

CHRISTIANS AGAINST ALL ANIMAL ABUSE

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Spiritual Radiance Following a Service Of Animal Blessing

Here we have just two of the photos snapped by Doreen – after she'd left her seat at the organ – following the service of animal blessing which was in the local Welsh Baptist Church. Such a service is always an inspiration and, following it, the press took a photo of myself which was included in a feature write up that then appeared in the Monday evening's edition of the



Joy & Elfen with Edward



Chrissie & Trevor with Whiskers

FLINTSHER LEADER, under the heading:: OUR LOCAL HERO. It read as follows

'A RETIRED Flintshire vicar who recreates the spirit of St Francis of Assisi by blessing our four legged friends has been nominated as a hero for taking care of everyone. The Rev James Thompson, of Holywell, yesterday held his ninth annual animal blessing service at Bethel Chapel and it is this ceremony that has gained him hero status amongst those who know him.

Sheila Stewart, of the Capricorn Animal Rescue, Padeswood, nominated the Rev Thompson for his selfless devotion to everyone he knows. "He is always there to help people," says Sheila. "And though he is known as the Animal Padre, he is there for people as well. He seems to take care of everybody, she says "That is why I wanted to nominate him.

Rev Thompson, 76, and known affectionately as the Animal Padre, still offers his pastoral services to local residents, despite having been retired for 10 years. For the Rev Thompson the animal services, which he has performed all over Europe, play a key role in his faith. "People ask me if there will be animals in Heaven, he says. "I say that if there was room in the Garden of Eden, then there must be room in Heaven.

But the real purpose of this modern day St Francis's mission is to generate respect for the vulnerable, a message he believes should resonate across society and a message he learned as a child. "I was first inspired to dedicate myself to the needs of animals by a great Quaker teacher at the Council School in Holywell," he said.

It was in 1983, during the period when he fulfilled the post of a senior hospital chaplaincy in Aberdeen that the Rev Thompson - having pioneered his animal blessings since 1971 earned the label of the Animal Padre. This title was given to him by one of the patients and he happily uses it to this day, but as far as being a hero, the Rev Thompson is not so sure. "I am happy to have the title of Animal Padre, he says. "But as for being a hero, I really don't know if I am one of those All I do is try to send out a message that the vulnerable should be cared for, whether it is animal or human. This is what I do in life.'

. I am grateful to dear Sheila Stewart, founder of Capricorn Animal Rescue, who – certainly unknown to myself! - put me forward for this local award. Regrettably, she had not been able to attend the service herself due to temporary illness, most probably resulting from over working at her sanctuary.

Two Ways Of Evading Responsibility

There are two proven ways of evading responsibility. One is to get so enthralled in a novel as to substitute a life of fiction for one of reality. The other is to become so philosophical as to realise that whatever conclusion one arrives at, a contrary opinion needs to be sought out and analysed. Consequently no action is ever taken. Yes, I am aware of many who are so absorbed in the, so-called, academic sphere that one never sees them taking a moral stand practically. Very sadly this is frequently the case within the world of those who prefer to call themselves animal welfare rather than rights.

Subtle ways of being side tracked are only too common. Hence it is little wonder that great moral change has seldom come from the bookworm mentality. Rather it is to humble, practical folk such as Francis Of Assisi, Abraham Lincoln, William Wilberforce, William Booth, William Carey, Gladys Ayleward, Mother Theresa – and countless others – that we owe it for past moral impetus. This, of course, is not to minimise intellectuals such as a past Schweitzer, a C.S. Lewis or an up to date Andrew Linzey - whose theological books on animal rights are – slow but sure – finding a place in most theological foundations. However, such pioneers as these have surely been the notable exceptions?

