever invention which pulls the local industry out of recession, and in a few years is able to erect his own factory. With its proceeds, he improves the local hospital, builds two new schoolhouses, and funds a dispensary for the poor. In time, the King prevails upon him to become mayor. The bishop dies; Valjean wears black to mourn for him, symbolically taking the torch of Christianity, which he is to carry for the rest of the novel.

His willingness to restrain the police earns him the enmity of the town constable, Javert, destined to become his lifelong nemesis. Valjean once declared that there are no bad plants or bad men, only bad cultivators. Javert states that "these men are irremediably lost". Javert, who knew Valjean in prison, suspects his true identity, and becomes more and more withdrawn from the mayor. The last straw comes when Valjean sides with a prostitute Javert is determined to imprison, invokes his powers as mayor, and frees her. He learns that she turned to prostitution to support her daughter. The woman dies, and Valjean promises on her deathbed to support her daughter, Cosette. Yet Valjean's cover is soon blown, by his own refusal to let an innocent man, mistaken for him, go to the galleys for life, and he flees with Cosette. As the child grows into a young woman, Valjean lives in Paris, frequently changing identities to avoid the determined Javert.

Enter the last of the novel's major characters - Marius, destined to fall in love with and marry Cosette. Like Valjean, he inherits a symbolic torch - the torch of revolution. His father was made a Baron by Napoleon on the battlefield of Waterloo, and passed the title to his son on his death. Marius has a hundred cards printed bearing the name "Le Baron Marius Pontmercy", and fancies the restoration of the Napoleonic empire.

"Le Baron" is soon disowned by his maternal grandfather, and cast off into a life of poverty. He meets the Friends of the ABC, a revolutionary society of students, philosophers and poets led by the fiery Enjolras. While the Bishop of Digne converted Valjean through simple acts of generosity and mercy, Marius' new friends resort to wit, philosophy, and a barrage of words to convince him to abandon Napoleon's empire and adopt a new cause - republic and democracy - but the means remain the same: the sword, the cannon, the barricade.

Hugo goes to great length to present us Marius in the most sympathetic light. He gives his poor neighbor twenty-five francs for rent when he himself has only thirty. Yet he also appoints himself judge over his neighbors, declares "these wretches must be stamped upon," when he realizes that a robbery is about to take place next door, and sends for the police. He regrets this judgment when he realizes that the ruffian about to commit the crime saved his father's life at Waterloo, and begins fumbling for another way out, but ultimately it is Javert who bursts into the room and disrupts the crime. Hugo conveniently arranges for this act to save Valjean, but did the Bishop of Digne "stamp upon" Valjean after his crime? Wouldn't it have been a simple rationalization for the Bishop to think he had to stop others from being victimized by Valjean? Let's not forget Valjean's original crime of stealing bread to feed his younger brothers, which led him to the galleys and a life of crime. Marius has good intentions, but never adopts the Bishop's willingness to turn away from a wrong, determined instead to fight his oppressors.

As revolutionary fervor again sweeps France, Enjolras rallies his secret society. Thirty years had passed since "Library, Fraternity, Equality" became the swish of the guillotine, the roar of cannon, the tramp of legions, and still they want more. The revolution comes, and Enjolras springs his plan into action, turning their favorite wine-shop into a fortress and erecting a barricade across the street. Valjean passes through the army lines wearing his National Guard uniform, enters the barricade, then gives up his uniform so a man with a family to support can slip away and be saved.

The government is determined to crush the uprising, and soldiers surround the barricade and storm it. Marius becomes the hero of the rebellion after winning the battle by threatening to blow up the barricade, himself, the soldiers, and all his friends. Now, if he could have blown up only the soldiers, would he have hesitated for a second? Moments earlier, Valjean was faking the death of his arch-nemesis Javert to free him on a side street. Would Marius fake the death of the soldiers? If the soldiers had not retreated, would Marius have carried out his threat of martyrdom? Probably. "Victory or death!" has been the rallying cry of radical patriots since day one.

Valjean, though present at the barricade, fires not a single shot. After freeing Javert, he turns his attention to Marius, determined to win his revolution or die fighting the soldiers. The government attacks again in force; the barricade falls. Marius, badly wounded with a broken collar bone and multiple head injuries, faints into the arms of Valjean, who lifts a sewer grate and drops in carrying the half-dead revolutionary. As he escapes through the sewer with the unconscious Marius, the wine-shop is taken, Enjolras is executed by firing squad, the ABC Society goes down fighting and Revolution of 1832 falls to pieces.

Marius recovers from his wounds to find much of his world collapsed around him. All his close friends are dead; what is left is his love for Cosette. They marry. Valjean confesses to Marius that he is a fugitive convict. Marius, not yet knowing that it was Valjean who saved him at the barricade, believing that Valjean shot Javert, and wondering if his six hundred thousand franc inheritance was stolen, gives Valjean the cold shoulder and gradually pushes him out of Cosette's life. Valjean, believing that the girl has a husband and no longer needs a father, acquiesces.

Marius ultimately learns the truth - that the inheritance is legitimate, that it was Valjean who saved him at the barricade, that Javert's murder was faked - and regrets having estranged Valjean.

With Cosette in hand, he rushes to redeem himself with Valjean, only to find him on his deathbed. So Valjean dies, in the presence of his adopted daughter and son-in-law. Perhaps this is meant as another symbolic torch passing, but who will carry it on, and in what form? Will Marius "love his enemies"? Will his wife resist corruption by his hot-headed rebellion? Has the Bishop of Digne's torch passed or finally died?

The failed 1832 uprising featured in *Les Misérables* was but one in a series of violent clashes spawned by the French Revolution. After declaring a constitutional monarchy in 1789, the French assembly within five years had executed its constitutional monarch. No provision for trying the king had been provided by the constitution; the national assembly simply tried him anyway. The masses packed into the Place de la Revolution and cheered as Louis XVI's severed head was hoisted aloft. Of all the Marius's leading the government, not one Valjean stepped forward to spirit the king away through the sewers under the city. After the king and the aristocrats went to the guillotine, next came the leaders of the revolution themselves. Robespierre, Saint-Just, Coulton - each got the six-inch haircut.

At last came Napoleon, who Marius once exulted as a "sun rising". After leading the French to devastate Europe, he was finally defeated and exiled. Yet any doubt that his was anything but a popular dictatorship was put to rest following his escape from Elba, during the "100 Days", after he landed on the French coast with 1200 men. Every town told to oppose him threw open its gates; every army unit sent to reverse him cried "Vive l'Empereur!" After being defeated in Russia, losing their entire army, and seeing their country in ruin, thousands still turned to the conquering general.

To this day, the masses insist on immolating themselves on the barricades in pursuit of truth, justice, and the French legions storming across Europe. How many millions of Germans cheered for Hitler as he proclaimed the Anschluss? How many millions "believed" in communism when Lenin proclaimed a worker's state in Russia? How many millions today think that greed is the driving force behind all human progress? How many will surrender their prized silverware to a convict and a thief? Yes, Christianity can save democracy, but only by dragging it unconscious through the sewers of Paris.

Democracy is a system of government where the majority of people choose not only their own leaders, but everyone else's. Democracy has little do to with right; nobody has the right to choose someone else's leader. Democracy is primarily about responsibility; the majority has the responsibility to choose everyone's leaders. If they choose wisely, it will succeed; if they choose poorly, it will fail.

My Response to Thomas Friedman

In his best seller "The World is Flat", Thomas Friedman identifies ten "flatteners" that are leveling the global economy; forces such as outsourcing, offshoring, supply chaining, and the collapse of the Soviet empire. His fourth flattener is open source software. None of his issues are particularly new, but it is Friedman's treatment of them, notably both his and Bill Gates's shocking misunderstanding of free software, that raises some of the most provocative questions of a provocative book.

To be fair, Friedman does attempt to present a balanced view of free software, even quoting an article in *The Economist* which noted that "some zealots even argue that the open-source approach represents a new, post-capitalist model of production". Yet somehow he still seems to miss the mark; perhaps it's the pro-capitalist bias that pervades the entire book. He asks:

Why would so many people be ready to write software that would be given away for free? Partly it is out of the pure scientific challenge, which should never be underestimated. Partly it is because they all hate Microsoft for the way it has so dominated the market and, in the view of many techies, bullied everyone else. Partly it is because they believe that open-source software can be kept more fresh and bugfree than any commercial software, because of the way it is constantly updated by an army of unpaid programmers. And partly it is because some big tech companies are paying engineers to work on Linux and other software, hoping it will cut into Microsoft's market share and make it a weaker competitor all around. There are a lot of motives here, and not all of them altruistic. When you put them all together, though, they make for a very powerful movement that will continue to present a major challenge to the whole commercial software model of buying a program and then downloading its fixes and buying its updates.

Let's see. What are his explanations for free software again?

1. "the pure scientific challenge",
2. "they all hate Microsoft",
3. "open-source software can be kept more fresh and bugfree",
4. "some big tech companies are paying engineers to work on [it]".

Like a darter who keeps shooting around the outer ring, Friedman just can't seem to hit the bull's-eye. Let me try. Because *capitalism is an immoral philosophy*. Nowhere in his list does Friedman suggest a moral motivation for the open source phenomenon.

Richard Stallman, of course, came much closer to the target, hit the bull's eye really, in the GNU Manifesto:

I consider that the golden rule requires that if I like a program I must share it with other people who like it.

What's the golden rule? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "a rule of ethical conduct referring to Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31: do to others as you would have them do to you".

Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the law and the prophets.
Matthew 7:12

Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
Luke 6:31

This, in my opinion, is the crux of free software. This is why, “of all the issues [Friedman] dealt with in [his] book, none evoked more passion from proponents and opponents than open-source”. It’s the same reason abolition evoked such passion a hundred and fifty years ago; because the issue at hand is fundamentally moral in nature, and the society as a whole is generally on the wrong side of it.

Yet even more interesting than Friedman, in my opinion, is Gates! Friedman quotes him:

“You need capitalism [to drive innovation.] To have [a movement] that says innovation does not deserve an economic reward is contrary to where the world is going. When I talk to the Chinese, they dream of starting a company. They are not thinking, ‘I will be a barber during the day and do free software at night.’ ... When you have a security crisis in your [software] system, you don’t want to say, ‘Where is the guy at the barbershop?’”

This is, to put it mildly, amazing. My reaction upon reading it was roughly comparable to Lawrence Lessig’s reaction to the U.S. Federal Government’s 2003 quashing of a proposed World Intellectual Property Organization meeting on open source:

What was surprising was the United States government’s reason for opposing the meeting. Again, as reported by Krim, Lois Borland, acting director of international relations for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, explained that “open-source software runs counter to the mission of WIPO, which is to promote intellectual-property rights.” She is quoted as saying, “To hold a meeting which has as its purpose to disclaim or waive such rights seems to us to be contrary to the goals of WIPO.”

These statements are astonishing on a number of levels.

First, they are just flat wrong. As I described, most open source and free software relies fundamentally upon the intellectual property right called “copyright.” Without it, restrictions imposed by those licenses wouldn’t work. Thus, to say it “runs counter” to the mission of promoting intellectual property rights reveals an extraordinary gap in understanding – the sort of mistake that is excusable in a first-year law student, but an embarrassment from a high government official dealing with intellectual property issues.

Free Culture (pp. 265-266)

As Lessig’s reaction to Borland, so went my reaction to Gates. His description of free software, “[a movement] that says innovation does not deserve an economic reward” is just flat wrong. I don’t know of a single free software advocate who holds this view; I certainly do not. If anything, our position is exactly the opposite – innovation *does* deserve a reward, *all* innovation, irregardless of whether access to it is restricted by a credit card entry form.

Nor do I know of anyone who dreams of working in a barbershop by day and slaving over a computer at night. I’d certainly like to have an office, a salary, employees, a budget to develop *my* free software. Unfortunately, I live in a society totally rigged in favor of capitalism. Reject Christianity. Reject Christ’s command to “give to all those who beg of you”. Adopt instead this immoral philosophy of refusing to do for anyone who doesn’t pay you, and the world is your oyster. Oppose it, do the *exact same work* as the capitalist, but insist upon a Christian model of distribution, and every door is slammed shut in your face. This is the truth about capitalism.

To hear these claims coming from Gates is both unsettling and reassuring. Unsettling that someone with so much authority so fundamentally misunderstands one of the major issues of his industry. Reassuring to those whose fear Microsoft’s threat to free software; they are unlikely to

successfully combat that which they do not understand. One wonders if he is being completely truthful, but he has little enough reason to dissemble. People generally mean what they say. He could always have answered along the lines of Steve Balmer, who has simply observed that Microsoft will not embrace free software because it would put them out of business. Perhaps Gates doesn't understand because he doesn't want to understand. Free software threatens too fundamentally his worldview.

As for *The Economist's* "zealots", they are simply echoing a message carried by evangelists for two millennia - Christianity is genuinely new. "Give to all those who beg of you" definitely "represents a new, post-capitalist model of production". Two thousand years on, a gospel of love, peace, and generosity is *still* fundamentally at odds with main stream human society.

How Occupy Lost

I'm homeless.

I don't work.

For everyone who wonders what I "do", about why I won't "do" something, I'm now going to tell you what I "do", and you are not going to like it.

By June 2011, I was homeless in Hawaii, seeking direction in my life, and I prayed to God for guidance about what to do next.

He sent me to Alaska.

How?

Discernment!

Here's how it works.

I prayed first for guidance, then I prayed for dreams. I prayed with a small group of Christians for dreams, with two of us specifically asking for dreams, and I had dreams about Alaska. In one dream I was in a hilly, wooded town that I was told in the dream was Juneau. In another dream, I was in an airplane taking off. I added it all up and bought a plane ticket to Juneau, Alaska on my credit card with no idea how to pay for it.

I got on the plane with no money, knowing nobody in Alaska, and no idea what I would do when I got there. It was a red-eye, and as I sat in my darkened seat that night, the thought came to me that I would be preaching in Alaska.

Preaching? I don't preach.

I arrived in Juneau on July 22, 2011 and slept the first week at the Glory Hole, the downtown homeless shelter. They threw me out over some stupid thing, and after a cold night spent out in the Juneau rain I met a retired math teacher at a church breakfast who gave me money for two nights at the local youth hostel. On my last morning there, I met a vacationing psychiatrist who befriended me and gave me a sleeping bag, a bevy, and a tarp. With these I set up a campsite on Mount Roberts, behind the city, a short hike up from the old mining road. Many a night I laid there after my prayers, listening to the creek murmuring below and the rain pattering on the tarp.

By mid-August I understood that yes, I am called to preach. How do I know this?

I do not know. I can only discern.

See, I've committed my life to serve God. I pray for guidance, maybe no more than the Lord's prayer, "thy will be done", every night. I have an idea - how about preaching some sermons down the way in Juneau? OK, so I've got an idea, but it could just be some goofy thing floating around my head. Need to pray about it. I now take that specific idea in repeated prayer requests to God spread over days. I start to really become convinced that I should do this, that it's OK with God. I start getting equipment together, I talk to people in city hall about electricity and permits. Now I'm really going to do it.

I set a date. I want to avoid September 11. I want to avoid preaching my first sermon on the tenth anniversary of 9/11.

