

# MANNA matters

Newsletter of MANNA GUM.



Facing up to the crisis of  
the church (p.3).

## News from Manna Gum

Since the last edition of *Manna Matters* our work has continued apace. This year we have developed a two-part series - *A New Way of Living: Following Jesus in the things that matter* - that we can run with churches as an introduction to Manna Gum's message of good news economics. The hope is to open-up new perspectives on faith and life, and point to resources for further exploration. In June and July we ran the series in Ringwood, Doncaster and Eltham, and while each group was different, they all provided very engaged discussions. Thanks so much to Emily, Mitch, Donna, Sue and Ben who hosted and organised the meetings in their area. If you are interested in Manna Gum running the *New Way of Living* series with your church or group, please contact us.

The other noteworthy things in the past couple of months have been the publication of an article on the economy of enough in the most recent edition of TEAR's *Target* magazine, and running a series of staff/student devotions at Tabor College. There is only one place left for this year's *A Different Way* course, so hurry if you are interested!

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## Standing At The Crossroads (Part 1)

### Facing up to the crisis of the church

by Jonathan Cornford

*Stand at the crossroads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way lies; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls.*

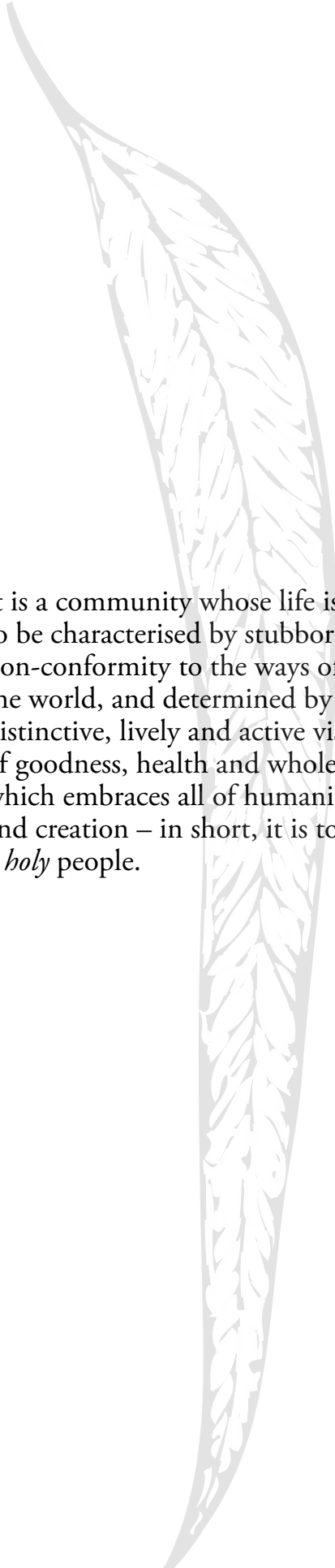
Jeremiah 6:16

In the previous edition of *Manna Matters* (May 2012) I discussed the incredible idea that is behind the New Testament conception of the church – that it is the very *body* of Christ; the continuing incarnation of Jesus in the world; the necessary outcome of the Word that becomes flesh. For the Biblical writers, for whom there is no division between the spiritual and material, or between soul and body, such a conception of the church must therefore have profound implications for the economic arrangements and behaviour of this community of people. The New Testament writers understood the church as a continuation of the calling of Israel to be an alternative economic community whose everyday mode of conduct is a witness to the character of God (*Manna Matters* Nov 2009). It is a community whose life is to be characterised by stubborn non-conformity to the ways of the world, and determined by a distinctive, lively and active vision of goodness, health and wholeness that embraces all of humanity and creation – in short, it is to be a *holy* people.

But we also recognised that in making such a statement we must also, almost in the same breath, acknowledge that we are a long, long way from this vision. There is not enough that is distinctive about the economic lives and habits of Christians and Christian communities today. There is not much recognition that *the sorts of choices* we make in all our major economic decisions – choices about work, perceptions of needs and especially income needs, consumption patterns and investment choices – form an important part of the very substance of our following Christ in the world; that they are an opportunity to *embody* the ethic of the kingdom of God, an opportunity for the Word to become flesh. At best, there is perhaps a vague recognition that Christian ethics dictate that there may be some things we shouldn't do in these fields, however, the main field of decision-making is left open to the all-encompassing influence of modern consumer culture. And while at times many Christians may have a nagging sense of discomfort about certain life-choices, people tend to feel that they have little choice, that there is no alternative. And in many ways, this holds true not only for our behaviour as individuals, but also, and perhaps even more so, for the economic behaviour of Christian communities, and the institutional structures of Christian denominations.

