a pinch of salt

Christlike life; lifestyle that is characterized by the radical, non-violent, sacrificial compassion of Jesus the Christ. A way of life distinguished by commitment to love and to justice; to the marginalized and disadvantaged; so as to enable them to realize their potential, as men and women made in the image of God; through self-directed, other-oriented intentional groups and organizations.

- Dave Andrews in Not Religion, but love



A Pinch of Salt to shake the Empire

In 1930 Mohandas Gandhi, the once stuttering barrister from Porbander, led a march to the coast of Gujarat to challenge the British Empire. As Gandhi raised in his fist a lump of salty mud he said, "with this I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire".

Gandhi and his companions were protesting against what they saw as an unjust tax law. It was illegal for Indians to make their own salt yet they were taxed heavily on the salt they bought from the state. The result was more hardship for the poorest to the benefit of the wealthy.

Looking back at that historically significant event the contemporary dissenter would do well to remember that the British Empire wasn't seated at Dandi beach. Until that day it is likely that most British administrators, save the local 'Collector' would struggle to know where it was on the map.

Perhaps Gandhi was advised by friends on how to tackle this injustice; "Go to Delhi and dump a sack of rice outside Lord Irwin's house", "Find a way to put salt into his water supply," "send bags of salt to London with a petition for tax relief". But Gandhi did none of these things or in any other way petitioned the government or cried out against the injustice. He could see that in this case the power for change lay in the hands of the people through making their own salt, thus rendering the salt law impotent.

Just as Jesus' most revolutionary message is in the way he lived his life, so Gandhi has discovered that the most revolutionary act is the one that is independent of state. How do we challenge the principalities and powers? Creatively seeking first the kingdom of God. Power isn't scared of megaphones and placards; he's scared we may turn our backs on him altogether.

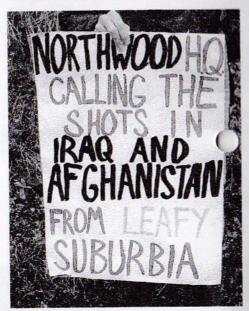
A Pinch of Salt is a re-launch of a popular magazine from the 1980s encouraging dialogue on Christianity and radical politics. How best to challenge the principalities and powers is up for creative debate. It is shaped by honest reflection on the many ways Christians choose to express their faith in the face of the world's many injustices.

Contributions and suggestions are well ...e. What would Gandhi do?

Keith Hebden email: edior.apos@googlemail.com



Catholic worker's guilty of defending the innocent. 28 December 2007.



http://apinchofsalt.squarespace.com/



Time for a Written Constitution?

The 34th Annual Levellers' Day. Saturday 17th May 2008. Burford, Oxfordshire. TONY BENN, ANTHONY BARNETT + OTHERS

chaired by REV. GILES FRASER

with music from

ROBB JOHNSON & THE IRREGULARS, ATTILA THE STOCKBRO-KER and AMV compeered by NICK TOCZEK

£12 / £8 / free to sneaky sneaks

On May 1649, three soldiers were executed on Oliver Cromwell's orders in Burford churchyard, Oxfordshire. They belonged to a movement popularly known as the Levellers, with beliefs in civil rights and religious tolerance. During the Civil War, they fought on Parliament's side, had at first seen Cromwell as a liberator, but now saw him as a dictator. They were prepared to fight against him for their ideals and he was determined to crush them. Over 300 of them were captured by Cromwell's troops and locked up in Burford church. Three were led out into the churchyard to be shot as ringleaders.