It doesn't work. I get up one Sunday morning with all of the batteries dead except one little audio recorder that's still on Hawaiian time, but I don't know that! I hear Juneau's bells ringing, but don't really count them! I'm late for everything! I don't give the speech on August 29. Nope, looks like 9/11. I was wrong. That's discernment, too.

A friend sent me some money that I used to buy a small portable sound system. On the evening of September 7th, I spent an hour at the Catholic church, on my knees in prayer, asking to be guided by God on the whole thing, along with one last crucial point - should I point the speaker out over the ocean as the government required?

On September 11th, I went down to Juneau Marine Park at noon, the announced time for my speech. Yet I did not speak. One o'clock came and went. Two o'clock came and went. Three o'clock! Finally, trembling with trepidation, I turned on the speaker and pointed it toward the city. I whined and cried, begging God for the strength to throw the switch, but once I got started, I was fine!

But I tell you who hear me, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you; if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also; if someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:27-31)

For two thousand years, these words have inspired many Christians. In 1200 A.D, thereabout, a young man, in Italy, kneeling before a crucifix, an icon, in a vision, heard the icon speak to him. It said "Francis, rebuild my church". He looked around him at this crumbling church that had been built hundreds of years before, went home to his father's shop, took his father's best silks and a horse, went to a market town, sold the silks, sold the horse, came back and gave the money to the priest to rebuild the church.

His father was not too happy with that.

In many ways, it was a typical message from God - simple, powerful, and very easy to misunderstand.

...

Francis started going around Italy and preaching. Ultimately, he founded the Franciscan order and rebuilt a church that had become corrupted with greed, money, the Crusades, power politics. He turned it back to God; he turned it back, told his followers "they shall have no coins or money"; they would give all their possessions to the poor, why?, well, we read it here in this Gospel - "give to everyone who asks you".

Now, that's just for saints, right? It's not for you and me.

No. Saints are not here just to do the heavy lifting while we sit around with the little one pound jogging weights. Saints are here to guide us, and teach us, and show us the way forward - "give to anyone who asks of you".

In Matthew 25, Christ goes on again with this theme. He tells us that if someone comes to us hungry, and we do not feed him, then we are not feeding Christ, and whenever we fail to do to the least of these, we have failed to do to him.

And this is an amazing concept! Does it mean that if a Christian walks into McDonald's, or

Subway, and doesn't have any money, and is turned away hungry, that, well, yeah! You're turning away Christ!

And here we begin to see the wickedness and indifference of capitalism. No, the capitalists teach us, we will not do what we are taught in the book of Luke. We will not give to everyone who asks. We will stand behind a counter and refuse to do anything for anyone unless we're getting something out of it for ourselves.

It is a rejection of the Christian Gospel, and it is facilitated by an indifferent freedom where people just sit around, pray to their God, go to their church, but the commandments are simply optional. We do them, we don't do them, but that's not what we're taught. We're taught to give to anyone who asks of us.

...

The terrorists ten years ago did not choose their targets at random.

The World Trade Center was a symbol of capitalism. It was a symbol of a nation that, blessed with fantastic wealth, will sit behind a counter with a smug look and say, "How about a job?"

...and some people, driven to some kind of rage, decided to hijack these airliners and murder three thousand people.

That certainly doesn't seem to be a very Christian alternative, again, the Gospel of Luke: "Love your enemies."

There's another commandment, thousands of years older, not printed in red but carved in stone, "Thou shall not kill"! So terrorism seems to be out of the question.

What then do we do? Do we just see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil? Remain indifferent when faced with an immoral society that has turned away from the Christian Gospel?

That doesn't seem like a very good idea.

No, Francis had the right idea. Francis... Ahab, when Elijah was called to preach to Ahab... when Moses was called to preach to Pharaoh... when Jesus told the Pharisees about their wickedness...

Preach! That is the answer! Not terrorism; not indifference; we are called to preach the Gospel! That is the true answer to 9/11! To preach!

No! Capitalism is immoral! We are called upon to give to everyone who begs of us! There is no exception if you're running a business! There's no exception if it's just your job! It is not optional! It is a commandment from God!

I kept preaching. Nobody came to hear me, but I kept preaching every Sunday all through September. I even managed to begin starting my sermons on time, without all of the crying into the microphone with the switch off. I preached, with the volume on full and no questions taken afterward at the Juneau Empire, the local daily. I don't have a very good relationship with the press. That's an interesting sermon. I pretty much passed judgment on myself that day:

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the

trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'" (Ezekiel 33:1-6)

I tried! I tried! A huge whirlwind storm formed and blew threw the trumpet and gave it great power! But I held it in my hand too long while gazing around, then the wind came up and roared through it while I tried to pull it back, then it ripped to pieces before my eyes and the Lord held me still while I beheld the enemy taking the keep!

I moved indoors in October, preaching in the local churches, whether they wanted me to or not. By this I mean that I just stood up at the end of the service, during announcements, and preached for five or ten minutes. No, I'm not a very popular guy.

Then I was called to leave Juneau. How, do you ask? The usual. Discernment. I prayed repeatedly for guidance, because my ministry didn't seem to be going very well. Nobody was listening; I had probably ticked off more people than I'd inspired.

I went to a Wednesday noon mass, as usual, at the local Episcopal Church, Holy Trinity, and left convinced that I was called to travel further into Alaska and keep preaching. But travel where?

I had been living in Juneau for four months, but had never visited either of Alaska's other major cities: Anchorage and Fairbanks. I bought another credit card plane ticket (my mother ended up paying for all of this) to Fairbanks. It was a two week advance purchase, though, and the flight transferred through Anchorage, so I could still go there.

I had to decide: Anchorage or Fairbanks?

I prayed, of course. Then one evening I met a palm reader.

A palm reader?

Sounds occult. I don't do palm readers.

She says that she's Catholic, prays to God, hangs a crucifix on the wall. She holds people's hands, casually, while standing in front of you, and tells them what God shows her. She reads me and tells me Anchorage.

Anchorage?

From a palm reader?

Here's what I didn't do. I didn't test it. I didn't take it back to God and ask if it's from Him. What if she was telling the truth about everything? I never asked. I never asked her about her gifts and vocation, about her prayer life. Somebody else described her as a palm reader, not her, and not God.

I toyed with it... palm reader?... and discarded it. I flew to Anchorage on November 2, and then took the next flight to Fairbanks. I figured that I would check out Fairbanks, then travel down to Anchorage.

I'd just blown a crucial discernment on the biggest religious call of my life. How did this disaster unfold? I'd never before met anyone with a prophetic gift, at least not that I know of! I've met plenty of frauds, though! As I'll explain later, we have a massive sham religion in this country. So although I understood clearly that God was in charge, I'd become very self-reliant in my vocation. I didn't really trust anyone else to help with my discernment.

I'd also developed a bad spirit of preaching against this country. The watchman in Ezekiel 33 is called to warn the wicked, to save their lives, not to condemn them. This Old Testament prophet, sent to an "obstinate and stubborn" people, foreshadowed the loving spirit of Christ, in a way made even clearer in Ezekiel 3:

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel, so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from the evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.

(Ezekiel 3:17-19)

I slept the first week of November at the homeless shelter in Fairbanks, preached a bit at the University of Alaska, and then I joined Occupy.

I'd read about Occupy on the news, but hadn't paid it much attention until I walked into Veteran's Memorial Park one afternoon, met some of the occupiers camped out on the gazebo in sub-zero weather, talked with them for a while and joined up.

It was obviously a political opposition forming and it was just the right timing for a political campaign - a little more than a year in advance of the elections.

So we occupied. (I was called to preach) We dug into a camp at -20F, sat around a tent huddled by a fire to drive out the bitter cold and talked about the problems facing the nation. We read about what was happening elsewhere in the country on the Internet, but we didn't have any television. I couldn't get the General Assembly to pray at the start of each meeting, and they wouldn't endorse my Sunday sermons, so I stopped preaching them. (Fatal)

I had a mental disconnect between the newspaper stories of SWAT teams eliminating Occupy camps and the peaceful political demonstration that I was part of. There was no way, after Tiananmen Square, that the government would use the police to break up a political demonstration. The media would never let them get away with it.

Occupy seemed to be going fine. (That was the problem) Plenty of reporters came through the camp, but I rarely talked to them. After all, the election was over a year away, so we had plenty of time to hammer out positions before making speeches. As late as Thanksgiving, I was invited to dinner at the home of a local liberal, was asked to speak, which I did, and was warmly applauded for introducing a spiritual element into Occupy!

Thanksgiving! Remember what was happening to Occupy at Thanksgiving! While I was being cheered for its spiritual side!

There were other indications of trouble, but I was oblivious. On November 6th, a woman had a vision about me after I had finished preaching at a local church. She saw me in an hourglass, trying to pass through the neck. Hmmm. Hourglass. Sand running through it. I'm in it, too. Didn't

know what it meant. (I do now) Again, I didn't take it seriously enough. I didn't ask God to explain it.

In early December, I decided that Fairbanks was OK, so I went down to Anchorage, to see how Occupy was fairing there. I arrived just in time to see John Martin thrown out. (disaster) But I had no clue, because I had never met John! He was thrown out of Occupy the very night that I arrived in Anchorage, while I waived vague discontent with my hands instead of John and I throwing the rest of them out together. Later that evening I met John for the first time with a delegation that handed him his walking papers.

I had never met him, but I certainly had heard of him! His affair at age 23 with his then 15-year-old adopted daughter had been plastered all over Alaskan headlines for months. Homeless like me, and for the same basic reasons, he had been camped out for months in front of City Hall on the corner of Sixth and G, six floors straight down from the Mayor's office. He's against Dan Sullivan's government, particularly its homeless policy. The government bans free camping anywhere in the Municipality of Anchorage (a sprawling metropolis), including its many parks. CAP, a special police task force, evicts the homeless during the winter by simply confiscating all of their gear! It's Anchorage! In the winter! They have no choice, then, but to go to overcrowded shelters like St. Francis.

So John was gone, but continued occupying! He had been called by God to occupy, after all! He had his camp below Dan Sullivan's office, and Occupy had theirs a block away. He kept occupying, but I didn't start preaching right away. (sigh)

It became clear that we were in trouble. I joined the Port protest on December 11, but did not speak, willing to observe and plan. It just didn't seem like the right time to start speaking. (it wasn't)

In January, I starting preaching again. I was interviewed at the Occupy site and on KYUR 13's Alaska Political Insider, but then nothing. No one would show up at my speeches, not the media and certainly not my own movement. I did a radio interview, too.

I soldiered on. I kept preaching, prayed for Occupy, discussed and abandoned several ideas, most notably disrupting Iditarod 40, then finally latched on to one that I liked. It only required a few people, should have been effective in regaining momentum, and seemed acceptable to God. We would occupy a news studio in February or March.

I figured that a dozen people could barricade themselves in the studio and demand to make a nationally televised speech. If we blocked the doors and refused to leave for a few days, I hoped that the media would have caved in and let me make the speech. At that point, a political nuclear strike seemed to be required; in the speech, I would have called for Alaskan secession and independence if America did not abandon her current course of leadership. In retrospect, I didn't even need it to be nationally televised. An all-Alaska audience was perfectly adequate and quite doable. Even if the premise was extreme, a really good speech might have gotten the whole thing moving again.

That never happened. The Occupy Anchorage direct action committee shot it down. They simply would not do it. After all of their fiery rhetoric justifying violent solutions to our most pressing problems, they would not occupy a news studio. I'm not blaming them; I'm just pointing out what kinds of people had come to dominate Occupy. They want freedom; I understand. They want to do their own thing; I do too. I want to do my own thing; they wouldn't help. I had become the enemy. They'd heard all of my Chrisitan talk and didn't want to hear any more. Didn't want to hear it on

TV, either. They had control of our own movement, had run it into the ground, and wouldn't give it back. I needed their help to ditch them from the leadership, and they wouldn't let go.

I wouldn't have worked. It might have worked, sort of. I had checked it out with God. I had discerned it, all by myself, walking around for an hour in the snow in the garden of saints outside the Catholic church and muttering to myself, but I couldn't do it alone. (Huge) The movement appeared savable as late as March, but it required the remnants of the movement to actually do something, and the remnants of the movement were all Anarchist. Even if the studio occupation had worked, the Anarchists would still be right there at the top, which is totally unacceptable, though it seemed OK at the time.

Are you an athiest? Can you do discernment? Can you figure out which state to fly to? When to start giving speeches? Whether to go to Anchorage or Fairbanks?

I can't. I try it and screw it up. I know you can't because you're atheists. There's no way that you can be given key leadership positions. You can't discern. You're not really poor. You don't work for God. I needed to throw you out immediately, and instead I showed up late enough and tolerated you long enough that I had to beg admission to get back in.

The campaign plowed on without me. I occupied more with John. I went back up to Fairbanks. I tried to commit suicide. I worked on some computer software. I put on a robe and did some street preaching, paying scant attention to the campaign.

Then Christopher Stevens was assassinated on 9/11, the eleventh anniversary of the terror attacks, the first anniversary of my first sermon!

Christopher Stevens was a super-diplomat who had slyly run Obama's diplomacy when America conquered Libya. First he was ambassador to Quadaffi's Libya, then when Obama backed the rebels he switched sides and became ambassador to the rebels, and then smoothly transitioned back into his old job as ambassador to the new Libya. This diplomatic two step allowed Obama to avoid using American ground troops in Libya.

His assassination in Bengazi was then followed by one of the most massive cover-ups ever seen in American history! Nobody could seem to explain what had happened! First some idiotic video tape was flown as a false flag for something like two weeks, then a massive witchhunt ensued to expose some supposed government cover-up. Meanwhile, a massive media cover-up raged on top of the supposed government cover-up.

A coverup of what?

Of admitting the link between "Obama conquered Libya" and "Chris Stevens was assassinated", because that would confound the sham opposition hypothesis that Obama is soft on the Middle East! This is what Bill O'Reilly preached to millions on Fox News Network! The man conquered another Arab country and he's soft! Unbelievable!

And if there really was a government coverup, a concerted attempt by the current administration to plant the video tape story, then we now have two massive coverups, both government and media, on the same story!

Finally, the race ran to its predictable outcome. The lame half-opposition limped to the finish line, prepared only a victory speech, then meekly handed the crown to the champion and vanished. Maybe it wasn't really there at all.

I blamed everyone for Occupy. I blamed the media. I blamed the atheists. I blamed Obama. I blamed the majority. I blamed everyone but myself and then I went on. What else could I do?

God let me wonder and wander for a bit. Should I get a job? Let's see, don't know what else to do, let's apply for a job... (really?)

You've got a job. You're a Disciple of Christ. God is your boss. Always will be.

I got two job hits. Hmm... go be a schoolteacher? Checked 'em out with God. Neither one worked out. (surprise)

Defect to China? Seriously! He let me consider that for a while, maybe the Chinese would let me be a propaganda tool at least...

I had tried everything that I could think of to claw back into the election and failed. It's impossible! It's truly impossible for one devout man to break into the American political scene! Why? Because we're poor! The only way politics works for a disciple is through a miracle!