If we take seriously the great distance between the above two paragraphs – what we are called to be, and where we actually are – then it should not really be surprising that the church in the West is in crisis. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the church in Australia has yet fully grasped this fact. Is it really in crisis? We live in a culture preoccupied with numbers and counting things, so let's see if the numbers tell us anything of use.

There are a number of sources of information about the level of affiliation to Christian faith and the health of Christian communities:



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census data, National Church Life Surveys, and other academic studies. These all look at slightly different things and employ different methods, however, they all confirm what anyone who is 60 or over could tell you – that identification with Christianity, and especially attendance at church, collapsed dramatically in the 1960s and has been in steady and continual decline ever since. But how bad is this decline? A study of religious affiliation in the UK, where the trend has been virtually the same, put it like this:

... in Britain institutional religion now has a half-life of one generation, to borrow the terminology of radioactive decay. The generation now in middle age has produced children who are half as likely to attend church.

More precisely, the study found that children in families where both parents could be described as ‘committed Christians’ had only a 50% chance of sharing such a faith in their adult years, while children in families where only one parent was a ‘committed Christian’ roughly had only a 25% chance of sharing that faith. I once asked an Australian academic who studies the same trends here whether he thought faith in families here had a similar ‘half-life’; he replied that he thought the rate of decline here is probably quicker than in the UK.

If these trends continue as they have for the past four decades, then a number of mainline denominations in Australia will struggle to remain viable by the middle of this century (perhaps sooner) and they will certainly no longer be able to economically support the structures that we have come to associate with the institutional church. Even in the religious culture of the US the decline of the church is biting hard; more than a decade ago Tom Sine wrote: ‘If the present trends continue uninterrupted these denominations will be totally out of business by the year 2032’.

But what about Pentecostalism and the mega-churches? Aren’t they growing? There is no doubt that the most significant phenomenon in the Australian church in the past two decades has been the growth of what are generally referred to as Pentecostal mega-churches (although the term ‘Pentecostal’ is becoming increasingly problematic when applied to many of these churches). Although these churches have individually grown very rapidly, they have brought little growth to the church as a whole. For the most part, their growth has come out of ‘recycling’ – picking up Christians who have fled smaller churches in the mainline denominations. But even here their growth is somewhat illusory – the mega-churches have very high flow-through rates (new attendees are largely matched by high rates of exit) and some observers close to this movement believe that the phenomenon has now passed its peak. Even with the enormous resources and effort poured into attractional-style services (more like concerts really), even these churches are struggling to win any new adherents to Christianity. As one sociologist of religion in Australia put it to me: ‘Statistically speaking, conversion is a myth – it simply doesn’t happen.’

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But numbers only tell a superficial story; they tell us that the church is going through profound change, but they don’t tell us what is really happening. The above discussion of mega-churches and the brand of Christianity that they represent, poses a much deeper question: what is the gospel anyway? It is in asking this question that we come to the heart of the crisis of the church. It is evident that the formulations of the gospel that have been the currency of the church for so many generations are seeming increasingly thin and two-dimensional. For some, this is compensated for by latching onto the passion and purpose of the social justice elements of the gospel that have so much to say in our current times; but, if you dig a little deeper it is not uncommon to find that this passion is still accompanied by a deep ambivalence about the rest of ‘the package’, and that social justice Christianity often looks little different from its secular counterparts. The growing recovery of the social justice purposes of the gospel (as they are ordinarily understood) is undoubtedly a positive development in the Australian church, but it is not proving to be a force for the renewal of faith. Those who buy this brand of Christianity are just as likely to drift out of the faith as not to.