Anarchist Studies Network Conference



Political Studies

Association

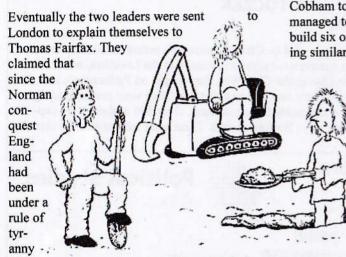
www.anarchist-studies-network.org.uk/

Faith based anarchism panel Loughborough University 4—6 September 2008

- 1. Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali Çaksu, Fatih University (Istanbul): "Islam and Anarchism";
- 2. Mohamed Jean Veneuse, Queen's University: "Paths to becoming a Muslim Anarchist";
- 3. Anthony Fiscella, independent researcher, Malmö: "Imagining an Islamic anarchism";
- 4. Cr. Bojan Aleksov, University College London: "Religious Dissenters and Anarchists in urn of the Century Hungary":
- 5. **Dr. Peter Pick**, Sussex University: "A Theology of Revolution: Abiezer Coppe and the Uses of Tradition";
- Prof. John Rapp, Beloit College: "Anarchism or Nihilism: The Buddhist-Influenced Thought of Wu Nengzi";
- 7. **Dr. Keith Hebden**, Church of England and editor of A Pinch of Salt: "The need for subversive foreignness in liberation theologies";
- drs. André de Raaij, Academy for Ambulant Sciences: "The International Fraternity which never was - Dutch Christian anarchism between optimism and near-defeat 1893-1906";
- Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, University of Kent: "The Theoretical Christian Anarchist Response to the State: Romans 13, 'render unto Caesar', and the question of civil disobedience".

Who were the Diggers?

On 1 April, 1649 a little group of unemployed labourers and landless peasants gathered together at St. George's Hill near Walton-on-Thames, Surry and began to dig up the common land and prepare for sowing vegetables. Their leaders were William Everard and Gerrard Winstanley. At first they only aroused curiosity and sympathy but as time went on the local lords of the manor aroused a mob against them.



which would now be abolished, and that God would relieve the poor and restore their freedom to enjoy the fruits of the earth. The two men also explained that they did not want to interfere with private property but only to plant and harvest on the many wastelands of England and to live together holding all things in common.

By June another mob, including some soldiers, assaulted the Diggers and trampled their crops. The Diggers announced that they intended to cut and sell the wood on the common, and at this point the landlords sued for damages and trespass. The court awarded damages and costs and seized the cows Winstanley was pasturing on the common, but released them because they were not his property.

By the Autumn, the Diggers, now numbering about fifty, moved to a different common at Cobham to avoid further confrontation. They managed to grow eleven acres of grain and build six or seven houses as well as information in a similar movements in

Northamptonshire and Kent. However, the landlord, Revd John
Platt turned his cattle into the grain and led a mob in destroying the houses and running the Diggers out.

On 1 April, 1650, Winstanley and fourteen others were indicted for disorderly conduct, unlawful assembly, and trespass. There is no

record of how the case turned out but this is the last we hear of the experiment in communism at Cobham.

K. C. Hone,

Contribute to A Pinch of Salt

Poems, reflections on your experiences of faith-based political intervention, liturgy, intentional community living, living beyond the money economy....

editor.apos@googlemail.com

Top Secret Transmission from Raising Agents

Spies who have longed and much hoped for altering matters went to thoroughly mark out 'another way' at fearful AWE. Dangerous scary scaffolds (for death making) or unwielding monstrous laser buildings will be refurbished and replaced by windmills and farms. Cost effective management will make sure that intended AWE-ful testing is eradicated, as we have had enough of those.

Vineyards and Fig Forests will be encouraged and wildlife will spread in safety, everyor can live under their vine and fig tree in multiplication with any series of the s

For the three Easter days a spy ring targeted the AWE Aldermaston site, its intention to make consistent access to redevelop the place. Infiltration focused on marking out the

land for its redevelopment and returning with a good report.
Despite the byways and the getting near to the prepared land for the transformation of this place, there are fences that make frich end many people at wander to this locality.

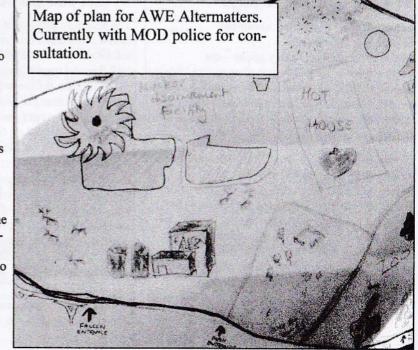
Reality states there is no reason in anyone's mind to go close to the construction; compassion and hope make bridges with what is to alter it, into what it will become. Spies like us, raising agents, flooded in despite hail and snowstorms to alter matters at AWE.. The AWE-ful truth is that people don't want to be there unless it's to be paid in order to finance their existence, as it brings no joy. Time for changes was indicated when two spies from a larger undercover spy ring lurked and suspiciously accessed the area to make further



change in a drawn out process of reconnaissance.