This book's key inspiration - that the whole fault for this thing is mine and that I know just how it happened - did not come until a week after election day. It required discernment, of course. It required two disciples praying a joint prayer, out loud, together, that I see the state of my ministry with laser-like clarity. A week after the election, I did.

On November 13, 2012, I knelt on the floor and confessed before God, as I now confess before you, my fellow Americans, that I bear sole personal responsibility for the absolute debacle of Occupy. This political movement was also a crucial ministry that was to preach the Christian gospel to this nation. It failed at that completely, and although many people share the responsibility for that failure, the fault is principally mine because the Lord gave me everything that I needed to overcome those obstacles and I bungled it.

Why did He tell me that? Why tell someone that he's just blown the biggest play of his life? Why aren't prayers answered? Would it be more merciful not to? And what was I called to preach?

What is the gospel of Occupy?

Capitalism

Any warning directed against America has to begin with a frank discussion of capitalism. I've already quoted my September 11th sermon, which neatly summarizes the Christian case against this wicked philosophy. So, when a beggar comes up to you on the street and asks you for money, you give him some if you have it. Is this being taken out of context?

"Give to the one who asks you, and do not reject the one who wants to borrow from you."
(Matthew 5:42)

"Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your possessions back from the person who takes them away." (Luke 6:30)

The discourse in Mathew is the most famous; it's called the Sermon on the Mount because we're told at the beginning of Matthew 5 that Jesus went up on a mountain. In Luke 6:17 we're told that he stood on a level spot and preached; it's called the Sermon on the Plain. These are two different sermons! The content is mostly the same because Jesus preached for three and a half years, yet all four Gospels can be read in a day. He preached the same message over and over, in different times and in different places, and the evangelists who wrote the Gospels recorded a respective sample of

his teachings. Nearly identical passages like Matthew 5:42 and Luke 6:30 should not be taken as meaningless repetition; the fact that they echo each other so closely serves to reinforce their importance, as does repetition of the same concepts in completely different contexts:

"But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?'

"The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

"Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?'

"Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

(Matthew 25:35-45)

What happens at McDonald's is immoral. When a Christian walks in the door and asks for a hamburger, you had better not be the guy behind the counter who turns him away because he has no money. Perhaps you can direct him to a nearby soup kitchen, or pay for the burger yourself, but indifference is simply not acceptable. Read the passage again. Does it matter whether somebody fed him later?

How do we eat, then? Who provides the hamburgers if we just give them away for free?

They took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness; and the children of Israel said to them, "We wish that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots, when we ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then said Yahweh to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from the sky for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law, or not."

(Exodus 16:1-4)

"That I may test them!" God will provide! If we are obedient! If we will walk in his law! For Christians, Matthew 5, Luke 6, Luke 12, Matthew 25 are all part of the law!

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I don't make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time!"

When he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough. Now, O Yahweh, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat!"

He looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on the coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and laid down again. The angel of Yahweh came again the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

He arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the Mount of God.

(1 Kings 19:7-8)

Scripture abounds with stories of miraculous feeding. "Give us this day our daily bread" was never made more real than when...

Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. When it was late in the day, his disciples came to him, and said, "This place is deserted, and it is late in the day. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat."

But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They asked him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give them something to eat?"

He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go see." When they knew, they said, "Five, and two fish."

He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass. They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all. They all ate, and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish. Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Still, aren't I taking all of this out of context? We can't make bread and fish appear out thin air like Christ! We have to be good stewards, right? We can't just give all of our money away, can we? Actually, a better question to ask is whether we can afford not to.

Just then a man came up to Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what good deed should I do to have

eternal life?" Jesus asked him, "Why ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you want to get into that life, you must keep the commandments." The young man asked him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You must not murder, you must not commit adultery, you must not steal, you must not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'you must love your neighbor as yourself.'" The young man told him, "I have kept all of these. What do I still lack?" Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the destitute, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come back and follow me." But when the young man heard this statement he went away sad, because he had many possessions.

A common objection to a literal interpretation of this passage is that Jesus intended this teaching for a particular young man, not as a generic commandment applicable to all disciples. This doesn't withstand careful scrutiny, though, because we find a very similar instruction again in a completely different context:

He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they don't sow, they don't reap, they have no warehouse or barn, and God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds! Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his height? If then you aren't able to do even the least things, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if this is how God clothes the grass in the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith? Don't seek what you will eat or what you will drink; neither be anxious. For the nations of the world seek after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek God's Kingdom, and all these things will be added to you. Don't be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy. Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old, a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail, where no thief approaches, neither moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(Luke 12:22-34)

Not only are we again told to sell our possessions and give to the poor, not only is it now the disciples themselves being exhorted rather than a rich hanger-on, but at the beginning of this passage, we find exhortations against work! The birds do not work, but God feeds them! The lilies do not work, but God clothes them!

"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and money."

(Luke 16:13)

Here we begin to see the Christian work ethic! After becoming disciples, we are to live according to the Gospel and that means putting God in charge. We are not called to be slackers, although this world will call us that because they measure the entire value of a human being in how much money you've got.

Many people suppose that Christ worked as a carpenter. Not only is this unsupported by any Scripture, but one wonders how Christ could have done this consistent with his own teachings. Clearly, he did not work for money, only for God, did not turn away anyone asking for food, drink,

shelter or clothing, gave what he had to the poor, and trusted in God to provide for his needs. Nowhere in any account are we told that he had any kind of job. In fact, he was homeless (Mat 8:20) and penniless (Mat 17:24-27). Furthermore, while we have no records of how Jesus lived before his ministry, we most certainly have records of how his disciples lived after it!

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

(Acts 2:44-45)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. From from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostle's feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

(Acts 4:32-35)

What good does it do, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but does not prove it with actions? This kind of faith cannot save him, can it? Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food and one of you tells them, "Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily." If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do? In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not prove itself with actions, is dead.

(James 2:14-17)

Christians need to take a different perspective. It isn't enough to just get a job. We need to do the work that we are called to by God. This doesn't mean sitting around waiting for the phone to ring. We have God-given talents that enable us to be productive members of society. Although I am grateful to my friends and supporters for providing me with food, shelter, clothing, a computer and electricity, I absolutely hate sitting around this house typing on this machine all day. I'm a really good math teacher, and there's no good reason why I shouldn't be teaching during the day and writing for a few hours every evening. Instead, I live in a country that tells me to go flip hamburgers until I've purchased a college degree. I'm not too proud to flip hamburgers, either. I'll do it for a soup kitchen, but not for a business that refuses to feed people unless they have money.

God provides for our needs, both as individuals and as a society. We have plenty of math and science teachers, it's the administration of our schools that refuses to use them unless they jump through hoops with a price tag on each one. We have ample energy reserves, and talented scientists who will develop new ones as current supplies are depleted, but those scientists can't get funding without a business plan to patent and exploit new technologies for profit. We have immigrants lined up at our borders willing to do almost any job we would ask of them. We have plenty of farmers, fisherman, doctors, policeman, fire fighters, EMTs, machinists, chemists, computer programmers, web designers, airline pilots and journalists, not to mention artists, musicians, actors, and athletes. There's no need for some economic system, either capitalist or communist, to regulate all human behavior, if we will simply live in obedience to God.

What would such a society look like? Our churches would be left unlocked, and most people would begin their day with worship. Anyone who wanted food or clothing, tools or transportation, would just need to ask for it, no money required. All the books in our libraries would scanned in, freely available to anyone who wants to read them on-line. Why would people give freely like that? Because we're all disciples, we're all working for God, and even if we fumble around and make

some mistakes, we know that we're all working for the same boss. Jesus called it the kingdom of God.

The choice is not between capitalism and communism. Both philosophies postulate the need for human behavior to be regulated, either by the government or by the marketplace. Both force you to work for a system, and that means doing what you're told. Both proclaim that anyone who isn't working for the system is a deadbeat. You don't do the work you want to do. You don't do the work you're qualified to do. You don't do what you're called to by God. You do what you're told.

How did we get here? People want freedom, but they don't want the Gospel. Nobody tells them what to do; no God, and no government. You can give all your money away, it's your choice. You have freedom; I have freedom. Don't tell me what to do. People who won't work for money are cast out and treated with contempt. They're accused of being "too proud" to work, and despite all our rhetoric of individual freedom, this society is absolutely determined to break the individual and force him to submit. Its favorite tactic is throw you homeless on the streets and ignore you.

You want freedom. You want to work for yourselves. In fact, you spend forty hours a week, the best fifty years of your life, working for a system. You give up on freedom by the time you're thirty, and if you won't give it up voluntarily, then you get crushed. You start talking about getting married and having a family, about how you aren't going to work so hard and make time for your kids instead. Now you just show up at your job, do what you have to do, and pin all your hopes on raising the next generation to have it better than you did. You'll pamper them until they're twenty, then get sick of them asking for money all of the time. The reason they keep asking you for money is because they want all that freedom you promised them, and they're old enough now to want it for themselves and not you. They don't dress up in cute little soccer uniforms now, they don't play catch in the yard, it isn't cool to hang out with Mom and Dad anymore. They want their own apartment now, and money for food and games and sex and drugs. So you switch to "tough love", break them by the time they're thirty, celebrate their birthdays and weddings and graduations if they'll cave, and shake your head and wonder what you did wrong if they end up smoking crack and sleeping under a bridge instead.

You're not raising them to be better. It's a vicious cycle, and you're raising them to be just the same. Some break, some waste away, some riot in the streets and scream for freedom. Hard core Christian disciples won't work for the system, either, but it's not because of pride, or a misplaced conception of freedom. It's because the system is immoral, and we work for God.

Then let God take care of us?

God does take care of us.

How?

Discipleship

Every society develops a state religion, and America is no exception. By this I mean a philosophy that postulates that a society is basically moral, that our leadership is basically just. Sometimes, a state religion is a church endorsed by the government, but not always. Even atheist societies like China develop a state religion, in this broad sense of the term.

America's state religion is called "Christianity" and "Christianity" is largely a sham, because American society is corrupt, so its state religion must also be corrupt.

That sounds pretty harsh, and it is, but the truth must be told. It's very hard to forgive your

enemies, but forgiveness does not mean allowing a fraud to be perpetuated because the truth is harsh.

I've met Christians that I respect, mostly here in Alaska, but overall they are the exception, not the rule. John Martin has taught me how to be a better disciple, and the prophetesses in Juneau and Fairbanks have genuine spiritual gifts. The Lord is working through a pastor here in Fairbanks to help me write this book. I've worshiped in churches that I feel are genuine, but most of them simply mouth the words of Jesus, and all of them seem harbor some element of hypocrisy. Most Christians are content to be believers without being disciples; it's easier that way.

In Hawaii, I was running out of money while finishing my first book. I solicited aid from three local Christian churches, two of which I had supported with my tithe. All turned me down, one way or another. My favorite rejection came from an assistant pastor who sarcastically asked me "How about a job?" I replied that I was writing a book. He thought for a second and then asked "How much money does it make?"

That was it! Didn't ask me what the book was about (capitalism, democracy, and Christianity). Didn't ask me why I was writing it (a religious call). Didn't ask to see my work (I had over a hundred pages written). Didn't ask about my relationship with God; didn't suggest prayer; didn't suggest discernment. "How much money does it make?" That was his ONLY question!

How did this happen? When I asked the senior pastor for his help, he replied "you're a pretty smart guy, you'll figure something out". He seems like a nice guy, he talks about Jesus, but he clearly thinks that Matthew 25:35 is optional. He does it sometimes, but not all of the time. Is God optional? Can we just obey him some of the time? Do we know better than him? Can we decide when to obey his laws and when to ignore them?

Once you start thinking that God's laws are optional, then the road to hell is paved with religion. We're against gay marriage, drug abuse, and Obamacare. We'll outlaw these things and promote traditional conservative values. The problem is that Jesus didn't teach anything about homosexuality, drug use, or health care. What he did teach was peace, love, poverty, and faith, and we have no intention of using the government to enforce those values. Actually, Jesus didn't tell us to use the government to enforce our religious values at all, even though our government leaders must be the most devout men of God, as I'll explain later.

There is little room in our faith for ministers who simply spout off about Jesus. Perhaps some will come to Christ in this way. Perhaps merely standing up in a pulpit reading the Bible will bring non-believers into the fold, and others will pick up where such men leave off. What we really want, however, are disciples! A preacher has to start first as a disciple, and then will be called to preach, not at first, but the calling will come! There are simply too few of us for the calling not to come! Disciples first, preachers second!

How, then, to describe discipleship?

Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:18-20)

The Great Commission! Pay attention! We're told to make disciples, not believers! The devil is a believer! We're given two specific instructions for new disciples. Disciples are to be baptized, and

disciples are to observe Christ's commandments. Disciples are to observe all of Christ's commandments.

I was sprinkled when I was an infant, but when I was 27 years old I was baptized by immersion in a lake in Ohio. At the time, I was considering a political campaign against the drug war, seeking the Lord's guidance, wrestling mightily with my conscience, and decided on a week-long fast followed by baptism. I asked the Lord in prayer to give me a sign at my baptism, even if it was only visible to me, indicating whether I should proceed with the campaign. No such sign was forthcoming, and I abandoned that foray into politics on the drive home. I now know that that was the right decision, though I spent years wondering. Asking for a sign now seems a bit presumptuous, but this was an early attempt at discernment, and very similar to how Gideon dealt with a similar situation in Judges 6.

Sometimes baptism is easy! In Acts 8, Philip probably had to preach for no more than a few hours and the eunuch was ready to be baptized. Some atheists, however, will resist this step for years. They don't believe in God; they don't believe in the Bible; they don't believe in Jesus. How can you believe in any one religion when so many say so such different things? Obviously these are myths; so many of these stories are all the same. For such people, baptism is a massive step. It is not, however, impossible. Tim Reilly's ministry focuses on evangelizing effectively to atheists and agnostics; he had many resources at iamcompelled.org to aid in this kind of ministry.

After baptism comes obedience. "Teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you." A lot of Christians get stuck at this point. They read so much about forgiveness, they hear so much about how our sins are washed away in the blood of the cross, we preach so much love, our theologians talk so much about Justification by Faith, that people start thinking that they can live however they please. After all, we're all saved, right?

"Not all who call me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

(Matthew 7:21-23)

"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'"

'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir', but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

(Matthew 21:28-31)

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

(Mark 3:35)

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments."

(John 14:15)

"The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me."

(John 14:21)

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

(John 14:23-24)

"If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commandments and remain in his love."

(John 15:10)

"You are my friends if you do what I command you."

(John 15:14)

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are dead to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

(Romans 6:1-2)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

(1 John 2:3-6)

We're not being judgmental, we're not preaching salvation by works, we're just telling you the truth! You think that you want this sham religion! You think that once you're saved, you can live however you want! You think that you want the Gospel to be optional!

You are wrong! The day will come when you will realize that you want to do exactly what God wants you to do, every day, all of the time, no exceptions! Why? Because God is good, he has our best interests in mind, and the commandments are there for our sake, not his. You will know then that you want to be the person that God made you to be, and anything else is a lie. You will pray to God to save you, and then you will understand that because we have free will, because we can choose between good and evil, the best way is to choose good at every time and in every way. America's sham religion is like the adulteress of Proverbs 5; its path is crooked, but it knows it not.

My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge.

For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.