Essentially, there is a crisis of confidence in the goodness of the good news. While many Christians are holding on (with varying levels of success) to a conviction that there is something deeply ‘right’ about the gospel, there is a great struggle to define, articulate, and therefore, to live by, a clear understanding of either what is distinctive about the biblical story or why it is good for us. And that is because the biblical story is not the only story we are

listening to. There is a much louder story that has, for a long time, been filling our ears, and we have barely recognised that it exists.

#### How did we get here?

To properly understand the current state of the church in the West we need to go back into its history to look at the things that have shaped it, and to ask where other stories began to be mixed up with the biblical story. To do this we need to re-visit the earliest centuries of the church, and there are perhaps many things that we could point to; but here I want to highlight four great turnings in the history of the church, which together go a long way to explaining our current predicament. I should quickly stress that these turnings all played out over generations and centuries and were never quite so clear as such at the time (lest we be arrogant about our superiority to our forbears). Also, in dealing with almost two millennia of history in such brevity, it is inevitable that this account will be too simplistic, and that every step of the way deserves some qualification. But it is critical, as in all human affairs, that we try to understand the grand story that has brought us to where we are. This is an inadequate first step, but as GK Chesterton said, if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.

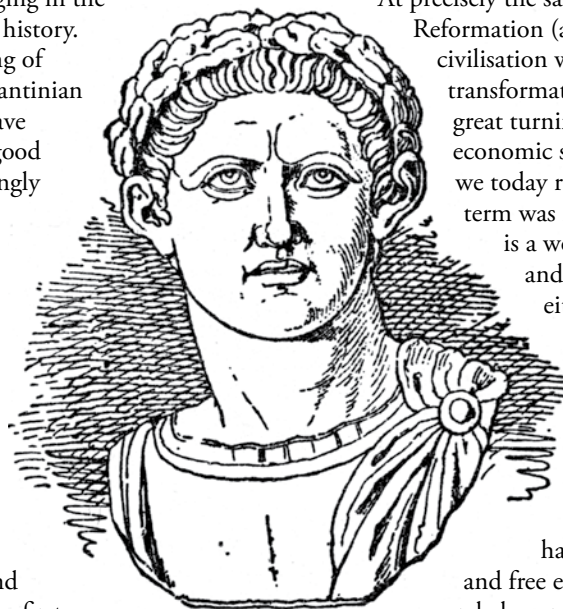
The first turning that I want to consider is the profound and incredibly unlikely revolution that gripped the ancient Mediterranean world when in 306 AD Constantine became

Emperor of Rome and then proceeded to transform the Roman Empire into a Christian Empire. Depending on your theological view of history, this moment has tended to be seen as either Christianity's greatest triumph (perhaps the dominant view), or its greatest calamity. I do not believe that such simplistic categories can accurately represent what happened, and why should they? The entire biblical story confirms that God is continually engaging in the messiness and mixed nature of human history. While I tend to a more negative reading of what has been referred to as the Constantinian Legacy, I am also convinced that we have generally failed to see just how much good was achieved by what is now disparagingly referred to as 'Christendom'.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, when the whole Roman Empire became Christian, something profound happened to Christian faith. As John Howard Yoder points out, before Constantine it took deep courage and conviction to be a Christian; after Constantine, it took deep courage and conviction *not to be* a Christian. When the church took up the sword there was little room left for the faith of the cross, the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. This was the first great turning. From this time on and until very recently, the whole history of Europe and Western civilisation has proceeded on the *assumption* that it was a Christian civilisation.

The next great event I want to consider here is one of the unforeseen consequences of the Protestant Reformation, which began with Martin Luther and John Calvin in the 16th century. In many ways the Reformation was a counter-reaction to the Constantinian Legacy that made everyone by default a Christian, and which made the institutional church the monopolistic arbiter and mediator of faith for everyone. The Reformers demanded that faith be a matter of conviction and integrity, and insisted that every individual human being could have access to God without the mediation of the church. This was the brilliant light of truth at the heart of the Reformation, however, as RH Tawney said, it was a light almost too blinding for the Reformers. As future generations of Calvinists and Puritans worked through these ideas the ultimate result (which neither Luther or Calvin would have been happy about) was an intense focus on salvation of the soul after death, and the obliteration of the older, deeper understanding of humanity as a creature of the earth, made

<sup>1</sup> I can almost hear the clamour: 'But what about the crusades and the Inquisition and Galileo?!'. Yes, yes, (sigh) there is certainly much to be deplored in the history of Christendom, however, the current dominant story is too simplistic by far and neglects much that we would do well to remember. If you can get past the appalling title, David Bentley Hart's book, 'Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and its Fashionable Enemies', provides a compelling account of some of the surprising accomplishments of Christendom.