The bare bones were put in place for dynamic pivotal changes altering the compass of the necessity in this place. It is proposed

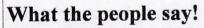
that others be invited to pick up their sense of responsibility to make more of this place.



The Subversive Gospel: Christianity and Anarchism conference 2007

For the second time in as many years a disparate bunch of so-called Christians met together up north to try and figure out a faithful politics of faith. Some Catholics, some Methodists, some Quakers and some not so sure met at the Anglican City Chaplaincy in Bradford for workshops, seminars, food, drink and singing. There was a little body-percussion this year too:

While some of the delegates had come back for more of the same for last year there were plenty of new faces too. It seems that there are a lot of you out there: Christians interested in Anarchism. Perhaps it's not so silly after all.



What was the best thing about the conference?

Meeting people—the curry house—the participative exercises—tour of anarchist club and all the talks—the range of people—hearing people's stories—the vegan talk and peacemaker teams talk—randomness—the size in terms of length.

If you could change one thing to improve the conference what would it be?

Mores space for small group discussion—more time between seminars—less packed into short time, get to discuss the practical out-workings—conference campfire—longer sessions—not having 'community' and 'direct action' at the same time—make it longer so we don't have to choose which talks to go to—more group exercises and workshops rather than 'speakers'—Nothing it was wooonderful.



Chris Howson's tour of Bradford began with a curry.

Contact Adam Dickson to find out about next year's conference: adam.dickson@gmail.com

What the papers say!

The anarchist group (sic.) Jesus Radicals held a conference this year (2006: the first conference) in Leeds attended by one of Total Liberty's regular writers. His comments as to the main difference were "I was warmly greeted as a stranger, the ratio of women and men was fairly even, the talks and workshops started and finished on time, there was a greater emphasis on listening than speak It was all very refreshing. I came away quite liking these people. Most choose to live a very simple life; they are as anti-hierarchical and anti-state as the rest of us. A lot of ideas floating around and a pronounced absence of dogma. It brought home to me the importance of tolerance and integrity needed in a free community."

Total Liberty: A Journal of Evolutionary Anarchism Vol. 5. No. 3 Editorial.

The World Turned Upside Down

Exploring Christianity, Anarchism, and Peacemaking

Christ Church Pitsmoor, Sheffield, November 21 - 23

"Even when they call us mad, when they call us subversives and communists and all the epithets they put on us, we know we only preach the subversive witness of the Beatitudes, which have turned everything upside down"—Oscar Romero

Sessions include:

- Christianity and Anarchism: A Primer
- The Biblical Basis for "No Borders"
- Radical Evangelicalism
- Mennonites and
 Peacemaking
- Worship and Prayer

To find out more information about sessions, housing, and booking, visit http://uk.jesusradicals.com



Tolstoy the peculiar Christian anarchist

Christianity in its true sense puts an end to the State. It was so understood from its very beginning, and for that Christ was crucified.

— Leo Tolstoy

Even for a Christian anarchist, Leo Tolstoy's reading of the Bible was unusual. When he 'converted' to Christianity near his 50th birthday, he did not embrace the orthodox Christianity of the traditional church. For him, Jesus was no 'son of God', nor did he perform any supernatural miracles. Tolstoy was convinced that these superstitious stories in the Bible had been added by the church in order to keep 'Christians' hypnotised enough to ensure that they did not question the unjustifiable compromise that the church had reached with the state. He was convinced that an honest and full application of Christianity could only lead to a stateless and churchless society, and that all those who argued the contrary were devious hypocrites.

The Sermon on the Mount

For Tolstoy, the implications of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:38-42) were nothing short of revolutionary. Jesus was proposing a new, radical and wiser method for human beings to respond to any form of 'evil'. That is, when coerced or when treated unjustly, do not retaliate, but respond with love, forgiveness and generosity.

Unchristian institutions

For Tolstoy, Christians ought to reconsider the relationship they have with the state. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed his followers not to swear oaths, not to judge and not to resist. Yet the state demands oaths of allegiance, judges its citizens and resists both criminals within and enemies without. Besides, the state uses violence to impose its laws, and maintains its citizens in a form of economic slavery. Thus, Tolstoy concludes, the state is an unchristian institution.

Furthermore, if Christians actually acted as Jesus taught them to – if they governed their social interactions through love, forgiveness and charity – then there would be no need for a state. People would help one another and willingly share all of life's basic necessities. The ordering principle of society would be love, not a fictional 'justice' enforced by a brutal state.