(Proverbs 5:1-6)

Baptism and obedience. These two things alone can take years. Many Christians can't get past obedience. Not only is it too hard, in a capitalist society, to "give to all those who beg of you", and

to "sell your possessions and give to the poor", but we're inundated with propaganda telling us how much freedom we've got, we're surrounded by a state church that doesn't seem to be persecuted, and our most prominent ministers preach that capitalism is fine, but we need more government control over abortion, marriage, and drug use. They believe in Jesus, but they don't live the way he taught.

After obedience to the Gospel comes obedience to the Spirit. This is more difficult because the Gospel is written down, while the instructions of the Holy Spirit can only be understood through discernment. Actually, the Gospel can only be understood through discernment, too (Isaiah 6), as we can well testify to in this country. My fatal mistake with Occupy was not a failure to obey the Gospel, but a failure to obey the Spirit.

Discernment offers our best option for dealing with issues like abortion, gay marriage, school prayer, drugs and alcohol. There would be little need for divisive political feuds if individuals would follow God's guidance when confronted with these issues, and there is no way to satisfactorily resolve these issues in a secularized political arena. A nation led by God needs only light governance; a nation that rejects God will embrace the most oppressive governance in vain attempts to fix its problems.

How do we practice discernment?

1. Worship

"But a time is coming - and now is here - when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

(John 4:23-24)

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two - or at the most three - should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

(1 Corinthians 14:26-30)

Our relationship with God begins with worship. Why? Let's see. Where did we first hear the Gospel preached? Where did we sing our first hymns? Where did we meet the Christians that we respect? The answer is usually (but not always) "in church", and that means worship.

What is true worship? Worship begins with a genuine love of God, trust in God, and surrender to God. There's little point in worship without love, there's little point in discernment without trust, and we'll remain permanently crippled if we keep thinking that we can run our lives as well as God can. The easiest step in God's direction is to simply go to church on Sunday, but it needs to be the right church.

What is worship? Merriam-Webster defines worship as "reverence offered a divine being" and

reverence as "profound adoring awed respect". Meditate on each of those words! Profound. Adoring. Awed. Respect.

Worship is usually accompanied by sermons, and these are either a real avenue for spiritual growth or a big problem, depending on the nature and strength of the preacher's discipleship (or lack thereof). Paul's guidance in 1st Corinthians is prescient. Notice particularly that when revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the speaker should stop (1Cor 14:30). In my experience, the single best test of a preacher is whether he is willing to let other people speak! The best churches are those where different people are preaching every Sunday. If it's always the same guy talking, and if he's been talking for a while, then where are the other disciples that he's been training? Nobody else in the congregation is called to preach? Really?

That doesn't mean that we should just jump up and start preaching. We have to actually be called to preach. It has to come from the Holy Spirit. We can't just do it ourselves. By the time that you are called to preach, you'll be strong enough to exercise good discernment, so there's no need to think that you have to start preaching if you're not already doing a lot of what I'm suggesting here. What I am saying is that in a church where only one voice speaks, that voice is unlikely to be God's.

So, find a church that preaches the Gospel, trains disciples, and is alive with the Holy Spirit. Don't know if the church is right for you? Then pray about it! Ask God to show you the right church, and if the minister only wants to know how much money your book makes, then consider your prayer answered!

2. Prayer.

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.

(Luke 6:12-13)

Yes, Jesus prayed! Quite a bit actually. In this case, he had an important decision to make, so he spent all night in prayer!

I've never spent an entire night in prayer, but a technique that I learned in college was to invest an hour a day into a class that I was behind in, and I'd be caught up in no time. One hour a day!

I wish that I spent an hour a day in prayer. Actually, I only spend that much time in prayer when I have a big decision to make, like whether or not to begin preaching, or how to deal with the collapse of Occupy. On a regular day, it's probably more like fifteen minutes, hopefully half an hour. I'm not counting short prayers, either, like the prayers I say before eating, or before driving, or when sitting down to work on this book. I used to recoil with a mixture of respect and aversion when I met men who spent two hours a day in prayer. Since the Occupy debacle, though, I'm starting to realize that almost however much we pray, it's not enough.

Go to a church if it's convenient. We can pray anywhere, but it's easier to have a designated place, lacking distractions, that's been dedicated to God. If a chapel or sanctuary isn't convenient, then find a quiet place away from the TV. Right now, I do most of my prayer next to a pellet stove in the back room of a friend's house where I'm staying.

What do you do when you're sitting or kneeling there for an hour? Speak to God, even though he already knows what's on your heart. I make regular prayer requests for food, clothing, shelter,

health and guidance, thanksgiving for the tremendous blessings I have received, transformation of my hatred into love and effective channeling of my anger, conviction of my pride and stubbornness, as well as exceptional concerns like Occupy, or this book. After speaking, then be quiet for a while, waiting for a response, which you probably won't be able to hear at first, or more precisely, you'll hear it, but won't be able to sort it out. Keep at it, though, and you'll start to find quiet but powerful direction in your prayer time.

Of course, that direction rarely comes as an audible voice or an email. How do we understand it? How do we figure out what's "right" and "wrong"? Make sure that you start with a genuine commitment to discipleship, to putting God in charge of your life and seeking his guidance. Study the Bible. Listen to your conscience. More than anything else, though, make a real, lifelong commitment to God, and you'll start getting real, lifelong answers.

3. Bible study

The only reason that I list this third is because we all encountered God first through worship, and because the Bible itself must be approached through prayer, since it can only be understood through the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the Bible possesses an important advantage over other methods of discernment. It is a printed book, and however difficult it may be to understand, it is easier to understand than a revelation or a prophetic voice.

So much has been written about Bible study that I can add little except to explain my own personal beliefs. I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, but that does not mean that it is always literally accurate. It is a spiritual document, so if Joshua 10:13 says that the Sun stopped in the sky, this is not to be interpreted as astronomical truth. Probably the Earth stopped its rotation, but this was explained to a more primitive people as the Sun stopping in the sky. The Bible explains the incomprehensible, so inaccuracies invariably creep in. It's a collection of historical documents, so if there are slight chronological discrepancies between M and M about the withering of a fig tree, well, it's irrelevant to the spiritual truths being conveyed. I don't need to believe that every word in the Bible is true in order to believe its message, anymore than I need a Grand Unified Theory before I will believe in physics. The letters from Paul are just that, letters from Paul. If he tells us that women should remain silent in church in 1 Corithians 14:34, that's just first century mores creeping in, nothing else. The Bible is inspired not just in its content but also in its presentation, that's why the words of Jesus are printed in red. They are the teachings of the Messiah, they the most important part of the Bible, and as such should be our primary object of study. Contradictions between the Old Testament and the Gospel should be resolved in favor of the Gospel, so we no longer stone adulteresses to death. Contradictions between the letters of Paul and the Gospel should be resolved in favor of the Gospel, so 2 Thessalonians 3:10 should be disregarded in favor of Matthew 25:35.

4. Group prayer.

Again, I tell you the truth, if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them.

(Matthew 18:19-20)

Group prayer! This is one of the most powerful prayer techniques that I know. The hard part is finding disciples to pray with. Once you've found a group of disciples, discuss your prayer requests with them. Once you reach agreement on what you want to pray for, then go around the group, letting each person pray in turn, out loud, with his or her own words, but each asking for what the

group has decided on. If someone requests prayer, it's best to pray immediately, rather than waiting for a later time that might not come. There has to be genuine agreement, so individuals can opt out, but we need to support each other's prayer life, so consider group prayer requests seriously. I've read of ministers who have recruited a prayer team to sit in a back room behind the pulpit and pray for them during the actual delivery of their sermons!

5. Revelation.

In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

(Acts 27:30-32)

How did Paul know that? Revelation.

Remember the story of Philip and the eunuch. At first, an angel appeared to Philip and told him to "go toward the south". He was not told why; only to go. Once he went, the angel did not appear again. The Spirit, not the angel, told Philip to approach the chariot. Why? Because it is difficult for the Spirit to give such a specific direction as "go down the road towards Gaza". Once God got Philip down the right road however, then the chariot was right there, and only some encouragement from the Spirit was then required.

What is revelation? It's a sudden insight or understanding that comes from God. It appears instantaneously; it is not reasoned through. It can seemingly be triggered by thoughtful exercise, like reading a book, but what really triggers it is prayer. If you desire revelation, ask for it! Pray specifically for what you wish to know! To write this book, I had to ask in prayer to understand the exact state of my ministry. That prayer was answered by revelation.

Pentecostal worship is the best technique that I know of to develop an ear for the Holy Spirit. A pentecostal service is typically longer than your average ritualized service. Two hours seems to be standard, three or even four is certainly not unheard of. There will be music, singing, praise, and a certain style of preaching that exhorts people to throw their hands up in the air and yell "Praise Jesus!" The preacher may feel called to throw out blessings, saying something like "there's a teacher, there's a educator in the house, say Hallelujah!". If you feel like the blessing is meant for you, then you should cry out "Hallelujah!". Even if you don't hear a specific preaching meant for you, there will still moments when you feel an urge to throw your hands up in the air and cry out "Hallelujah!" or "Praise Jesus!" or "Amen!"

I haven't been to many pentecostal services, but I hardly ever make it through an entire service without the Spirit calling me to do something a little crazy, a little embarrassing, a little unusual. Usually, I then clam up and remain seated in my chair. That's not good, but most of us failed to write our b's and d's correctly back in first grade. Get over it, come back next week, try again. Keep it up for a while, and you'll find that not only are you opening up to blessings during worship, but you'll also find yourself walking up to people in the supermarket and finding the right words to say because they're being given to you from the same source - the Holy Spirit.

6. Dreams and prophetic gifts

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell

you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

(Matthew 2:12-13)

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

(Luke 2:36-38)

Now to each one the manifestations of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

(1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

I experienced dreams in Hawaii and prophetic voices here in Alaska. When I explain to people what happened to me in Juneau, I'm often told that we are to avoid palm readers because they are occult. Satanic rites, prayers to Wiccan deities, and Ouija boards are occult. But let's not forget also that there are genuine spiritual gifts. These are not myths, and the reason we see them so rarely is because we've allowed secularism to pervade and corrupt our churches, but they are there and they are real!

I group dreams and prophetic gifts together because both present the same problem, that of interpretation. In my experience, they can never be understood without further discernment! If you're praying specifically for dreams, you might as well just go ahead and pray for understanding at the same time, because otherwise you'll just be left wondering what it all means and then have to pray for understanding later. Likewise for prophetic voices. Two of my greatest mistakes with Occupy was not asking God if the message in Juneau was real and what the message in Fairbanks meant.

Most certainly I tell you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also; and he will do greater works than these, because I am going to my Father. Whatever you will ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it.

(John 14:12-14)

Towards the end of my time in Hawaii, I was lost and hopeless. All the local Christians had rejected me, I was living in a homeless camp, everything that I had of value (laptop and surfboard) had been stolen. I prayed for guidance, exercised discernment, did everything that I felt called to, but still didn't know what to do next. I prayed about this, too, and the answer came through revelation. "You've asked me what I want you to do, but you haven't asked me to do anything for you."

What? I don't ask God to do anything for me! Do I? Discernment is finding out what God wants me to do, not the other way around, right? Let's see, I ask God to "give us this day our daily bread".

I've asked God for food, shelter, and guidance. After the revelation I just described, I started asking God for dreams, as I explained earlier, and I had dreams about flying to Alaska!

See, if you're a disciple, you work for God, and you can ask the boss for things that you need to do your job. You can even ask for luxuries, and God would rather you ask him than try to get them yourself, actually. Just remember that it's a request, that's all.

I now ask God for transportation! In the spring of 2012, I was occupying with John Martin in advance of the Anchorage mayoral election when I felt called to visit a church here in Fairbanks. Now previously, when I felt called to do something, I'd think that I needed to jump up and go, go, go! John encouraged me to wait. I spent most of that week fasting, which I've done often in the wilderness, but fasting in downtown Anchorage was a new experience! I fasted and prayed for transportation to Fairbanks, if in fact I was called to go there.

Friday afternoon found a church group across the street handing out clothing and warm drinks to the homeless. I walked over, talked with them for a while, and obtained a ride to Wasila, which is on the road to Fairbanks. If you've spent any time hitchhiking, you know that getting out of a big city is the hardest part.

Lance let me sleep on his couch that night, and gave me thirty dollars and a bag of trail mix in the morning. I stood by the road with a sign reading "Fairbanks", I developed the definite sense that I should lose the sign, which I did. I also stopped holding out my thumb. I now waited by the roadside, fasting and praying, with no sign, just a suitcase, and making no signal that I was seeking a ride.

One car after another stopped and gave me rides. I did spend a pretty miserable night out in the cold in Healy, and as dawn broke Sunday morning I couldn't help but wonder how I could make the remaining hundred miles before church began. Was I really called to go to Fairbanks? Maybe it was all in my head.

At 8 AM a car pulled up from the wrong direction. "Do you have any money?" the driver asked. Yes, I replied. I had the thirty dollars that Lance had given me the day before. She was driving from Anchorage to Fairbanks and had just discovered that she had left her ATM card at home. The thirty dollars went into her gas tank and she dropped me off at the front door of Freedom in Christ an hour before their Sunday service.

If you love me, keep my commandments. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

(John 14:15-18)

I've tried to describe, in practical terms without much theology, how I live as a disciple, and I've tried to explain this in a way that others can apply in their lives. Don't get the idea that I'm some Jedi master that uses "the force" to make cars stop and give him a ride. First off, God does all the work, not me. He's not some impersonal "force" that I "use". He's a living spirit that's overwhelmingly incompressible to any human being. Second, the reliance on God that I've described has taken years to develop and learn, and I don't think that I could have learned it without a strong dose of persecution. I would never have gotten to the point of praying to God for transportation to Fairbanks if I had the money to just get on a plane and fly there myself.

Finally, let me summarize the essence of discernment. First, you must become a disciple, which

means making a conscious decision to put God totally in charge of your life. You can bring him your wants and needs, your ambitions and desires, as prayer requests, but he's the boss. He's in charge. Next, you live according to the Gospel. There's no point in seeking the Spirit if you won't obey the words in red. You develop a disciplined spiritual life with regular worship, prayer, and Bible study, so that you're constantly exposed to God, you're constantly talking with God, and you're constantly reading about God. Finally, you listen to God. You pay attention to that still small voice that we call our conscience and you follow where it leads.

Now, if disciples lived alone in the world, we could wrap up this discussion right now. We live apart from the world, we work for God instead of money, we follow where God leads us, do the work he calls us to, and are eventually called home. Fortunately, we don't live alone, so after discussing how to live as an individual disciple, we should now discuss how to live in community.

Christian Community

"Community" usually means "church", but there's a big problem with that. By changing the one term to the other, we're already accepting the secularist proposition that discipleship is something to be done on Sunday mornings, rather than a 24/7, lifelong commitment. In a lot of ways, I'm just not interested in going to church if that's all it is! Are we going to pray together on Monday, too? Are we going to talk about how God wants us to run the school, or the gas station, or the newspaper, or the website, or whatever it is that we spend the rest of our time on? If not, then we're not really a community of disciples, are we? We're more like undercover Christians in a secular world.