The fact is that while so many academics waffle and live in their worlds of fantasy the vulnerable occupants of this world – animal as well as human – are being appallingly abused. Yes, because few, in deed there are, who are prepared to get their own hands dirty by saying 'enough is enough!' My own Mum – now many years in Paradise – used to say to me what I've repeated time and time again: *"Don't just dream about good deeds; go out and start doing them for a change!"* Yes, and how right she was! We can't waste any more time shedding tears over the character of some work of fiction – a sloppy magazine or a top Booker prize. Neither should we philosophise in circles so as to evade confrontation by subtly rationalising for both the hare as well as the hounds. The Bible passage says: *'choose you this day whom you will serve!'* Bunyan's 'Mr facing two ways' is harmful to both our

psyche as well as the development of character. From now on, when approached by evil, we must cease from 'making waffles'. We need to step in to the breach and emulate a Martin Luther or a Luther King.

We Need To Identify Ourselves

I do not wish to be too harsh on my fellow clergy but I feel that the trend to discard one's clerical collar – except in church where everyone knows you! – is nothing but a retrograde step. I sense it is all a part of implying: 'I'm no different to you; call me by my first name!'. Yet – the fact is – we are meant to be different! We are meant to represent Jesus to the masses; just as Muslims are so proud to convey by their attire that they follow Mohammed. Indeed, I have always been proud to represent My Lord; and long before becoming a cleric – when going from door to door to read electric meters – I proudly wore on my lapel a badge which said: 'God is love!' And let me assure you that it was not without effect. Some fellow employees would despise me while others respected me. And as for one house visited, the dear lady had just lost her husband and was terrified to retire for the night. However, I openly prayed with her and all that was malevolent left her home. Later, she profusely thanked me for what I'd done.

Jesus wants us to confess Him before others. But He wants us to preach His gospel by deeds as well as words. Therefore, Christian leaders should be in the vanguard within our spiritual war against evil. They should be flying the Christian colours. Yes, and rocking the boat aswell!. Like our Lord we should be 'stirrers of the people'. The price for freedom is constant vigilance and, therefore, freedom of speech and responsible demonstrations are a vital part of a democracy. Yet it is sad, indeed, that speakers corners within our various cities are diminishing. What is more, for myself, I've lived in industrial parts of Yorkshire long enough to enjoy what is termed 'banter'. People – even husbands and wives! – exchanging rudish remarks to one another; one seeking to 'outshine' the other. Yes, and woe betide an outsider who intervenes to stop them. They'll both, unitedly, turn on such an uninvited guest!

Well, I'm proud to say that *to my mind* Mohamet was as false a prophet as Joseph Smith (founder of Mormonism) and that immigrants need to respect our customs and heritage, just as I would theirs, on visiting their original country. They have every right to oppose my dietary requirements as I have theirs. And as for ritual slaughter as it is practised by many of them – and indeed by far more Jews! – I consider it to be cruel and barbaric. And one needs to have the right to say it openly and publicly within a country cradled in Christian democracy. Such freedom of expression will naturally carry with it the probability of causing offence, but then we are emotional animals and as such, every day, by the looks as well as the words of others one is to a stronger or lesser degree being either commended or offended. What is more, attire has the same ability. I once offended a lady because I entered a Roman church in Munich wearing shorts. That's an extreme case! To a far lesser extent, Sunday worshipping females attired in denim jeans or dowdy black apparel made me choose worship at another church where women wore gay and bright dresses, the choir were colourful, and the parson interspersed his sermon with jokes. Yes, trivial things, indeed, to either commend or offend in comparison with the mistreatment of animals and birds, over which God has instructed us to fulfil a caring stewardship!

Christ was not only moved with compassion but He was also moved with righteous indignation (holy wrath), and the qualities that moved Him to action need to move us as well. For, once this ceases then we have ceased to be 'the salt of the earth' and we are then fit for nothing but to be cast (said Jesus) on to the dunghill!

Getting back to a preacher's attire, some clerics appear so strangely pious as to be as off putting to Christianity as I consider strict Orthodox attire to be for Judaism or a fully veiled woman walking behind her spouse, to be for Islam! So – let other clerics do the contrary – but for myself, I'll hold hands with my wonderful wife while wearing a 'dog collar', I'll radiate a smile (she always does!) express laughter, visit a Wetherspoon's Inn! Yes, and equally, when confronted by evil towards man or beast: take a militant stand. So consequently, when another Christmas draws near I'll be demonstrating in the streets of Chester against intensively reared poultry, while those in the faculties of theology waffle on ad-infinitum, and while clergy (as a whole) might come round to question: 'Does a bird have a soul?' A question they may even ask before they knife in to it on Christ's birthday. Ah, but – take heart! – not before they've offered grace over such a carnivorous conglomerate of congealed carcass!