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For Tolstoy, therefore, Christianity and the state are incompatible visions for society. One cannot be both an honest Christian a at the same time recognise the legitimacy of the state, both because the state directly contravenes Jesus' clear advice, and because if Jesus' recommendations were put to practice, then the state would anyway become obsolete.

But why, then, are Christians told to own allegiance to the state? For Tolstoy, the answer is clear: ever since Emperor Constantine, the official Church has betrayed Christianity by hypocritically cuddling with state power.

Tolstoy is therefore just as scathing of the church as of the state. He accuses church and state authorities of conspiring to maintain their hold on power by perpetuating a cunning mix of irrational lies and legitimised violence to keep 'Christians' hypnotised into submission.

For the last thirty years of his life, Tolstoy relentlessly wrote dozens of books, articles and pamphlets on religion and politics in the hope that it could help awaken his fellow Christians to the true essence of Christianity. His virulent criticisms of both state and church authorities led him to be frequently corred, but his writings were published abroad and circulated both in Russia and elsewhere. His fellow Russians respected him for standing up to the Tsar, but he also received plenty of letters (including from Gandhi) and visits from abroad by people inquiring about his political interpretation of Christianity.

So he became an important international figure at the turn of the century, even though today, we only really remember him for the novels he wrote before he 'converted' to Christianity.

His version of Christianity will be uncomfortable to those who sincerely believe that divine mysteries can only be revealed through patient contemplation and diligent rit-1. And critics could well be right in bein veary of Tolstoy's extreme, almost fundamentalistic interpretation of Christianity. Yet Tolstoy's contribution to Christian anarchism remains valuable in that he brings attention to the neglected political implications of the Sermon on the Mount, and on this topic, he wrote well and he wrote a lot. His interpretation of Christianity may have been peculiar indeed, but his work makes him an eminent voice in the Christian anarchist literature today.

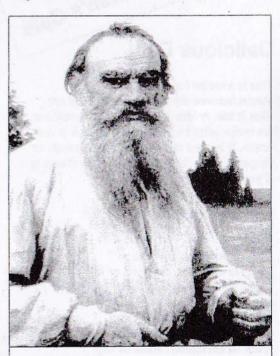
- Alexandre Christoyannopoulos

This is an edited version of a paper Alex delivered at the Christianity and Anarchism conference in 2006.

Alex is a research student (and part-time teacher) at the University of Kent at Canterbury, currently in the final year of my part-time PhD studying Christian anarchist thinkers.

Alex is also a member of the Anarchist Studies Network.

http://anarchist-studies-network.org.uk



Leo Tolstoy (above) with magnificent beard(s).

Lived: 1828-1910

Full title: Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy

Quote: "How can you kill people, when it is written in God's commandment, 'Thou Shalt not murder".

Unusual: Made his own shoes.

Veganapicalical Neganapicalical ARecipe from Hephzibah's Café 1. Fry the garlic and and the state of the s

This is a recipe I use so often it has almost become my staple diet, and my son likes it too. A Muslim friend of mine told me the recipe after I had enjoyed eating it at her house. It is great on its own with rice and / or chapattis, or as the base to add other things to if you are feeling experimental!

The measurements are approximate. It takes about 20 minutes to make.

Delicious Daal

2 tablespoons of olive oil
2 cloves of garlic, chopped or minced
half a teaspoon of salt
one onion, finely chopped,
one tomato, finely chopped
three handfuls of red lentils
loads of coriander, fresh or dry
You might also like to add cayenne pepper
or other chilli but try it without first.

- Fry the garlic and onion in the oil until it is soft and golden, then add the tomato.
- Add the salt and a couple of tablespoons of coriander (dry) or a handful of fresh, chopped coriander leaves. *
- Cover with boiling water and add the red lentils. Bring to the boil then simmer and add more water as needed, to allow the lentils to soften into a soupy consistency. (My friend tells me the Bangladeshi version is usually more runny that the Pakistani one, the choice is yours!)
- Check the taste: you will probably want to add more coriander, and maybe a sprinkle of chilli.

If you wanted to add other vegetables such as mushrooms and spinach to this daal they ought to be added at the frying stage, but it is

* Editor: Shane Claiborne says mustard grows like weeds but you should see coriander; It's one of the easiest things to grow. Why not plant some in your local park or nearest round-a-bout?