So what are we? Undercover Christians? Is this China?

For centuries, Christians dissatisfied with Sunday morning religion have sought deeper ways to respond to the Gospel. The most successful of these efforts began with a dedication to living the Gospel, progressed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately attracted additional disciples who gathered together into religious communities, two major examples being the Benedictines and the Franciscans.

In the years following the collapse of the Roman empire, St. Benedict left his upper class Italian home in his early twenties and initially became a hermit, living for three years in a cave about forty miles from Rome. A spring provided him water, and a sympathizer lowered him food in a basket and visited him occasionally. Word spread, however, and he developed a reputation for holiness. Eventually, he was asked to lead first one monastic community, then another, ultimately founding the Benedictine order and writing the rule by which it is governed to this day.

Contrast this with how many Christian leaders operate today. Benedict did not decide to establish a monastery, then go around soliciting donations to make it happen. Nor did he remain in Rome, working a job until he had saved enough to make a pilgrimage to the cave. He didn't even join an established monastery until he was asked to become abbot! Instead, he gave up all of his worldly attachments (Luke 12) and followed where the Holy Spirit led him, even though it must have seemed impossible that retreating to a cave was the route to lead a community! Today, he'd just be called lazy.

How, then, do Benedictines live? What is it about this lifestyle that continues to attract people?

The Benedictine motto is "ora et labora" - prayer and work, and Benedict's own example shows that the prayer comes first. Modern Benedictine communities typically pray together five times a day, starting with morning prayer around dawn, followed by Mass just before the beginning of the

work day, a brief noon prayer, a longer Vespers service before dinner, and Compline just before the monks retire for the night. Each service has its own flavor. Morning prayer is typically dominated by psalms, Mass is a slightly shortened version of your typical Sunday service, and Compline is quiet and meditative.

What about work? Most Benedictine abbeys have some kind of major work that most of the community engages in, such as running a school or a retreat center, but that doesn't mean that everyone in the community has to engage in that work. A Benedictine friend of mine runs a small theological research institute in a wing of the abbey, even though the community runs a high school as its primary occupation.

Hundreds of years later, St. Francis embarked on a journey similar to St. Benedict's. After dabbling in a variety of pursuits, he turned decisively to God, making a pilgrimage to Rome and spending more and more of his time in solitude. A crucial turning point came during a prayer vigil in the small church at San Damiano, when the crucifix spoke to him in a vision and told him to 'rebuild the church'.

After some confused first steps, he ultimately settled onto a path that led him to found the Franciscan order. If the hallmark of Benedictines is their hospitality (they are to "receive strangers as Christ"), then the Franciscans are renowned for poverty. Like the Benedictines, they divest themselves of their worldly possessions, but instead of working at a monastery to support themselves, they go around begging for food! They base themselves out of a friary, but spend most of their time out among the everyday people of the surrounding community, receiving no money for any work they do, and counting on charity to provide for their needs.

Of course, the Franciscans have received so many sizable donations over the centuries that they no longer have to beg for anything. A good modern example was the late Bruce Ritter, who after living for a year in a tenement building on the Lower East Side of New York City, operating a "ministry of availability", began taking in homeless teenagers and ultimately founded Covenant House.

Notice some common threads between the Benedictines and the Franciscans. Both were established by saints who founded their orders only after a long prayer interaction with God. Both insist that disciples must obey Luke 12 and sell all of their worldly possessions. Both pray at least five times a day.

People who take the Gospel seriously, commit to living the life of a disciple, depend on God through prayer, and support each other even with a seemingly goofy idea like a ministry of availability because they trust that we're all on the same team, and it's God's team.

That's what I'm talking about! That's Christian community!

Unfortunately, we've spend so much time and energy fighting amongst ourselves over our bitter little theological disputes while ignoring Christianity's overall slide into hypocrisy and irrelevance that there isn't much Christian community left.

Remember John Martin? The last time I saw him he was taking up the slack left by the temporary closure of a major Anchorage soup kitchen. He obtains food from the Food Bank, cooks up a pot of soup, puts it in a wagon, rolls it up to the corner of City Hall at noon and scoops it out to anyone who asks. A local church provides kitchen and storage facilities.

If he was selling hot dogs out of a cart, all he'd need is enough cash to make the health inspector happy. Instead, he's been cited three times for operating an illegal food establishment. This is also

the man who was once called the "scum of the Earth" by one of our opponents, walking by the protest site in a suit and tie.

Those opponents will be quick to point out that the Food Bank provides the food and the church provides the kitchen. Yet John is still homeless, camping discretely where the city cops haven't found him. It just isn't my idea of a community, or a society, that I want to live in. It's a pagan nation that treats disciples this way.

I want to live in a country where there are religious communities everywhere! A country where a monastery is as easy to find as a health club, where disciples are respected, not persecuted, for foregoing wealth and worldly possessions, where basic living accommodations are available to them (and everyone else), and the churches are vibrant social centers of discipleship.

Christian Democracy

Occupy was a political opposition, and any doubt that there is a strong political aspect to my calling was dispelled by the timing of this revelation - one week after the election.

By 2012, I had turned completely against democracy, believing it to be another communism, another "people's government" that had become an excuse for depraved tyranny. Then I was shocked by a religious call to run a political campaign of some kind! I'm still very suspicious of democracy. It's just so hard to believe that after years of being talked to like garbage, being treated like garbage, being throw away homeless on the streets like so much human trash, that we would suddenly achieve some miraculous transformation of American society just because yours truly made it onto TV.

Let me be very clear about this. There's nothing wrong with the idea that the masses of people should have a voice in a country's leadership. There's no reason why we shouldn't have free and fair elections; in fact, we should have more of them. There's no reason not to have a vibrant political opposition, limitations on government power, and a free press.

On the other hand, there are some points that we need get absolutely clear about. Governmental authority does not come from "the people" or the "consent of the governed" or any such nonsense. Legitimate authority comes from God, nowhere else.

America's political philosophy proposes far more than the notion that the people have a voice in their government. American democracy proposes that the only legitimate source of governmental authority is the "consent of the governed". This is an almost meaningless propaganda phrase; taken literally, it would seem to imply that nobody should be imprisoned, for who would consent to their own incarceration? "Consent of the governed" is a code phrase that means "majority rule", and what our system of government really proposes is that the majority have the right to rule over everyone else, even if that leadership is absolutely wicked.

Last July 4th, American Atheists made headlines by flying an "Atheism is Patriotic" banner over New York City. Dave Silverman, the group's president, stated that "Religion is unpatriotic at its core, because it places its law above the law of the land." Teresa MacBain, the group's Public Relations Director, added "Atheism, being the absence of any religious beliefs, implies that human law alone is supreme over humanity."

This has been the collection sin of humanity since Genesis 3. We want human law to be supreme over humanity. We don't need God's law; man can govern himself. God might not even exist!

Of course, atheism is an extreme position relative to the beliefs of the average American, but these

comments are prescient. The atheists describe exactly where our country is going. "Human law alone is supreme." Under our democracy, majority rule is supreme, it has produced the largest prison system in the world, a depraved economic system, and is conquering the entire planet to enslave it under democracy.

We've seen this style of government enough times in the last century that it's become sickeningly rote. Some group is declared to be "the people", whether it's the proletariat, the Aryan race, or the majority. Then we build a "people's government"; who would argue with that? Who wouldn't want "the people" to govern? We don't really need limits on government power; it's what "the people" want. Our society is totally dominated by money; it's what "the people" want. You have to obey the laws; it's what "the people" want. Anyone who doesn't like it can leave; it's what "the people" want.

Part of the problem is that "the people" are never all of the people. There's always one group that is labeled "the people" and those who oppose them are derided as thieves, bums, criminals, terrorists, and generally speaking, the lowest form of human scum imaginable. Anyone who opposes "the people" absolutely must be broken. It never hurts that "the people" so dominate and control all of the means of public expression that opposing voices are drowned into silence.

According to the communists, the proletariat were "the people" because they did the actual work that kept an industrial society going. Marx's "labor theory of value" argued that the value of a product is related principally to the labor required to produce it. According to the fascists, the Aryan race were "the people" because they are more evolved, more genetically advanced. "Gattica", named by NASA as the most plausible science fiction movie ever made, envisions a future dominated by a super-race of genetically engineered humans.

Many readers easily discard the pro-communist and pro-fascist propaganda while accepting our corresponding pro-democracy propaganda without question. The majority are "the people" in a sense that neither the proletariat nor the Aryan race could claim to be. Democracy is a "legitimate" system of government in a way that neither communism or fascism were. Shocked outrage at anyone who doesn't "believe" in democracy serves to eliminate any real discussion. Lambasting opponents as racists or communists disguises the fundamental similarities shared by all of these tyrannical philosophies. We accept our own propaganda, that the majority have the right to rule, and reject fascism and communism because they are not supported by "the people", i.e, the majority.

In fact, there is no person or group of people who have any right to rule. Only God has that authority. Leadership of any kind is justified only if it is moral and just, and this is decided by God.

A fascinating system of government. I absolutely hate it. How much? I thought that my religious call was to overthrow this government! I even told people that! Well, I knew that it was something like that! (anybody can screw up a discernment) Now I understand better. I was called to preach! I was called to give you a choice, through your democracy, by breaking into this political system and at least giving voice to the Christian gospel and letting you choose in your election. And I blew it.

What system of government is better? What could replace it?

When ancient Israel was enslaved in Egypt, God raised two prophets named Moses and Aaron who led Israel out of bondage and into freedom, as told in the book of Exodus. After years in the desert, Moses died and was replaced by Joshua, who led Israel into the promised land, as told in the book named after him. When he was 110 years old, he led Israeli to renew the covenant, died, and was peacefully buried.

The Israeli government then vanished. Ceased to exist.

Individual tribes continued to operate, but there was no longer any central organization. The tribes and their leaders were devout, they worshiped God, they prayed to God, they listened to God, they discerned God's will, and things went pretty well. We're now into the book of Judges.

Things didn't keep going well, mainly because individuals and tribes turned away from God. They stopped trying to be disciples and just settled for being believers. Little wars began to crop up.

The Lord let this go so far as to allow brief returns to slavery. The Philistines ruled Israel for forty years, and then God raised a judge, Samson, to liberate them starting in Judges 13. Samson was a bit like me; he really bungled things up, too, but he got rid of the Philistines, though he died in the victory. (oh well)

This is how God led Israeli for years, through men and woman like Samson and Deborah, Gideon and Ehud, until the Israelites demanded a king, mainly because everyone else around them had a king. That transition was overseen by Samuel, the last of the judges.

In short, after the Exodus, the most dramatic of God's interventions in the political life of a nation, a certain system of government resulted. Very loose, very weak, often non-existent central government unified only occasionally by a special kind of disciple called a judge.

Interestingly enough, a lot of people today advocate a weaker central government! It's important to remember, however, that decentralized government and deregulated society isn't some cure-all elixir to be hawked on AM talk radio like a nineteenth century patent medicine. An absolutely essential characteristic of this form of government is the devotion to God of the bulk of the populace.

Essential! This is essential! There is no magic system of government that produces freedom, liberty, equality, human rights, civil liberties and economic opportunity apart from God! The modern attempt, in the name of religious pluralism, to detach God into a Sunday morning exercise is an experiment doomed to failure. No government programs, no matter how well managed, can mitigate a fundamentally immoral society. No economic system, no matter how competitive, will reward hard work if subjugation is the only way to obtain it. Likewise, a society of people dedicated to God, with a healthy dose of genuine disciples, needs little in the way of governance, because God is the leader.

Now, I've studied the Bible, I understood what judges were, I advocated for that system of government, but I did not grasp that such governance was possible in this country until I myself was called to lead an opposition. I hate our leadership, but if I could have played Occupy like a fiddle, something would have happened. Maybe I wouldn't be President, but it would have at least let people listen and vote.

So maybe I was wrong about democracy. Maybe.

I'd fantasized about overthrowing it, I'd settled down to opposing it, I'd sought ways to escape from it, I would have used an election to reform it, but actually I was just called to preach to it.

Of course, there is no such thing as democracy. There is only the American system of government, the Canadian system of government, the Mexican system of government, the Australian system of government, etc. Democracy is only a vague concept, that somehow "the people" should have "a voice" in their government.

There's nothing wrong with giving people a voice in their government, but the American system of government is a total disaster, partially mitigated by freedom. Our leaders are chosen on a TV

game show, vastly elaborate, with stages all over the country, and oh so expensive! You've got to be flying everywhere, giving speeches, buses, banners, balloons, all kinds of buttons and bumper stickers! It costs huuuuge amounts of money to play, the judges watch everything on TV, and then they vote!

The great reliance on TV means that the media has tremendous influence over the outcome of the election, and the media is now massively corrupt. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign cost \$700 million, of which \$300 million was spent on advertising. In other words, \$300 million went into the pockets of the "free press", and that's just one national campaign. Add up all of the campaigns for President, for Congress, for state houses, and probably \$1 billion per election got paid to the media to buy TV, radio, and newspaper ads. Before you can even think about winning an election, you need to spend hundreds of millions of dollars just to be heard.

Our leaders are chosen like sporting champions. There's a regular season, then the postseason and the conference championships, and finally two contenders square off in the fall debates to see who can claim the greatest political prize of all, Leader of the Free World.

The Giants play the Patriots in the Super Bowl, everybody watches on TV, but it doesn't really matter who wins. What if it did matter? What if the Buffalo Bills absolutely had to win the Super Bowl; what if it was essential for national security? The Bills haven't made the playoffs since Doug Flutie was quarterback. What if the Toronto Argonauts had to win? They're not even allowed to play.

This is how our political system is structured, except that it really does matter who wins. Of course, it could be worse. A lot worse.

In his book "The Gulag Archipelago", Alexander Solzhenitsyn tells the story of Viktor Alekseyevich Belov, whom he met while in prison. God had probably raised Belov to become Czar after the death of Stalin. Belov was warned by a prophet not to begin organizing until 1948, but Belov, even though he was only an automobile mechanic at the time, felt so responsible for what was happening in his country that he began organizing in 1943. He was betrayed to the police, arrested, and disappeared into the gulag. Instead of Czar Mikhail we got Khrushchev. This is the real world; men of God make mistakes.

You vote, you lose, then you do what you're told. If you don't like it, get the hell out. The logic here is that the majority run this country, this is how they've chosen to do so, if you live here you should accept that, and if you won't accept it then you should leave.

So why not just leave?

First and foremost, I am a disciple of Christ. In many ways, I hate living in this country because of how I am treated, but I'm not going to leave until God tells me to leave. In the meantime, I've got a job to do and it's not one that the majority wants or respects, but that doesn't matter. I don't work for the majority. I work for God.

Furthermore, where are you going to go? Whenever we are told to "love it or leave it" or to "get the hell out", I reply first that I go where I am called by God, and then I want to know where? Where are we supposed to go to when we leave? There really is no place to go. The problems of America are the problems of humanity. There is no other country that offers the freedom that we lack. There certainly is no other country that offers it to immigrants.

It was America, ironically enough, that not only promised freedom, but promised it especially to immigrants! Now we've come full circle. We were born here, we were promised freedom all of our

lives, and now we are told that if we want the freedom that we were promised, we should leave, go to another country and become immigrants to obtain it.