And A Little Child Shall Lead Them

The photo above surely speaks for itself! There is innocence and a trustfulness in both creatures that speaks volumes to a discerning mind. There seems to be a mutual bond and trust as if they are both so close to the heart of God. However, with the passing of time the desensitising and ultimately exploiting character of man destroys such a picture. The sheep soon learns to distrust humans, and rightly so. And as for the youngster, she will become so removed from that earlier closeness and, indeed, kinship, as to have a leg of lamb on her future plate at school dinner. Ah, but thankfully, that is only half the story. Cheryl is no longer a conditioned child but a grown up who is throwing off the shackles of past programming and is now a recently qualified social worker, more and more reprogramming her own future life style, revealing compassion and care for those lives which are much more vulnerable than her own.

It is a regrettable fact that the older one grows 'educationally' then the more desensitised one is programmed in to becoming. The roles of parchment and a mortarboard are seldom for those with a mind of their own. It is for those willing to be subservient to those they are persuaded to adulate as academic superiors to ones self. It is, mostly, for those who tow the line and imbibe 95 % assimilation of others views, and retain about 5% of their own. Thankfully, the young lady – who along with her Mum, has graduated at the same time – are amongst those prepared to go out and face the real world and – thank God! - think for themselves.

Indeed, concerning the little folk who inhabit our earth I well remember last week travelling in a crammed coach of holidaymakers as the narrow gauged train chugged its way through the lovely welsh countryside. Doreen and I were padrlly surrounded by little people, some little more than toddlers; and – as if to make the day more memorable still - a little puppy engrossed in the atmosphere was further back, wagging its tail for all it was worth.

Yes, Doreen was truly rejuvenated in spirit as she spoke to the closest of these little ones while their proud parents looked on so happily. These children made me very much aware of a third presence in such a midst. Yes, none other than Jesus Himself! It appeared that in the midst of so much joy the Nazarene had invisibly come to join in the joy. But then – after several happy moments - my thoughts moved on to something awfully tragic: 'where would these happy innocent lives be, ten years or so from now?' Indeed, I sense that Jesus was thinking along similar lines. Yes, and then His words came back to me. Not only uplifting ones such as: *'of such is the kingdom of heaven!'* but much more sobering ones: *'woe unto this world for offences; yet offences must surely come. However, who so ever becomes a stumbling block to one of these little ones that believeth in me, better for that person that he had never ever been born'*

And who are the ones that are a cause of offence to one of these little ones? Are they the paedophile priests of Catholicism who – via the confessionals – have preyed upon young folk, assessing their vulnerability so as to ‘groom’ them later? Well I’ll not go in to that one, I’ll simply recommend a book by a dear colleague who was abused as a youngster himself (see next article). For the present moment, I have in mind a protest I took outside Dounreay nuclear site in the far north of Scotland. – Oh yes, I know I’ve mentioned it before, but I’ll repeat it again! -There were hardly a dozen of us there, but we knew full well of lethal faults within that nuclear system that so many had sought to cover up.

We knew also that the fish of that area had to be avoided by the fishermen because so many were deformed through so much radioactive waste seeping out in to the sea. We were not surprised to learn how the sheep that grazed in that region were not allowed to be sold for meat within the whole of that vicinity! Yes, as for ourselves, we were moved with compassion for the vulnerable families of such an area – especially the youngsters. However, the nuclear site provided much needed employment for the vicinity and, when we made our protests, none less than a parish minister himself became our clerical opponent. He leaned backwards to side with the mercenary motivated nuclear authorities, along with MPs anxious to win local votes. And – saddest of all - even the rank and file of workers preferred to oppose us because the industry rewarded them with lucrative employment.