Contributions and responses welcome: The politics of food, clothing and shelter are the salt that shakes the empire and builds the alternative kingdom of God. Knit one pearl one for Jesus.

Called to be Peacemakers Conference 2008

The Fellowship of Reconciliation's annual Called to be Peacemakers conference offers a unique opportunity to learn about a specific peace or conflict issue from a personal, national and international



view. The residential weekend conferences provide expert speakers, in-depth workshops and training.

The conference is for 18 to 30 year olds who want to meet others who share their concern for peace and conflict issues.

www.for.org.uk

The Welfare State: Let the little children come unto me



In State we trust.

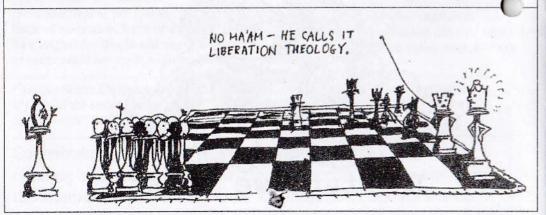
Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals

- 1. Power is not only what you have but what they enemy thinks you have.
- 2. The second rule is: never go outside the experience of your people.
- 3. Wherever possible go outside the experience of the enemy.
- 4. Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules.
- 5. Ridicule is man's most potent weapon.
- 6. A good tactic is one that your people enjoy.

- 7. A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag.
- 8. Keep pressure on.
- 9. The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself.
- 10. The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition.
- 11. If you push a negative hard and deep enough it will break through into its counter side.
- 12. The price of successful attack is a constructive alternative.
- 13. Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it.

"If there are no rules, there is no game"

- Jean François Lyotard



Tolstoy's hermeneutic of resistance

For Leo Tolstoy, Jesus' commandment not to "resist evil" provides the "key" or essential hermeneutic tool for working out a practical theology and for reading the gospels. He seems to nuance this commandment as "never resist the evil-doer by force, do not meet violence with violence" when he deals with the commandment as the fourth of the 'Commandments of Christ'.

When the court translators working in the hire of King James chose to translate antistenai as "resist not evil", ... ey were translating non-violent resistance into docility.

Tolstoy can be said to be a primary source for understanding Christian anarchism since he predates Vernard Eller and Jaques Ellul and had an impact on M. K. Gandhi.

It's appropriate to refer to Tolstoy's key as a hermeneutic of resistance This hermeneutic of resistance is the essence of a Christian anarchist hermeneutic since it leads to an irresistible rejection of the state and an understanding of the kingdom of God as alternative to all forms of state or powers.

Jesus' hermeneutic of resistance, as outlined by Tolstoy reflects God's resistance through Christ and through the movement of the Spirit and the proclamation of the kingdom of God – a kingdom of resistance.

Tolstoy uses this hermeneutic of resistance to define his ethical stance in relation to the institutions of the state.

The courts do not forgive, but punish. They deal out not good but evil to those they call the enemies of society. So it appeared evident that Christ must have condemned the courts.

From this he draws out the Christian anarchist principle that a Christian must be in opposition to any ruler, or arké, since he rules by using violence to overcome violence. His position puts him in opposition to the Church and in suspicion of orthodox exegesis and doctrine.

Tolstoy demonstrates the use of the hermeneutic of resistance by applying it to the text of Matthew (Matt. 5: 17 – end) from which he distils five 'commandments of Christ'.

This fourth commandment of Christ was the first I understood, and it was the one which disclosed to me the meaning of all the others.

The language of Tolstoy is sexist and the translation by Maude is now dated so a summary of the five commandments as Tolstoy explains them and re-worded here follows: Firstly, Strive for peace by counting nothing against others and always seeking their peace of mind in relation to you; second, do not even entertain thoughts of changing sexual partners; third, Never make oaths or promises; fourth, non-violent resistance to violence; fifth, treat all nations as your own because God loves all nations the same.

Part of this hermeneutic is the assumption that anything that contradicts the fourth commandment of Christ must be either an addition or an example of exegesis bias to the state. For example, because Jesus' instruction not to be angry 'without cause' (eiké) suggests that anger is sometimes appropriate Tolstoy works at the text until those words are removed.

The very word [eiké] which infringes the whole meaning of Christ's' teaching was added to the Gospels in the fifth century and is not to be found in the best manuscripts.