I am learning to be reluctantly grateful for the oppression that I suffer here in this country. If I had freedom, I probably would use it to work on technology R&D, I'd go to church, I'd worship God, but I wouldn't develop the total reliance on him that I have now. The scripture is true! It is only by losing my life that I have gained it! It is only by being stripped of the life that I desired that I have obtained the one God wants me to have!

There is no freedom without Christ.

the·oc·ra·cy

noun

1 : government of a state by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

That is almost exactly what we need, except of course that it's not enough for the officials to be regarded as divinely guided. They have to actually be divinely guided. Human beings are not capable of administering a government without divine guidance.

When I suggest theocratic government, the secularists howl and start screaming about their rights! We're thrown away like human garbage because our religion teaches that capitalism is immoral and they talk about rights! We're told to "get the hell out" if we don't like it and they talk about freedom! Our political opposition is busted up by SWAT teams, they shrug their shoulders and tell us that we have to obey the law! Our speeches are blacked out by the media and they're very concerned about the stifling effect of religious fanaticism on free expression.

Enough! We're done with these rights! We live in an oppressive society determined to jam its depraved leadership down our throats, we're disenfranchised by a political system controlled by money and dominated by secularism and sham Christianity, and now we've seen an entire political opposition eliminated by the police and silenced by the media! If the secularists wanted rights, they should have stood up for ours! What they really want is secular government.

The choice is not between a free, peaceful, democratic, secular society and an oppressive, fanatic, conquering theocracy. The choice is between an oppressive, fanatic, conquering democracy and peaceful, Godly leadership. Our leaders are absolute fanatics. They "believe" in democracy, no matter what it produces or how it produces it. They will not negotiate with their opponents. You have to "accept" democracy, either at home or abroad, and you will be crushed and beaten until you do.

We're told to wait until the next election, things will get better, we can work within the system. Instead, we vote for "change we can believe in" and get more oppressive, fanatic, conquering, militant capitalist democracy. This is why the only visible theocracies are so militant. It's not because all theocracy is militant; it's because no merely human opposition to secular democracy is possible. Only God can oppose this government.

The election of 2012 was the biggest political disaster in American history. The opposition degenerated into street riots and was eliminated by SWAT teams. No meaningful election took place. The presidential campaign pitted a militant capitalist against a militant capitalist and a

militant capitalist won. What's more, this time the opposition was raised by God, so what does that imply about the consequences of its failure?

2012 was also the biggest failure of my life, but there is no way to go back. The only way is forward. We need to discuss these issues, we need to form a Christian opposition, and we ultimately need to form a Christian government. We need to make a solid commitment, across the board, to have Christian leadership in every aspect of our society. General assemblies, legislative sessions, and board meetings all need to start with prayer. Not rote prayer, either. Our farms and factories need to be managed by people determined to seek God's will for the disposition of those resources, not multinational corporations determined to maximize profits. We can not be dependent on a global economy, no matter how cheap its products, because we can not trust that it will be managed by disciples of Christ.

Christian government. Many will howl in terror at the thought. Remember, though, that it is secular government that has produced the largest prison system in the world, the most crushing military juggernaut in human history, our cynical economic system, and an overarching government that spends money like a Siam princess.

Remember, too, that many claim to be Christian disciples who are not. Capitalism is an acid test for this brand of "Christianity". Review Matthew 5, Matthew 25, Mark 10, Luke 6, Luke 12, James 2. What happens when a man walks into a restaurant without money? How do we treat the homeless? How do we fund our buses and trains, schools and hospitals? Can we develop proprietary technology and outlaw on-line public libraries, or must technology and information be open and free?

A Christian restaurant must be run as a soup kitchen; a Christian hotel must be run as a homeless shelter. If we can't provide sufficient housing, then establish free camping sites. They will need to be provided with sanitation facilities like port-a-potties, which must be cleaned regularly, and the homeless can not afford this. So it must be provided for them at "public expense", but not through taxes, but rather through well-meaning citizens who donate their time, money and equipment. If enough of those people exist, we're fine. If those people don't exist, then that's not a place worth living in.

The government must be run by Christians, too. I can't figure out whether to get on a plane and go to Anchorage or Fairbanks; I most certainly can't figure out how to deal with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Only God can lead a government. Only through discernment can people on Earth tap into that wisdom.

A Christian political party must be formed. Its primary process can include rallies and speeches, general assemblies and town hall meetings, yet the ultimate selection of a party ticket must be carried out by the most select Christian disciples, using all of our techniques of discernment, all of the prophetic gifts and spiritual resources at our disposal. There can be no primary election. Once that slate of candidates has been prepared, it will be presented to the populace in a general election, to be accepted or rejected in favor of other candidates. If the disciples do our jobs, then the electorate should be pleasantly surprised to find us nominating quality leaders who will effectively guide the nation.

So, Christian democracy is a political and spiritual movement that proposes a comprehensive social revolution, replacing capitalism with the Gospel, introducing a strong element of theocracy into our democratic government, and warning of dire consequences if this prescription is not followed.

Conclusion

America is abandoning God, we see the results, and it's not something stupid like gay marriage. We hear the vitriol that is spewed on AM talk radio. We see the street riots on TV. We're at war with Islam abroad, and we're at war with ourselves at home. One faction screams for people to work for Mammon, and tells anyone who doesn't like it to "get the hell out". The other faction demands more and more government regulation to solve all of our problems. Both preach our overarching system of government to anyone who will listen. The street faction throws rocks at storefronts and rants against "the system". They're all at war with somebody. They hate you. You hate them. That's what we've become. A nation full of hate, greed, wickedness, and violence. Everyone talks about freedom, but nobody wants freedom in Christ.

The nation! The nation! My God, the nation!

Ever since the non-campaign when I was 27 years old, I've felt that I've held the nation cradled in my hands, I've finally dropped it, and I'm so, so sorry. I've hated this country in so many ways, but I would have run in the election, and if elected I would have served. I would have at least tried to lead the opposition to pack our bags and launch an Alaskan secession movement.

See, the watchman takes a lot of pride in his work. I came to Alaska because I was called here by God. I preached the Gospel because I was called. I tried to blow the trumpet because I was called. I'm not going back to Maryland; of course not! I was called to Alaska! I failed to blow the trumpet, so then I ran door to door trying to warn everyone about what happened. That didn't work, either, so now I'm back on my knees begging God to blow the trumpet again.

Here's the problem. The watchman didn't really give a shit what happened to the town. The townspeople talk to him like garbage, they treat him like garbage, they ignore him, they slam their doors shut in his face, they spit on him in the marketplace, they leave him to sleep out in the cold, they throw him out of their churches. The watchman would love to leave and go to another town, but he can see them all from the watchtower, none of them are very friendly, and anyway he has a job to do. The watchman does his job, but he hates the town.

That doesn't sound very Christian, and it's not.

Who could love this country? Who could love a country run by a bunch of self-serving creeps with some nightmare system to be jammed down the throats of anyone who won't go along with it voluntarily? Who could love a country out to conquer the entire world and enslave it under majority rule? Who could love a sham religion that mocks Christ by teaching that the Gospel is optional and throws away genuine disciples like human garbage? Who could love a country that celebrates political opposition as the most protected form of free speech, then eliminates the most promising political opposition in a generation using SWAT teams? Truly, who could love this country?

What? You don't want leaders who hate the country? Well, no, but you definitely want leaders who burn with hatred for capitalism, who consult everyone but refuse to cave in to the majority, who have dedicated their lives to God, who serve if they are called by God, who are disciples of Christ.

I've told you how I've prayed for food, housing, transportation, work, guidance, and inspiration. I've also prayed for God to get me out of this country, repeatedly. I've asked him to help me overthrow this government. I've asked him for a secession movement. When he called me to preach, I asked for a pulpit. I never expected a political campaign, at least not for anything other than secession and independence. They want us to leave, then let's leave! I'm OK with that, but

now there's a crisis.

I wrote my first book hoping that it would galvanize America's scattered anti-capitalist Christian opposition into mounting an Alaskan or Hawaiian secession bid in 2012. Then Occupy happened! CNN! Fox! God's plan was so much better than anything that I had imagined! (of course) The timing was perfect! And it was so easy! All I had to do was go to Anchorage and preach! Now 2012 has come and gone, and I'm back to writing again. It's a poor substitute for a divinely inspired political opposition.

There are benefits to failure. I'm a better disciple than I was a year ago. Obviously, I take prophetic voices a lot more seriously than I did then! I'm more humble, more willing to consider the spiritual gifts of the people around me.

Have you screwed up in your life? Ruined your marriage with an affair? Got locked up in prison? Killed someone driving drunk? With a handgun, even?

And you're really, really sorry, right? I know, I am too. You want to go back and fix it? Me too. But we can't go back. Only forward.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Sometimes it's because good people make mistakes. Good people make mistakes that affect other good people who haven't themselves done anything wrong! Sometimes things don't work out even though you've done everything right!

Why aren't things working out, even though I'm sure that I'm doing what God has called me to? Maybe the calling is so difficult and so delicate that an inadvertent misstep can lead to a ruinous outcome. Something seemingly insignificant could be decisive.

So the opposition is destroyed, I'm back to being homeless and destitute, no one listens to my speeches, there's no way to organize, the church throws me away in a homeless shelter.

Now what?

Alaska Blog

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Day 0



Day 0 started rough, but God worked through it all. I packed up my campsite near the university, piled everything into a shopping cart around noon, and pushed it across town to New Hope, a local church that's been providing space for John Martin's Community Support Group on weekday afternoons. An old man came in; we provided him with clean clothes, some food, and I let him lie down to rest with my blanket to cover him and my rolled up sleeping bag as his pillow. I was the only person cleaning up, and when I was done, I woke him, then went upstairs to help carry a coffee maker downstairs for an evening meeting. When I returned, the old man was gone, along with my blanket and bag!

I left a suitcase and the shopping cart at church, started heading downtown at around 6 PM, saw him on Delany Park strip, walked over to him and he talked to me like trash!

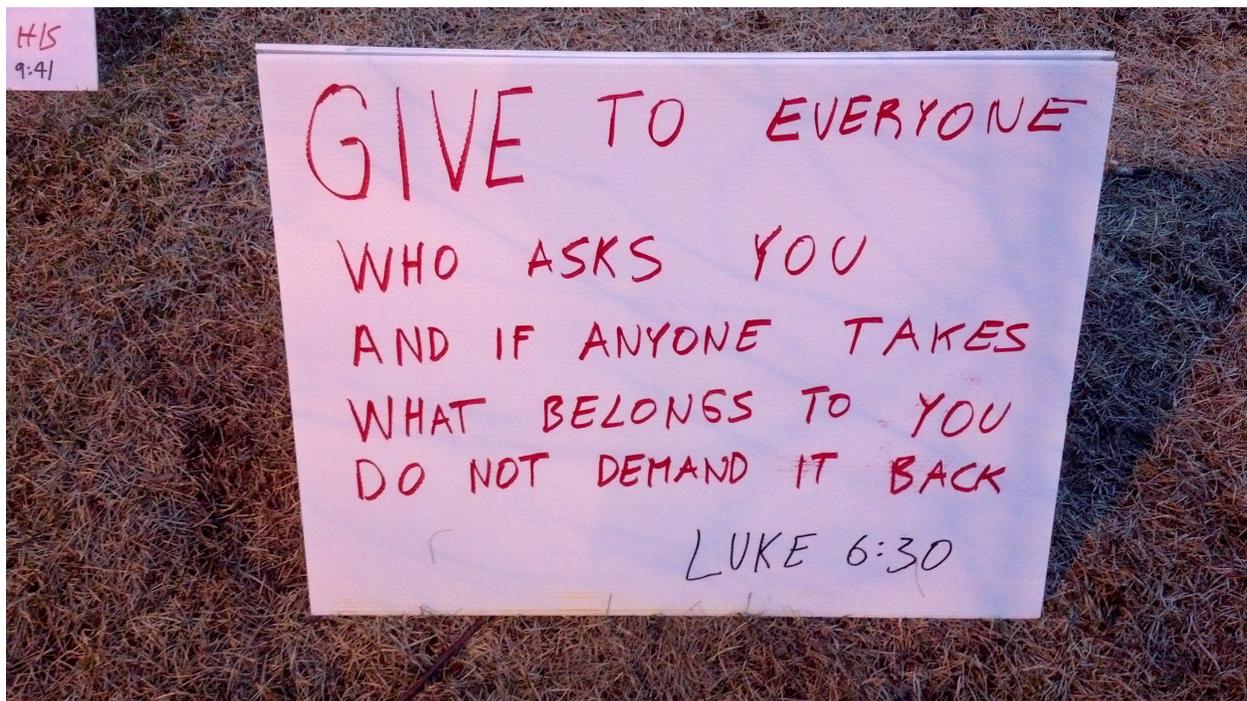
"I'll be over Town Square," I said.

"I don't care if you go to the moon!" he replied.

Not even a thank you for the bag. I lugged the rest of my stuff over to Town Square, dropped it all down, and started to cry. Why am I doing this? I'm broke; I'm homeless; I have no sleeping gear, now. Is this really what God wants?

I started thumbing through my Bible, and came to Luke 6:30: "Give to everyone who asks you and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back." Well, I said to myself, that's what I just did!

So I took out magic markers, wrote that passage on two signs, taped them together and set them up:

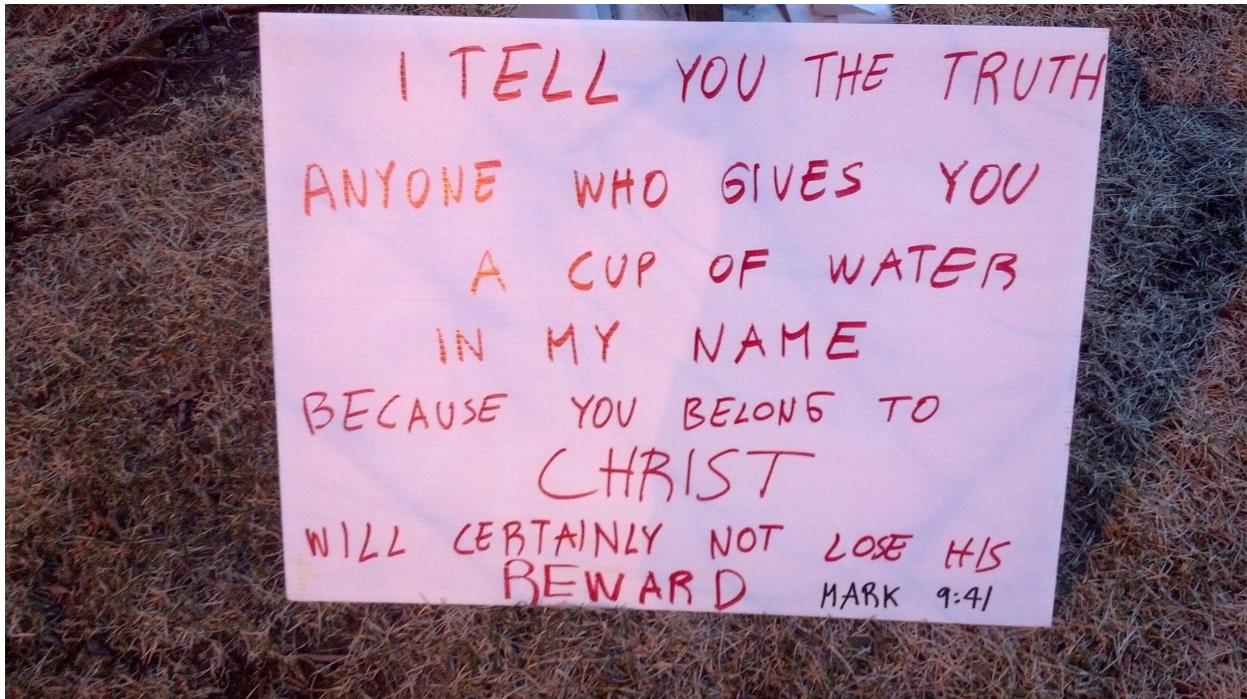


Then I started begging God again to provide me warmth to sleep that night. A friend of mine texted me and I called him back and told him what had happened. Even though he was pretty tired, he said that he'd buy a sleeping bag at Wal-Mart and bring it over.