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for communion within the fellowship of creation and the Creator. Reflecting on later generations of English Puritanism, Tawney concludes that 'it enthroned religion in the privacy of the individual soul, not without some sighs of sober satisfaction at its abdication from society'. This was the second turning.

At precisely the same time as the Protestant Reformation (and feeding directly into it), European civilisation was undergoing another monumental transformation, which is the subject of our third great turning. Between 1450 and 1650 a new economic system was coming into being, which we today refer to as capitalism (although this term was not coined for another 400 years). This is a word that gets bandied around a bit, and depending on who is using it, carries either negative or positive connotations; however, there is very little clarity about what capitalism actually is and how it differs from other forms of economic organisation. (For example, many people assume that capitalism is synonymous with 'free enterprise', which it is not; you can have capitalism without free enterprise and free enterprise without capitalism.) This will surely be a matter for discussion in a future edition of *Manna Matters* as we need to understand the nature of the system that now encompasses the whole globe. Let it suffice for the moment to stress that the form of economic organisation being birthed in Europe was something entirely new and something that radically reshaped the social landscape wherever it took root. The end result was that all of society, from milk-maid to monarch, was made to serve a new Law and a new Lord: the Law was that of never-ending accumulation and constant growth; and the Lord was Capital, once known as Mammon.

Capitalism went on to conquer the globe and become the only economic system going, and all the while there remained the assumption that it was the product of a *Christian* culture. The post-

Reformation church, which in centuries-past had doggedly applied the gospel to the economic sphere, offered little resistance to this economic upheaval, and very soon the church had baptised the virtues of efficiency, productivity and accumulation as the new 'godly discipline'. This was the third turning.

Hard on the heels of the Reformation and the birth of capitalism there came that other profound revolution in European society, this time intellectual, known as the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason. It is far beyond me to try to summarise the diverse works of philosophy and science emanating from thinkers such as Descartes, Locke, Newton, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume and Smith, but there is no doubt that it set in motion a profound shift in human thinking that is still being worked through to this day. Immanuel Kant summed up the spirit of his age as simply the freedom



*The consumer economy has crashed straight through the middle of the church. Photo: the Chapel on the Lake, Nagambie, 2003.*

to use one's own intelligence, but it was more than that. Emboldened by the Reformation's relegation of the church to a secondary sphere in society and the banishment of God to a spiritual sphere (if he existed at all), the Enlightenment project set about trying to understand the universe and human existence without any recourse to what was widely becoming viewed as 'superstition' – that is, religion or the church.

The Enlightenment set about to establish the self-sufficiency of human kind, and that is what it did. The church was graciously granted its domain to chaplain the private recesses of the human heart, but it was made clear that it had no place in the realms of politics or the new science of economics – these were simply no longer of religious concern. The church basically accepted and agreed with this position – the fourth great turning. Through all of these storms and upheavals, the church, the government and even the new breed of non-Christians, continued to assume that they lived in an essentially Christian society, even though everyone had been transformed into practical atheists.

To sum up, we have considered four great turnings away from the gospel by the church:

1. We consented to join with empire and domination, and 'Christian faith' became something other than a matter of deep conviction.
2. We individualised and spiritualised the Christian gospel, effectively discarding all that it had to say about our material lives and the bonds of community.
3. We became willing participants in the program of never-ending accumulation.

4. Other than a narrowly defined spiritual sphere, we made God practically irrelevant in virtually every other sphere of life.

Of course, this is not the whole story. There are indeed other turnings in Church history that would be fruitful to consider if space permitted. But, perhaps more importantly, there has always been a counter-story, a story of faithfulness, resistance and hope at the margins – the desert fathers, the early monastics, the mendicant friars, the Anabaptists, the non-conformists, the list goes on – and their legacy continues to be renewed and live on.

