

# CHRISTIAN ANARCHISM



He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble, he has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent empty away.

Luke 1:52

Therefore this buying and selling did bring in discontents and wars, which have plagued mankind. And the nations of the world will never learn to beat swords into plowshares and leave off warring until this cheating device of buying and selling be cast out among the rubbish of Kingly power.

Gerrard Winstanley

From Gerrard Winstanley to Leo Tolstoy, from Adin Ballou to Ammon Hennacy, Christianity and anarchism have merged and continued to the present to attack the ills of society and to present alternatives. From co-op farms to mutual credit From slavery to wage oppression Christian anarchism has always been there fighting for the poor and the oppressed. Fighting for the underdog is what Jesus was about: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Many people not just anarchists are put off by the church in particular and by the spiritual in general. No wonder, most of it is crap devised to exploit the weak and vulnerable. But the church is not the true church of Jesus. And most people who tell you about spirituality have little of it. If the church as you have known it is a dangerous con game, why blame Jesus for it? That's not his fault that's not what he taught.

It has been said that Christianity promised to make people free, it never promised to make them independent. True freedom is found where you find community, and community means dependence on oth-

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Christian anarchism is based upon the answer of Jesus to the pharisees when He said that s/he without sin was to cast the first stone; and upon the sermon on the mount which advises the return of good for evil and the turning of the other cheek. Therefore when we take any part in government by voting for legislative, judicial and executive officials we make these people our arm by which we cast a stone and deny the sermon on the mount.

Ammon Hennacy

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ers, dependence in and on the collective. With Christianity that collective is the church. That is what a church is. You may be free and independent, you may live in a cave, but will you be living up to your potential? Will you make the world a better place?

From the Christian anarchist perspective most of these statements are acceptable: The Christian anarchist accepts no master under God. Sin is just error. The Kingdom of God means the administration of things, not the government of people. God's law (natural law) takes precedence over man's law. The Kingdom of God is within you (it's a state of mind). Jesus meant it when he said you should call no man master.



TOLSTOY

You have not paid any wages to those who work in your fields. Listen to their complaints! The cries of those who gather in your crops have reached the ears of God. Your life here on earth has been full of luxury and pleasure. You have made yourselves fat for the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent people, and they do not resist you.

James 5,4-6

We believe that Anarchism can offer Christianity a more lively awareness than at present exists in most sections of the church of what the Kingdom of God should be. It advocates revolution and challenges apathetic, corrupt or merely theoretical Christianity. It asks for practical changes, and it provides a means of testing traditional interpretations and applications of Christian doctrine.

We believe that Christianity can offer Anarchism a better reason than exists elsewhere in the Anarchist movement for believing that society could be like this. Anarchism is always challenged on the grounds that human nature is so corrupt that coercion and regimentation are absolutely necessary. Christianity, properly interpreted proclaims that human nature, given freedom and opening itself to the activity of grace, can and should continuously strive toward perfection. It is at once

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Government is violence;  
Christianity is meekness,  
non-resistance, love and  
therefore, government cannot  
be Christian and a person  
who wishes to be a Christian  
must not serve government.

Leo Tolstoy

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# THE BOOK OF AMMON

The address edition of  
the autobiography of the  
simple American rebel,  
Ammon Hennery, with a  
receding chapter  
written by Jean Thoreau  
concerning his death on  
August 24, 1879.



realistic and idealistic: it  
appeals to the weak and fal-  
lible, it allows for const-  
ant falls and recoveries, it  
proclaims that alone we can  
achieve nothing and deserve  
nothing - but it uncomprom-  
isingly declares that its  
ultimate and only goal is  
perfection

from an old Christian  
Anarchist manuscript

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This pamphlet published by  
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chist, 642 George st. N.,  
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May a Christian voluntarily contribute money to assist a government which is supported by military power, executions, and violence in general? No! unless the money is to be used for some special purpose, just in itself, where the object and the means employed are good. May s/he pay taxes to such a government? No! s/he should not pay taxes of their own accord but should not resist violently. May a Christian vote at elections and take part in courts of law or in the government? No! To take part in elections, courts of law, or in the administration of government is the same thing as participation in the violence of the government.

Adin Ballou, from  
Catechism of Non-  
Resistance



Adin Ballou 1847

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Christ by means of his disciples, would have caught all the world in his net of faith, but the greater fishes broke the net and escaped out of it, and all the rest have slipped through the holes made by the greater fishes, so the net has remained quite empty. The greater fishes who broke the net are the rulers, emperors, popes, kings, who have not renounced power, and instead of true Christianity have put on what is simply a mask of it.

Peter Helchitsky  
15th century

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Peter was a gentle but relentless teacher. He believed that if people learned to think, they would see the wisdom in his simple anarchism. He did not advocate irresponsible freedom or a total disregard for authority. Maurin in the tradition of Christian anarchism, believed that communities founded on individual moral commitment held much more promise than the alienating influence of government. Perhaps he was naive. Perhaps, however, he simply saw the goodness in people - the goodness we are to blind to see, disfigured as we are by the empty promises of consumer society.

from Peter Maurin  
Peasant Agitator