That inspired me to write a second sign, Matthew 25:35:



I was part way into a third sign when John Martin showed up, and by the time my friend got there with a sleeping bag and a tarp I was able to introduce them. Then I finished the third sign:



Finally, I added a fourth sign to explain why we were doing all of this and now I had one from each Gospel:



My first interaction with the police came around midnight. John was still there, which was great, and the exchange was very cordial. I basically preached a brief sermon, explaining to the police officer why I was there.

John left soon after the police did, but quickly returned with a deaf mute in a wheelchair. We could only communicate with him by writing, but it was clear that he had no place to go, so I let him sleep at the site.

He got the sleeping bag.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 9, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-1/>].

Day 4



Some rain fell during the night, then let off in the morning, then resumed again in the afternoon. The tarp is fine to stay dry in a light rain, but wouldn't withstand a downpour. Also, it's wide open at the ends. I'm starting to call it the "Wind Tunnel".

I preached several times today, since it is Sunday, starting at nine in the morning, and continuing every hour, on the hour, through noon. I eased off in the afternoon as the rain started to fall, but did call my mom to wish her a happy Mother's Day, talked her through setting up her tablet for USB tethering, and let several other people call their mothers on my phone. I also put up signs that read "Free Bike Rides" and "Free Bike Rides, Phone Calls, Food".

The bike disappeared while I went into the mall to use the toilet.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 12, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-4/>].

Day 6

Spent another cold night, as there were four of us occupying and only one sleeping bag between us. I gave the sleeping bag to a woman, gave my coat to a man, and layered up with a bunch of dirty laundry I had in a bag. I prayed, of course, and felt guided to walk across the street to Covenant House, which donated a light blanket that I used for myself. I also found a dumpster full of cardboard and used it to make a bed on the sidewalk under the tarp. Spend a good bit of time in prayer, thanking God for sending me his people (none of them were any trouble) and begging him for more blankets and sleeping bags.

In the morning, two of my guests left right around six A.M. to catch an early bus. I was able to duck in the sleeping bag and grab a few hours of sleep for myself before a woman from Parks and Rec came around at nine thirty and told me very politely that we can't have people sleeping in the park.

What is the point? Why am I here? I wish to tell the majority, very politely, that I will not accept capitalism, I will not accept majority rule, I will not work their wicked jobs, I will not disappear under a bridge, I will camp out here in the park and the only way to get rid of me is to kill me or disappear me into prison.

Prison is what at least one man expects will happen. After a brief visit to New Hope to grab a cup of coffee and find out if I could get someone else to pick up a food bag for me (I could not), I felt led by God to walk to the Downtown Soup Kitchen and preach, which is to say I talked about what I'm doing and why for three or four minutes to the people lined up outside. John Martin will probably object, describe them as a captive audience and tell me they're sick of preaching. I see his point, but I really feel led to it by God, and I thank him for getting this thing going again. The only vocal reaction was from a man who pointed out that a jail cell was warmer.

After lunch at the soup kitchen, I got back to the protest site and had two different people ask me about the "Free Bike Rides" I had offered. The signs are down, but I simply told them that the bike had been stolen. I wasn't real attached to the bike, but I'm trying to use it to learn how to manage the resources God gives me. I had been leaving it unlocked, and walked into the mall to use the restroom. Didn't dilly-dally, either. When I came back, it was gone. I can't tell you how I hate living in the world. They take *everything*.

God's showing me the way forward. Keep praying. Keep occupying. Keep preaching. Do it God's way; his time, his place. Sunday it was sermons from "the mound". Yesterday it was fifteen second sermons as people walked by. Today it was the soup kitchen and probably the kids in the park this

evening. Probably the Covenant House kids, too.

Prayer requests: Guidance, sending God's people this way, sleeping bags, tarps, blankets, maybe a tent or two, continued food, sunny weather, paint brush and paint to label the tarp

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 15, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-6/>].

Day 7

Joe and I occupied Night 7. At first, I was going to sleep under the tarp, had packed all of the signs under it, and was actually in my sleeping bag when Joe showed up! I didn't have room under the tarp, wasn't going to tell him to sleep on exposed, bare concrete, and certainly couldn't leave him in the park alone. So the signs went back up, I gave him my coat and blankets, and I slept in the bag, which was colder than I thought it'd be! Some road work awoke us around 4 am, and I got up and put on some long underwear from the suitcase.

At first I thought that Day 7 would be a day of rest, but it turned out to be a day of preparation. John Rodda, from Parks and Rec, showed up mid-morning to politely read me the riot act. The police have ample photos now of me and others sleeping in the park, and police action is implied. We have to sleep on the sidewalk.

After reading a chapter from Ezekiel, I went over to Side Street Cafe to charge my batteries, both physically and mentally, and met John and Margie drinking coffee there. Told them about Rodda and was blessed with a cup of coffee from Deb. Went back, read more Ezekiel, and worked on the phone until it went dead.

Over lunch at Downtown Soup Kitchen, Francisco explained how the 99% are going to hell, actually I think he said 99.999%, but I could be off by a nine or two. Then back to the park, where a visitor read Proverbs 15 since it is the 15th of the month, and I learned that Proverbs has 31 chapters. John and Margie stayed for a while, while I bought some treats with my food stamps (odwalla strawberry smoothies, avocados, and honey) and retrieved my battery pack from Side Street.

Then we talked about Rodda.

I explained my intent to retreat to the sidewalk. There's just not enough to fight for. I can get up at six in the morning, when the park "opens", set the signs back up, and go back to sleep for a few more hours. Few people are walking around at three in the morning. As we expand, we'll run a row of tents down the sidewalk. Why not? Ask for a hundred people in prayer, and when we have surrounded the park with about fifty tents on the sidewalks, then occupy it. Why fight over something so trivial as what happens between midnight and six am?

John has a different idea. He's thinking about occupying with me, tonight, for the first time!

Well, that changes everything! Obviously, if the most ardent occupier in Alaska is going to occupy, I

can't be under the tarp! John explains what we can expect legally, since he's been through it so many times. They really can't arrest us if it's a protest activity. We'll be released when we face the magistrate. They can confiscate the sleeping bag we're in, and if we try to fight, then they can arrest us for that. We agree on a completely peaceful approach in this case. Us two men join in prayer with Margie, a deep, meaningful prayer for guidance, holding hands while praying aloud. Then I'm off to spend four of the six dollars I've got on batteries for the audio recorder.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 15, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-7/>].

Day 9



Night 9 was John and Margie's second. With rain in the forecast, we prayed for shelter, and a tarp appeared! A visitor stopped by to share and pray, then drove by half an hour later to drop off two nice blankets and a tarp. John and Margie had taken the evening off, and by the time they returned at eleven, I had strung up the tarp between three trees and a stake. No trouble from the police.

Woke up to a steady rain pit-pattering on the tarp. Now there's even snow in the forecast! We talked some more about what message to paint on the tarp, and seem to be settling on "Christian Revolution".

rev•o•lu•tion

1. a sudden, radical, or complete change
2. a fundamental change in political organization; especially : the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another by the governed
3. activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes in the socioeconomic situation
4. a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something : a change of paradigm {\it the Copernican revolution}
5. a changeover in use or preference especially in technology {\it the computer revolution; the foreign car revolution}

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Which is exactly what I'm trying to achieve! A Christian revolution in Alaska; fundamental changes in the socioeconomic situation; a society where "Give to anyone who asks" is a core value; leadership that serves God and not money; disciples who "give up everything that (they) have" valued instead of persecuted.

If the United States wants a Christian revolution, great! Otherwise... God bless Alaska.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 17, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-9/>].

Day 10

Night 10 brought a police raid at eleven o'clock sharp.

I had gone on a beer run and came back running. About a half dozen police officers were gathered around our site in front of where John and Margie were seated under the tarp, refusing to move. I quickly jumped onto the grass so that I, too, was on park ground. I was given a few minutes to gather my belongings and leave. I gathered only my phone charger and announced my refusal to leave, as John was announcing his. Once they put the handcuffs on, I walked out of the park under arrest as John and Margie were carried out behind me.

Everything was confiscated. I've been through this once before, though John has dealt with it ten times. I also managed to keep my sleeping bag the first time, but no such luck on this night. We were transported to jail, where I participated in a telephone interview with the magistrate. Perhaps "participated" is too strong a term, since I said little and the magistrate proceeded to offer me release on an unsecured bond, which means that I'll only have to pay if I don't appear in court or violate the conditions of my release, which include not entering Town Square. I was only asked to sign an agreement to appear in court, however, which I did, and was released around 1:30 am. John was held overnight.

I had an audio recorder running and made an hour and a half long recording of the arrest.

On the way out, I met two prisoners sitting in the entryway, one of whom was talking on his cell phone. After he hung up, I asked if we were allowed to sit there in the warmth. He suggested that I just sit there and enjoy the warmth, which seemed like good advice, so we sat and talked until a correctional officer came out and told us to leave. My friend had another trick up his sleeve, however, and we simply walked down to a different entrance where we were able to enter, duck into a vacant restroom, pray together, and rest for about two hours before being discovered and evicted by more correctional officers.

My friend then found an unlocked prison bus to shelter us from the light snow that was falling, but I decided to walk into downtown and soon encountered a disabled car. The driver's only problem was a lack of gas or money to purchase it, so I helped him push it to a nearby gas station and gave him the \$3.65 I had in my pocket. He thanked me profusely and I continued my walk.

I spent the next few hours wondering around downtown Anchorage until Side Street opened at seven, and I went in for coffee and a warm place to sit and write this blog. In the afternoon, I attended John and Margie's bail hearing, where Margie refused the conditions of her release (stay out of Town Square) and John was required to post a \$150 bond, which of course he does not have. Both remained in jail, while I retreated to my campsite near the university for prayer and much-needed sleep.

Tomorrow's a big day.

Prayer requests: Guidance, guidance, guidance. Put your words in my mouth tomorrow. Stay with John and Margie, abide with them, Lord.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on May 18, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-10/>].

Day 11

Night 11 found the site unoccupied for the first time, with me sleeping at my campsite and John and Margie in jail.

I got a late start to Day 11, slept in until 9, spent an hour at church drinking coffee, and didn't get to the site until almost two. I wanted to get there earlier, but everyone who knows me well knows that I'm notoriously unpunctual. It also took me a while to decide on a course of action.

I sat on the sidewalk, in compliance with the trespass order, but I entered the park to preach, and I intend to preach every hour, on the hour. I preached at two o'clock, on the dot. I want everyone to know what has happened to John, and I am absolutely screaming for revolution against this indifferent majority and their tyrannical democracy.

I'm also calling on people to occupy Town Square.

I preached again at three, and at four, and at five.

After my five o'clock sermon, a friend stopped by, the man who donated the sleeping bag on Night 1, and I went to his apartment for my first shower in two weeks. We worked on some math for a while, then he gave me another sleeping bag (a prayer answered!) and drove me back around nine o'clock. I went to bed at John's campsite, which is a lot closer to downtown than mine.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on June 4, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/day-11/>].

Arraignment

I made my second court appearance today. John and Margie came with me, even though it was only an arraignment. I pled not guilty, asked for a public defender to assist me, and was given a date in late July for a pretrial conference.

I then walked down the hall to a different courtroom where an actual pretrial conference was underway. Looks like I can expect a trial date in late August.

John and Margie have earlier trial dates, probably because they actually spent several days in jail before John's mom paid his bail and Margie got her conditions of release modified to let her return to Town Square.

We haven't actually returned to Town Square, at least not for a 24-hour sit-in. We're meeting with our lawyers in two days, and I want to discuss getting a court order prohibiting the city from arresting political demonstrators for trespassing.

We're also preparing flyers to hand out, describing our plans and goals. Ideally, a trial in two months would lead to a renewed occupation, with a court order in hand to prevent further arrests. If the flyers are successful, maybe we'll have thirty people by then. Maybe we'll have three hundred!

An incident later in the afternoon underscored why I'm determined to stage a revolution. The three of us were relaxing in Delany Park when two police officers on bicycles pulled up and told me to unplug my cellphone from the outlet, which was only for park employees and permit holders. "It's called theft of services", he said.

I complied and later complained to the city ombudsman, but there are so few places where I can use electricity that working on the website, porting Macaulay 2 to Android, or writing on this blog requires real ingenuity. I'm developing Android applications which I publish for free on the Internet, but I can't keep the phone charged to do it.

I'm done! Done! DONE with this leadership! Christians are so PERSECUTED in this country!

No more! No more of this! Please, father God, no more of this! I can't even work on my website, the hatred, the hatred, oh God, no more of this, please God, no more of this.

Almost every morning and every night now, I beg God to either restore this revolution or take my

life. We're supposed to love each other, and all I have in me is hatred, hatred, hatred for this majority.

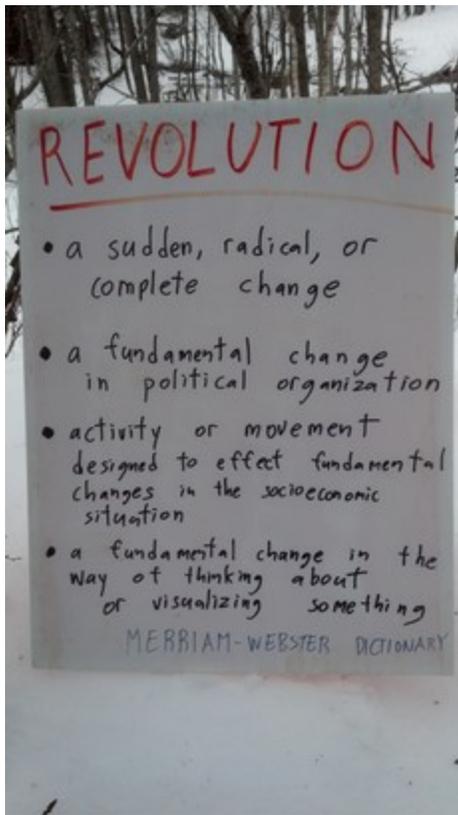
What is the plan? We convince three hundred thousand people to pack up, move to Alaska, and BECOME the majority.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on June 17, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/our-day-in-court/>].