But, as the inheritor of the four turnings discussed above, it is not really that surprising that the church now seems disoriented and irrelevant, like a house built on a foundation of sand. In the face of global environmental crises, unprecedented inequality, economic tumult, social fragmentation and the hollowing-out of self, we are discovering that it all looks very little like the good news that Jesus proclaimed, and that it has all been a profoundly destructive project. To put it bluntly: the crisis of the church is one and the same as the crisis of the world, because that is what we have become.

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*Next edition:*

**STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS (Part 2)  
The economics of renewal**

# Economics of Remote Aboriginal Communities

## Part 2 - Today's economy

by Tim Trudgen

*The following article has been reproduced from the 'Why Warriors' blog (blog.whywarriors.com.au) and is the second part in a series of articles. Manna Matters will run the full series over coming editions.*



*Workers making compost in a private family run market garden, an enterprise supported by the AHED Project*

In the previous article I discussed some of the historical influences on the economy in the remote Indigenous communities of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Briefly, it shows that Indigenous people have been moved from a position of traditional economic independence to a situation where almost all income into their communities comes from the dominant culture Government, either as social security payments, or via grants and contracts to various local organisations.

As a result, the economy of these communities are largely artificial. Even where private businesses exist, ultimately they are dependent on the influx of taxation revenue from the Australian Government. For example, the local store in Galiwin'ku is a commercially viable and profitable enterprise that successfully employs local Yolŋu staff with wages at and above the industry standard. But ultimately, even businesses like this rely on customers whose income is almost entirely from Centrelink payments or from jobs in Government

services, such as the clinic, Centrelink and the Shire council etc. The other significant non-Government employers in many Arnhem Land communities are the Home Land Resource Centres. These centres run a variety of commercial enterprises, but again, rely on local customers' welfare payments, or have contracts which come from Government grants and contracts, such as housing and infrastructure projects. Seriously, if you lived in an Indigenous community your whole life, you should be forgiven for thinking that the whole country's economy is based on Government handouts – this is the illusionary force that surrounds you as one continues to work in the "Indigenous Industry." If the Government suddenly stopped supporting Indigenous communities there would be a very limited monetary economy here.

The biggest source of income outside of the Government is land use royalties, for things such as mining, grazing and pearling, but like welfare payments these do not provide any meaningful employment for locals and are not managed by

the people themselves. These monies are controlled by the Land councils which in the NT, unlike the rest of Australia, are not locally controlled organisations, but statutory organisations that manage income from a huge expanse of lands on behalf of the true land owners. The Land councils struggle to determine who should control these monies according to the traditional Indigenous systems, and so tend to divide the profits amongst everyone who puts up a fight for it. Due to the lack of connection between the payments and the land the monies come from, and the lack of control traditional owners have, these royalties become another form of “free” money.

As the most readily available sources of income are perceived as free money, many people have become trapped by dependency on such devalued income. Their sense of motivation and power, and motivation to labour, dwindles as they start to believe that accessing “free” money is the way one must survive today. However, do not think that people are all hopelessly dependent or just “bludging” – there are very limited jobs to go around, so people are forced to make do however they can. Welfare payments become the only option as life in the new world being constructed around them in these “growth towns” is more and more dependent on access to money.

There are only a few areas of private enterprise that add real value to the local economy and also provide a fulfilling vocation. These are mostly from the arts, crafts trade and knowledge industries, such as teaching, Indigenous knowledge, and research. There is almost no primary production, with locally controlled market gardens just starting to become real possibilities (although hampered by the difficulties of finding a motivated workforce, and constant attempts by the dominant culture to force community gardens on people). This stands in stark contrast to the mission history when all the missions had thriving gardens. A sustainable tourist industry is also only just starting to spread its wings.

What does this mean in monetary terms for the average household? The average income in the community is roughly equivalent to a social security payment of \$300 – \$480 a fortnight. Pensioners and people receiving top-ups on Community Development Employment Project payments (which is now a form of Newstart Centrelink payment and is being phased out) receive up to about \$600 per fortnight in total. This means on average, people are earning about

one fifth to one quarter of the average Australian income (\$60,000pa as at August 2010). Some families receive income in addition to this through royalty payments that are usually widely distributed. This seems to be sufficient for most families to manage rent and buy food and basic items, when they are managing their budget well. Those who manage their money well have enough; but those that do not struggle, and there are those who, for various reasons, have difficulty accessing income, including Centrelink payments, who are truly poor.