Then I thought of the children of such families; of the piling up of nuclear waste; of the future hell that all those supportive of the nuclear industry were creating for their children, grandchildren, and children yet to be born I’m not ashamed to say it: ‘I wanted to cry; and I knew that I was not alone’. Those brave protestors felt similar to myself, and again I was conscious of the tears of the Nazarene whose presence felt so close. Well, I tell you, the grotty politicians who are crazily pushing for more nuclear sites today – be they Tory, Labour or (God forbid: Lib Dem) – are little more than myopic stooges of a heartless chemical conglomeration whose god is mammon. And as for the clergy who could speak out but prefer ‘*courting the praise of man to the praise of God*’: they will reap the wrath of a righteous Christ whose strongest denunciations throughout His ministry were singled out for their first century counterparts: the scribes and Pharisees who, as ‘whitened sepulchres’, appeared attractive on the outside, but were inwardly full of rotting carcasses. If you don’t believe me, look up: Matthew Chp: 23!

Book Review

THE LEAST AMONG US by Martin O’Shea & Tony Wright (ISBN:0-9552945-0-9)

‘ Here is a soft back 62 page book which takes me back to my Dandy and Beano days because it is basically a picture book like they were. However, it’s content is far from humorous and is, therefore, more akin to a Sexton Blake detective presentation of those far off years. Indeed, in a computer age of being glued to a dazzling screen in which to acquire information, how relaxing and enjoyable it is to relax in an armchair and read in a comic cuts style that which is, alas!, far from comical. Yet it needs to be read because, though fictional, it is so very largely built on past life encounters or reflections.

Having only yesterday viewed a most disturbing TV panorama exposing Paedophilia within the Roman church, and the quest to hide the guilty priests and ignore the plight of its victims THE LEAST AMONG US becomes up to date and compelling reading. Yes, and not least, because the way this Latin branch of Christendom has ignored, covered up, and frequently perpetrated cruelty towards animals has its counterpart in the way it similarly distances itself from human victims for which it was also responsible. The parallels are certainly intriguing, revealing that abuse towards one species so easily leads to that in another. It is surely; therefore, not necessary for me to tell you that Micheal O Shea (a pseudonym!) is an animal activist of some considerable standing. He, and also the co-author of this picture book, are equally most gifted in art work. If one picture conveys a thousand words, then this hand sized publication has a great deal to make one think. I strongly commend it’.

Available direct from the publisher Ascendant Press, PO Box 291, Cardiff CF11 1ED at only £4.95

Witnessing With Others In Oxford



Being aware of a weekly protest taking place outside the proposed primate site for vivisection – to be the largest of it's kind in Europe! – I used the occasion of a past college reunion to give this our number one support. However, this last Thursday in August found, at first, more police than there were protestors; though further protestors later arrived. Doreen got police permission to take the above photo and a few more. Meanwhile the representatives of the law constantly videoed us! Well, I realise that they have a job to do and, let's be quite frank, the officer in charge was a perfect gentleman and a true credit to the police force of Britain; yet it still made me feel that one was now already in a police state. And this was certainly not lessened when I later read the attached newspaper cutting below. It is from a most delightful couple up in Beverley: Eileen and Nigel who are practising Christians:

YOUR VIEWS

All species are God's creatures

ON Saturday August 19, my husband and I attended our first animal rights demonstration in Hull, held to protest against Banton and Kingsman's breeding and supplying of innocent animals for vivisection laboratories.

It was extremely peaceful and spiritual, yet two protestors were still arrested, simply for holding up posters of 'bloodied' laboratory animals. The police gave the reason as 'It could offend families'.

I have two points to make

(a) Vivisection continues because these very people are kept in the dark and the animals, who are shut away in secret laboratories, need these people to be upset for them.

(b) - Butchers' shops show extremely upsetting parts of dead animals which offend and upset vegetarians and vegans, so in the interest of discrimination against this said group, why do not the police arrest butchers?