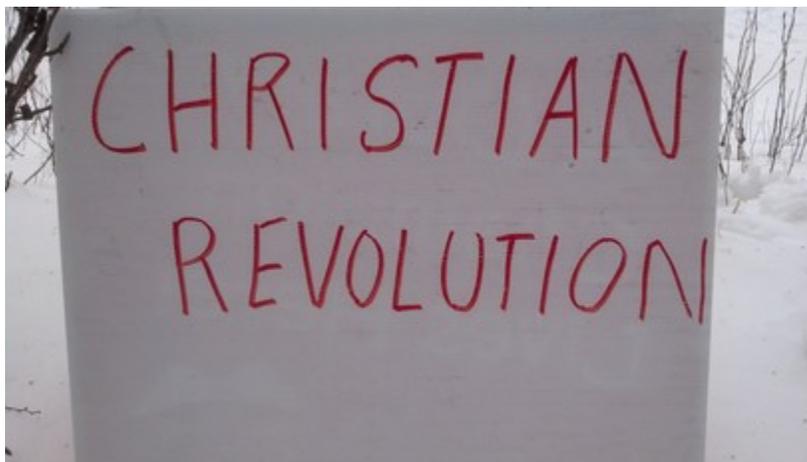
Winter Protest

Yesterday we were back in court for oral arguments on the pre-trial motions. Judge Motyka ended the hearing by saying that he'd take it under advisement and rule in two to three weeks. I'd spent Friday afternoon with a sign on Town Square, but haven't been back this week.

What, then, is Occupy? What are we trying to achieve?



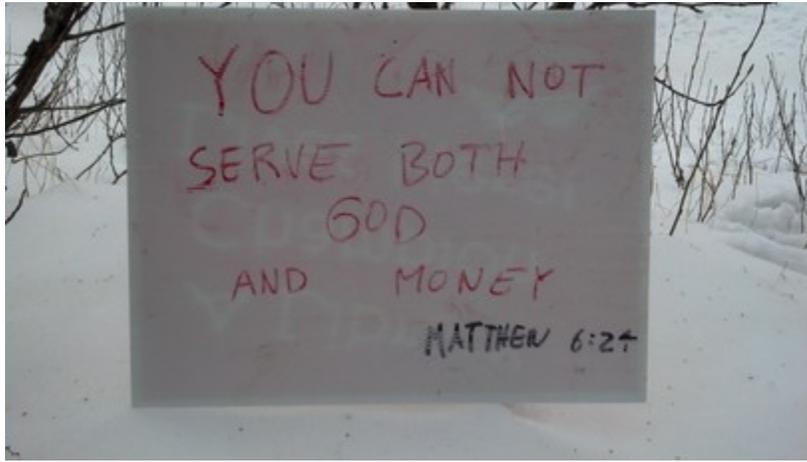
Occupy is a revolution. Occupy seeks to achieve an anti-capitalist revolution in the United States.



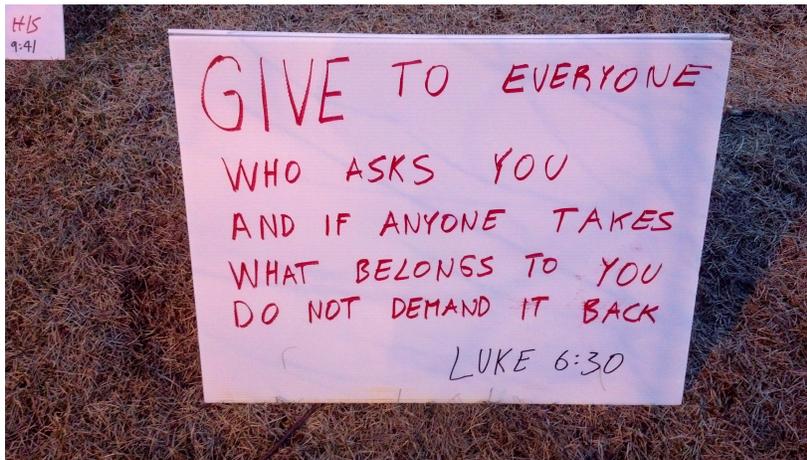
It has to be a Christian Revolution, though. Only God can lead an opposition against a government determined to use S.W.A.T. teams to break up grassroots street demonstrations. It's not enough to be against something, either. We have to state what we're for.

First and foremost, Godly leadership. Governors, legislators, executives, business owners, men and

women who kneel before God and seek to know and do his will. Everyone, ideally, should become a disciple of Christ! I'd love to see a world where every man, woman, and child commits their lives wholeheartedly to God. Failing that, at least the leadership should be Godly.

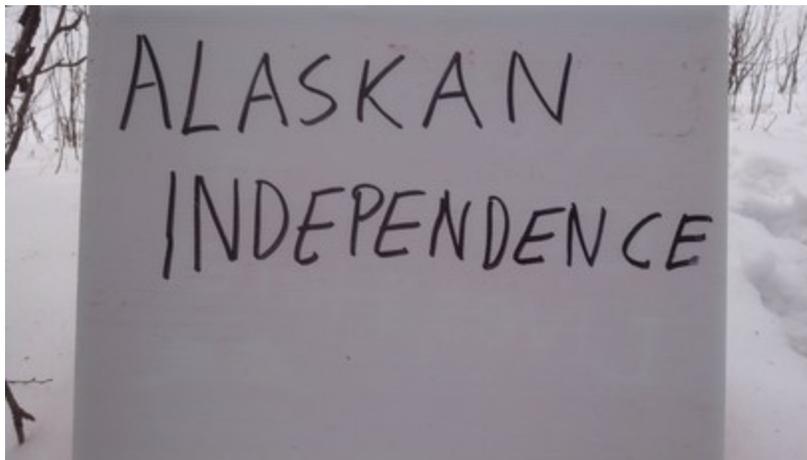


I'd like to provide free housing, free food, free energy, free transportation, free technology, free education. Why?

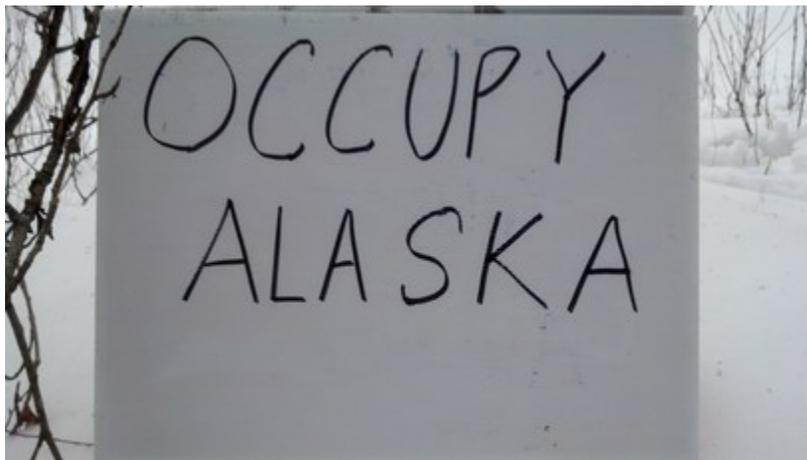


I can't do it myself! I want to live in a society where people choose to give all of these things voluntarily. How do we pay for it all? Not through taxes! Not through borrowing! Only by voluntary charity, by gifting our time, our money, our resources. That's a big change from what we've got now. That's a revolution!

...and if the United States won't go for it?



How do we achieve this? By bringing 100,000 people up here from down south and winning the 2014 election.



The next step is to win this court case. I want to obtain a court order prohibiting the police from evicting political demonstrators from Town Square, then build up an opposition camp that can't be ignored by the media, and start pitching a simple line:

"Come to Alaska. Come to Alaska. We're occupying Alaska. Just come to Alaska."

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on December 12, 2013 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/winter-protest-2/>].

Convicted!

So we lost.

We had debated for months over whether to represent ourselves or to use our court appointed attorneys. At first, I expected to go *pro se*, partly because I only met Bryon Collins on the day before the trial was scheduled to start in August. John had initially expected to let Justin Tapp represent him, but in the weeks approaching our new, February court date had strongly advocated for self-representation. That was fine with me, and for the same reasons – Christ promised that when called before courts, we, not our lawyers, will be given the words to say.

“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”

(Luke 12:11-12)

Mistakes were made, but overall I was pleased with our conduct. We three prayed together on every break in the court proceedings, and I'd rather go through a trial like that than with the most experienced barristers that have every argued in Old Bailey.

Another big decision was to opt for a jury trial. I now believe that this was a mistake. Why did I want a jury? I had this naive belief in a jury trial as a fundamental Constitutional right protecting us from an overarching government. I now suspect that a jury trial is simply trial by the majority, and that if you're trying to win an unpopular cause on a technical legal right, you're better advised to opt for the bench trial. I have to admit that I never seriously considered a bench trial and never really prayed about it, even though John was advocating for one.

Freedom of speech is limited in the courtroom. We pretty much allowed the prosecution to do whatever they wanted for two days to present their case; why couldn't we just be given two or three days to present ours? When is freedom of speech more important than for a defendant in a courtroom?

John wanted to read from the U.S. Constitution and was not allowed to do so. The prosecution had argued and won in pre-trial motions that the law was constitutional, and didn't want that issue reopened before the jury. This despite the text of the law itself referencing the First Amendment! Only when the jury sent a note, an hour into their deliberation, requesting a copy of the First Amendment, was one at last provided to them!

Charles Tice's blog post describing our protest was ruled irrelevant, a video presentation of Occupy news clips was suppressed, and I didn't even try to introduce any of my speeches from Occupy, as the prosecution had already indicated that they would object. I wanted to use these to demonstrate I had tried just about every tactic I could think of to resurrect and lead Occupy. I had written a book, I had given speeches, I had sent press releases, I had talked to the man on street.

For me, the biggest disappointment was not being allowed to read excerpts from my book, *Icarus Wing*, which not only presented the political and religious philosophy that I advocate, but also might have gone a long ways to shed the aura of "worthless bum" and replaced it with "author".

Yet enough evidence did get in, I thought, that the jury could understand why we were there. I even thanked the prosecution, in my closing argument, for letting it in! John hammered on homeless issues throughout the trial, and of my writings, both the Alaska Blog and [My Confession](#) were admitted into evidence. John had eloquently presented his plans for a free campground on the abandoned native hospital grounds, and I had testified unambiguously about my plans – lead 100,000 Christians north to Alaska, vote ourselves into power in Juneau, take Alaska, and secede from the union.

I might not have expounded enough on why such drastic action is needed. Capitalism is an immoral philosophy that rejects Gospel commandments like "Give to anyone who asks" (Luke 6:30) and "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24). Business is based on turning people away if they can't pay, and no philosophy has preached the service of money louder than capitalism.

"Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor..." (Mark 10:21) Try it! Live the way you're taught by Christ! See how you're treated! Devout Christians are persecuted in this country, and if America won't repent, than Alaska should secede! 100,000 Christians coming to Alaska would be nice; better would be Alaskans living as Christians.

By the end of the trial, both the prosecution and the defense had moved far afield from the First Amendment issues at hand. For our part, we had focused much attention on Cynthia Franklin's role in orchestrating the May 17 raid and this dicey question of whether the police were concealing their actions under some screwball definition of the word "protest". The municipal prosecutor, on the other hand, had insinuated during her cross examination of John that he didn't work, was a full time protester, and that the parks were for the enjoyment of people who worked jobs and paid taxes. By her final rebuttal, she was appealing directly to the jury to oppose my Christian Revolution, asking them "What about people who aren't Christians?" None of this was relevant to the legal questions at stake – was this First Amendment speech, and were our actions on May 17th reasonable? I suspect that Judge Motyka saw through all of this, but the jury bit and ultimately convicted us on a red her-

ring offered to them by the prosecutor – that at the exact instant the police arrived on May 17th, we weren't actively protesting. John was drinking a beer, Margie was relieving herself in the bushes, and I was coming back from the liquor store.

A dangerous precedent is now well established. Overnight political demonstrations in the Municipality of Anchorage are de facto illegal. Tienanmen Square, were it reenacted in Delaney Park, would be put down by APD.

I seek nothing less than the peaceful overthrow of this country's capitalist leadership. "The majority" stand behind a counter with a huge rack of food behind them, refuse to feed anyone who can't pay, and when you put a sign in front of them that says "Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back (Luke 6:30)", they convict you for trespassing because at the moment the police showed up to arrest you, you were sipping a Budweiser instead of holding the sign, chanting. The prosecutor repeatedly suggested that we wouldn't have been arrested if we had been chanting.

That's what we needed! A good chant!

"Down with capitalism! Down with capitalism! Down with capitalism!"

Too fanatical for you? OK, I have to walk a fine line here. I have preach the Gospel without sounding like a religious fanatic. Unlike Occupy, this isn't a leaderless movement. Our leader is Jesus Christ.

There is no opposition in this country. Nobody opposes the majority. In China, nobody opposes communism. In America, nobody opposes democracy. There are those of us who oppose this country's leadership, won't work for capitalists, won't get the hell out, and strive peacefully for an end to capitalist rule. You never hear our speeches. You can find mine on freesoft.org, but you never see them on TV.

Homelessness is a policy masquerading as a problem. Somehow this society manages to house their cripples, their elderly, even their convicts! The majority builds prisons to house convicted criminals, but throws people away homeless on the streets if they won't work.

Why would anybody "fix" homelessness? Why would anybody care about John Martin's cause?

Homelessness is a deliberate tactic used to force people to work. There is little meaningful freedom of speech or freedom of assembly for the homeless. You might as well ask for freedom of speech for incarcerated convicts.

Next time I'm in the park, when the police show up, I'll grab a sign with scripture on it, and start chanting "Down with capitalism!" We'll see if the CAP officers call Mark Rein and say "Sarge, we can't arrest this guy! He's protesting!"

There is no magic system of government that produces freedom, liberty, equality, human rights, civil liberties and economic opportunity apart from God! The modern attempt, in the name of religious pluralism, to detach God into a Sunday morning exercise is an experiment doomed to failure. No government programs, no matter how well managed, can mitigate a fundamentally immoral society. No economic system, no matter how competitive, will reward hard work if subjugation is the only way to obtain it. Likewise, a society of people dedicated to God, with a healthy dose of genuine disciples, needs little in the way of governance, because God is the leader.

...

The choice is not between a free, peaceful, democratic, secular society and an oppressive, fanatic, conquering theocracy. The choice is between an oppressive, fanatic, conquering democracy and peaceful, Godly leadership.

...

A Christian political party must be formed. Its primary process can include rallies and speeches, general assemblies and town hall meetings, yet the ultimate selection of a party ticket must be carried out by the most select Christian disciples, using all our techniques of discernment, all of the prophetic gifts and spiritual resources at our disposal. There can be no primary election. Once that slate of candidates has been prepared, it will be presented to the populace in a general election, to be accepted or rejected in favor of other candidates. If the disciples do our jobs, then the electorate should be pleasantly surprised to find us nominating quality leaders who will effectively guide the nation.

(excerpted from Defense Exhibit B-U)

None of this is protected speech. We weren't chanting.

This entry was posted in Christian Revolution on February 28, 2014 [<http://freesoft.org/blogs/Alaska/convicted/>].