We need to remember that the economy is not just about the money; the real economy involves the transfer and transformation of all valuables. These include all forms of sweat (hard work and labour, including parenting), using land resources and primary production (growing things). Many Yolŋu people contribute to the local economy through land management and harvesting traditional foods. For a few young men this is almost a full-time job. While money is rarely exchanged for Yolŋu food items, the food is exchanged through reciprocal generosity and kin relationships. Yolŋu native food items are highly valued and are important contributions to the families’ real income and nutrition. Significant local elders in Arnhem Land communities also contribute huge amounts of time to governance, dispute resolution and generally maintaining social order through Indigenous systems. This work is mostly devoted to the Indigenous domain – that part of Aboriginal communities that non-Indigenous personnel rarely participate in. In addition to this some of them also participate, with difficulty, in the dominant culture governance system. This energy is of huge value and is almost always unpaid, and thus remains an important labour contribution to the economy.

In painting this picture, I am not judging people’s use of money or suggesting they need higher incomes. History shows that when incomes increase rapidly in Indigenous communities, money tends to be devalued, creating dependency and even loss of purpose. My focus here is to ask how we can sensibly help people to develop the local economy under these conditions. The answer I believe is found in matching economic policy to support people’s real needs and motivations, while challenging welfare dependency. This will be the topic of Part 3 in the next edition of *Manna Matters*.

*Tim Trudgen is the Managing Director of Why Warriors Pty Ltd. He has worked closely with Indigenous people from North East Arnhem Land (Yolŋu), Northern Territory Australia, since 2001. Today he works as a Cross-cultural educator, and as an Enterprise Facilitator to help Yolŋu develop their economic and social endeavours.*

## Would you like to join the AHED Project?

The Arnhem Human Enterprise Development (AHED) Project is the not for profit project of Why Warriors Pty Ltd. Why Warriors’ mission is to empower Yolŋu and other First Nations people to live out their full potential through restoring control and freedom, providing access to information and building capacity and understanding between Indigenous peoples and the dominant culture. We are currently seeking people for a couple of IT-related positions. Go to: [www.whywarriors.com.au/ahed-project/volunteer-opportunities.php](http://www.whywarriors.com.au/ahed-project/volunteer-opportunities.php)

## Meet your meat

by Kim Cornford

For most of us, making a connection between a moist, tender, white chicken breast and a scratching, pecking, feathery farm bird can be difficult. It is really hard to believe, when we pull it off the glowing fluoro-lit supermarket shelf, packaged on a styrofoam tray and wrapped in plastic, that piece of meat actually came from a living animal. Knowing, caring for and watching an animal grow before we eat it is about as strange to us as eating our own pets.

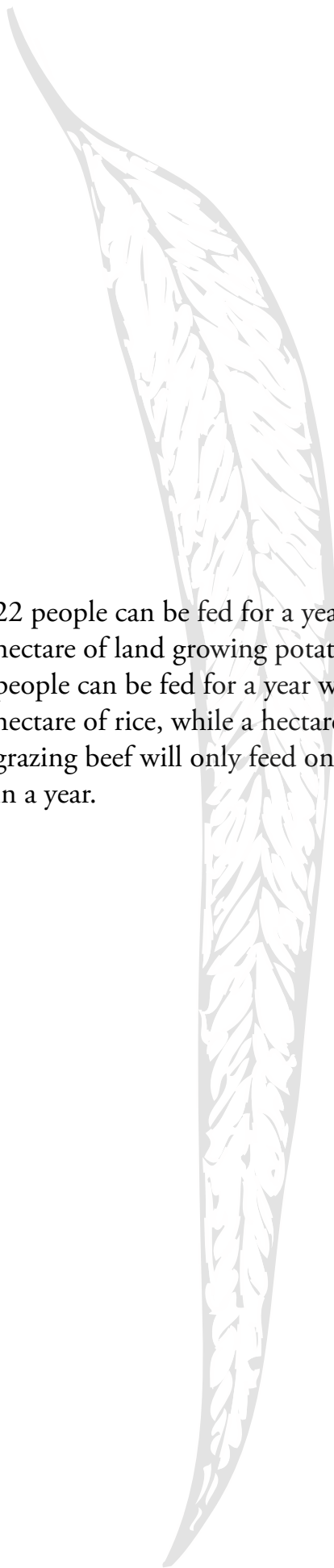
A few years ago our family began to take steps toward becoming more aware of our household's carbon impact on the planet (see *Manna Matters* November 2010). We discovered that after air travel, our consumption of meat and dairy was the highest source of our household carbon emissions. These initial steps towards reducing and changing our meat consumption have taken us on something of a meat adventure...