Finally, the answer is because we live in a very prejudiced society and the animal rights people, who are vegans by their very nature, are the group most highly discriminated against. All species are God's creatures and it's time the church spoke up for the laboratory and intensively farmed animals on this earth.

Eileen Girling
Sigston Road
Beverley.

Although it is with much regret that the proposed Oxford centre for animal experimentation goes ahead, we pray that ultimately this building will be used as a noble centre for humane research. For the fact is that no lasting good can come out of mean, miserable, cruel and grotesque practices. Such must surely be the belief of all who believe in a morally just, caring and loving God who has planted a little of His character within even the least worthy of His subjects!

We may not be united in calling the great upholder of this universe Jesus Of Nazareth. We might prefer to identify Him with Buddha, Krishna or Allah. But one thing is sure: the enlightened followers of the world's major religions believe that what ever one sows for good or evil is what one will reap back. Consequently, I would not 'for even all the money in the world' want to be in the shoes of short sighted vivisectionists whose practices are blunting the finer qualities of mankind and turning them from being courteous Dr Jekylls into laboratory Hydes. Bit by bit, and hardly noticeable to themselves the practice of having primates caught in the wild, put in to sanitized and cramped confinement to endure an hourly existence of mental torture and then, drawn out, physical pain, is something that no civilised human could condone - *unless*, he or she has been conditioned over the years through a gradual growth of desensitisation. Yes, such as that which incubated and then hatched a Mengele, an Eichman and a

Goebells - Doctors who practised similar evils, before retiring daily to express 'selective compassion' to their families and domestic pets!

You have, of course, every right to disagree with me and oppose me to the face. So far (but for how long I cannot tell you!) we can still 'argue the toss' until the cows come home. But as I see it – and I'm certainly not alone here – Big Brother is becoming Big Bully, and with subtlety and stealth the freedom those who died or were maimed for in the past two World Wars will have been lost because our present political regime is selling us out – hook line and sinker – to a totalitarian and crooked European state. What we as a nation have experienced since Magna Carta is under this present regime being taken from under our noses! And few seem to know it as they exist in their cocooned boxes; their offspring off to communal nurseries; and all later 'advancement' dependent on towing the line to a sordid secular state.

Ah well, as an increasingly fit 76 year old I'll continue to speak out and fight for God's vulnerable! Like others of my age I'm happy to have lived in eras when churches were often full, when Mum was a home maker, where Dad earned the pennies, where children were disciplined as well as deeply loved, where the house was a home and people stuck together 'for better or for worse' because they'd made such promises to God. Yes, an era when the Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh were actually proud to sing Rule Britannia, Land of hope and glory, and – quite incredibly – there'll always be an England!

With Signs & Witnesses From Jesus

A young boy just loved frogs He collected them in all shapes and sizes. Indeed, they were made of various materials! Sadly, there was a time when the little fellow became seriously ill, and eventually he passed in to the spirit world when no more than 10 years of age. His parents were naturally devastated and used to frequent his grave very often. One day whilst there, the mother filled with grief cried out loud- "Oh, if you could only let me know that you are alright!" Then – with truth stranger than fiction! – a frog from out of the undergrowth jumped on to the grave, stayed a while, and then hopped off. Mum was overjoyed – she knew her beloved son was just fine.

Thanks To Maurice & Betty Swift For The Above.

Yes, there are signs from God that are all around for those whose spiritual vision has not been impaired by the grit of this world's secular education '*which is foolishness with God*' (1 Corinthians.3:19) Even the animals that are living are aware of those who seek to do them good rather than harm. Below we have two photos snapped by Doreen, as are the rest! The first one is of a sweet lady who cares for stray animals. That's alongside of running a quaint and delightful old world tavern and B&B – *The Halfway Inn* - helped by a caring hubby and a brother whose a gifted chef in the delightful hamlet of Pisgah near Aberystwyth. Indeed, they and the rescued animals, look down upon – what the locals call - the Promised Land. The second photo is one of blessing a seal in a wild life park at Colwyn Bay





'Proclaim the gospel by all means available – and, if necessary, use words' - St Francis Of Assisi