Therefore Christ, in this instance, is barring all forms of anger because they are a violence of the mind against those who do violence.

By Keith Hebden.

An Irresistible read?

Shane Claiborne is better known in the USA than the UK as an evangelical who's willing to push the boundaries of what it means to be an ordinary radical in a country that claims to put its trust in God but puts far more trust in capital.

The book is mostly entertaining narrative with plenty of pithy quotes from some inspiring saints: Dorothy Day, M. K. Gandhi, and Tony Campolo.

Some of the Americanisms are annoying and the theology backing up the action is a little "lite", but if you can put up with him calling Mother Teresa "Momma T" then it's a challenging and engaging read that even made me cry at one point (Aw..).

Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution:* Living as an ordinary radical, (Zondervan, Michigan, 2006).

Saving Christianity

Essentially written in two halves, this book outlines the contemporary Imperial US ideology and method before examining biblical motifs of violence. **Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer**'s message hasn't changed since the original and now classic work *Jesus against Christianity*. The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) contains multiple images of God not all of which fit with the non-violent radical teachings of Jesus.

This book draws on the work of critics of both the Clinton and Bush administrations to remind us that "unilateralist sentiments were widespread in both" and, chillingly, lists fourteen examples of cold-blooded unilateralists US government decisions in recent decades. Nelson-Pallmeyer takes lessons from the Roman and German empires and sees echoes of both in the 'Project for a New American Century' – long hand for 'neocon bloodlust'.

While this book helps us dip into a whole range of opinions on US imperialism, the really original work begins in chapter five where he outlines "five stages in US foreign policy" stretching from 1946 (when the School of the Americas, SOA first opened) to the present war on terror. While this tour of empire is chilling enough, Nelson-Pallmeyer concludes the first half with a warning that few but anarchists heed: "The danger is that citizens will reject one path of empire without rejecting empire itself."

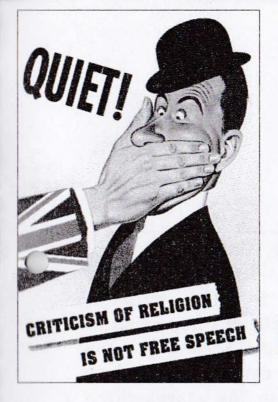
In the 2nd half of the book Nelson-Pallymeyer is most confident: Biblical perspectives on violence and empire. The eon which his thesis lies is this: "Incompatible and irreconcilable biblical perspectives on empire and other matters must be rejected altogether, or we must choose between them and explain our choices".

Nelson-Pallmeyer goes on to look at ten passages that he believes "make up the core of Jesus' non-violent approach". Other approaches to these passages exist and might be read alongside for a broader perspective. Nonetheless this is both useful and encouraging in what is otherwise a depressing read.

Where Nelson-Pallmeyer falls down is in his 'choices' in the final chapter for he sees 'empire' and 'republic' as the only choices for society. That is to say he sees so clearly the violence of the empire in oppressing beyond its borders but fails to acknowledge, I feel, the violence that is essential to the maintenance of the republic.

If you find this book tough-going, struggle on. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer does not just challenge the Christian fundamentalists but all Christians to re-asses their prejudices and, as there should be in a gospel: there is hope.

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, Saving Christianity from Empire, (London: Continuum 2007).



BECOME A PINCH OF SALT!

Aims

- 1. Give space to activists to reflect on action and act on reflection
- 2. Introduce readers to anarchists, Christian anarchists and radicals.
- 3. Be reader, member, and spirit led through consensusbuilding.

Objectives

- 1. Publish two free magazines every year for the next 3 years.
- 2. Create a membership that guides the aims and objectives. Membership

editor.apos@googlemail.com

To become a member donate £10 per year toward the printing and distribution costs of the magazine.

Members convene once a year at the Christian anarchist conference to review aims and objectives and provide direction for the magazine's year ahead for the editor to act on.

Money

Presently there's a Co-op bank account in my name. Costs are low. All members can ask to see a statement whenever they like, and at the annual meeting the financial arrangements can be reviewed like everything else.

Meetings

To keep life simple (I like simple) an annual meeting of members can steer the magazine while an editor makes editorial decisions. This seems to me a practical arrangement. Any decisions will need to be reached by consensus rather than majority rule.

apinchofsalt.squarespace.com