Most of us have heard, and some perhaps have put into practice, the call to eat less meat. As an affluent people, we generally eat too much food, and eating too much meat is a part of this overconsumption. But beyond our own health and wellbeing, there are other very important reasons for reducing meat consumption.

The environmental impact of meat production and consumption in Western countries has now been well documented in areas such as greenhouse gas emissions, water use, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and waste. In Australia, over 56% of our continent is used for grazing animals and the production of crops used in animal feed. One kilogram of beef is the equivalent in greenhouse gas emissions as driving roughly 170km in a large family vehicle.

Grain crops grown for animal fodder rather than for direct human consumption have a big effect on food supplies and food security. In Australia, standard commercially raised pork is grain fed, and for poultry, feed grains account for about 40% of the cost of total production. Globally, the diversion of grain from human consumption was one of the factors contributing to the 2007/08 food crisis. According to the World Health Organisation and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, on average, 22 people can be fed for a year on one hectare of land growing potatoes, 19 people can be fed for a year with one hectare of rice, while a hectare given to grazing beef will only feed one person in a year. As our global population rockets upwards, this is indeed food for thought.

In addition to the impacts on the environment and global poverty, the mass production of meat has resulted in a system that has largely lost sight of any reasonable care for living creatures. In Australia, animal ethics issues have become prominent in the export of live beef cattle, however, there are just as many reasons to be concerned about the production of pork and chicken for domestic consumption. Most of Australia's pigs are farmed intensively in factory farms. In these farms, sow stalls measure 200cm x 60cm - barely bigger than the pig itself. Clearly this does not enable the pig to turn, walk, or stretch out. These conditions remain when the sow is pregnant and suckling



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young. Chickens raised for meat production are bred to grow and gain weight as quickly as possible, some being ready within 35 days. This unnaturally rapid rate of growth brings with it many problems for the chickens such as leg disorders and heart failure. Further, when chickens leave the growing sheds they are packed into crates upon which there is further loss from heat stress and overcrowding. At the slaughter plant, chickens are shackled upside down by their legs on conveyor belts, stunned in an electrical water bath, and have their necks slit by a rotating blade. Somehow, that plastic-wrapped piece of flesh looks awkwardly different when we know this.

We have consistently argued in *Manna Matters* that caring for all of creation is central to the vocation that God has given humanity. Making connections between the food we eat, where it comes from, and how its production impacts the earth and other people, should be part of how we join in God's work of reconciliation in the world.

So knowing all this, what options are left for us to make responsible choices around meat consumption? Wendell Berry writes "to live we must daily break the body and shed the blood of creation... When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament". With this in mind, our household has tried to make a shift towards eating meat that we have met.

The biggest step in this process was actually coming to this decision. Once our minds became open to this possibility, and once we purchased a chest freezer, opportunities have gradually presented themselves to us. We have been able to source pork from friends living on a small property in northern Victoria who, amongst many other things, raise a few pigs each year. We have been able to source lamb from friends near Warrnambool in a similar way. From another friend who shoots rabbits as a part of land conservation, we have enjoyed learning how to make rabbit stew and curries. Through a friend's uncle we can make possible the sharing of a cow with two or three other households. And in the past year,

we have braved the killing and eating of a few of our backyard chickens.

Choosing to meet our meat has made the reality of eating meat more real for us. It has helped us better understand the work and care required to raise animals well. We have seen and learnt about the living conditions of the animals, and the care which is possible for both the animal and the land, and the resources required to raise it. Indeed, done well, raising animals can form part of an integrated approach to land-use which restores and improves the land.

Meeting our meat has helped us take more seriously that eating meat requires the killing of animals. This is certainly true for us with our own chickens. The pig and lamb have been killed on the farm, and this has enabled the animals to avoid the distress of traveling to, and processing at, an abattoir.

Meeting our meat has enabled us to build links between urban and rural livelihoods and therefore to understand the value of these connections. It has enabled us to support people trying to do things differently on the land, to choose better farming practices, and better treatment of animals.

Finally, choosing to meet our meat, and the consciousness that comes with it, has helped us to reduce our meat consumption. This is better for our bodies, better for the earth, and it has actually increased our enjoyment and appreciation of meat. As Wendell Berry says, "eating responsibly is eating with pleasure; in this pleasure we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude".

The journey of thinking more carefully about meat consumption has seen my motivations and understandings expand from simple environmental concerns to a greater awareness of making good choices for the whole community of creation – for neighbours both near and far, for other creatures beyond ourselves, and for the earth itself.



Cam Holt with his pigs. Pig's natural behaviours include nesting, digging, wallowing, and simply enjoying each others' company.

### SOME OPTIONS FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION OF MEAT

- Eat less meat!
- Choose kangaroo meat. Kangaroo is available in most supermarkets. Wild kangaroo harvest is supported by ecologists and farmers alike. Being a native animal, their footprint is light on the land compared with introduced livestock. Appropriate culling quotas are set by federal and state legislation. Kangaroo meat is high in iron (higher than beef), and low in fat. It is also free from antibiotics, chemicals and growth hormones.
- Choose free range meat and organic meat. These cost more and will mean that you will have to eat less!
- Buy meat at your local farmers market:  
[www.farmersmarkets.org.au](http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au)
- Find a farm near you: [www.localharvest.org.au](http://www.localharvest.org.au)
- Look for any opportunity to source meat from someone you know living on the land.



## KUMQHAT GLEANINGS

It's kumquat season, and there is a good chance there are a number of kumquat trees in your neighbourhood with a rich bounty of fruit that is going unpicked. Why not knock on some doors, introduce yourself, and see if any of your neighbours are amenable to you picking their kumquats and sharing some of the produce with them. Here are two ripper recipes you could try (Warning: be prepared for a tangy taste explosion!):

### Kumquat Cordial

- 6 cups of kumquats
  - 4 cups of sugar (you can use more depending on taste and your kumquats)
  - 2 tbs tartaric acid
1. Slice the kumquats and place in a large bowl.
  2. Add the sugar and mix through.
  3. Allow to sit for 24 hours, occasionally stirring.
  4. Drain out liquid from the fruit into a large heavy-based saucepan, by pressing through a sieve.
  5. Add tartaric acid and bring to the boil; reduce heat to a slow boil for 5 minutes.
  6. Allow to cool somewhat before pouring into sterilised bottles.

*Fantastic served on ice, with carbonated water, in the height of summer!*

### Kumquat Marmalade

- 8 cups of kumquats
  - 1 meyer lemon
  - 8 cups of sugar
1. Slice each kumquat into half and squeeze out the seeds.
  2. Cut the kumquats and lemon into thin slices. Add enough water to the fruit and let sit overnight in a cool place.
  3. Bring the fruit and water to the boil and simmer gently until the fruit is tender, about 2 hours.
  4. Measure the mixture and add an equal amount of sugar. Bring to a boil and cook slowly until jellying point is reached, about 30 minutes.
  5. Fill the hot marmalade into sterilised canning jars and seal.

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### About Manna Gum

Manna Gum is an independent non-profit organisation that seeks to:

*1. Provide resources for Christian groups to understand and practise the social, economic and political implications of the Gospel of Christ; and*

*2. Stimulate critical thinking on issues of aid and development, poverty and wealth, and to undertake research and advocacy on matters concerning Australian aid and development involvement overseas.*

Please contact us if you would like more information about our work or to find how we could support you and your group/organisation to explore some of these issues.

[www.mannagum.org.au](http://www.mannagum.org.au)

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