

Christians Against All Animal Abuse

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The Passing Of A Compassionate MP:

Yes, these are few and far between as far as animal welfare is concerned. What is more to his credit, Tony would have preferred the title animal activist to a welfarist because he did not mince his words when speaking out for our animal brethren. Indeed, I well remember sharing a platform with him in Dover where he made it abundantly clear to all of us that: given the choice between being a member of parliament and an animal activist, that the latter would have precedence every time.

Well, coming from the mouth of some other politicians I would suggest that it was simply a matter of playing to the gallery when confronted with like minded sympathizers; but, with a Tony Banks this was not so. Indeed, I was honoured to share fellow patronage of a militant animal activist movement which has no time for any – to quote Bunyan's phraseology! - Mr Facing Two Ways! Indeed, for Tony Banks – and again using Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress as an example – I sense the bells are ringing out to welcome him home. Yes, along with, possibly, many a four legged creature as well. Indeed, the following words by Judi Hewitt of Rhyl, written the morning after his decease, are most apt and touching:

You were my hero Tony Banks. a brave heart, through and through.
You fought against a mighty foe; who didn't have a clue
Your battles gained you many friends; with comrades near and far
There will be lots to greet you, when you enter your new star.

The foxes, deer, and the hare. and others too on mass
Will all line up and pave the way. and cheer you as you pass.
I never knew you Tony Banks; just knew you were the best.
Be sure your comrades will fight on; To beat the human pest

May This Easter Message Be A Comfort To You When A Loved One Dies!

The glorious Easter season is once again upon us and we not only think about lambs and their value to the One we aptly call the Lamb of God, but we think of little chicks as well and how they break out of their shell in to the light of day. Well, haven't you ever thought that before they broke out that they had been encased in utter darkness and that such an existence was hardly making sense to them? Strange things had, indeed, been happening. Upon their little faces two things we call eyes had come in to being; a beak had formed in their mouth; and – more strange still – two things had been growing out of their sides which was making them more cramped than ever while within a dark confined, cavern experience. These were wings in the making!

But then, one day – through passing through a momentary and frightening experience – they stretched out their beak and wings and a terryfing cracking experience occurred. Bu then, all sense of panic soon left as their eyes began to blink and, for the first time, they were beginning to see something they could never previously have envisaged. What a contrast this new world was compared to their previous dark existence. For the first time they knew why they had eyes. And, what is more, as they looked down and felt a pang of hunger, they began to realise that they had a mouth to give them exquisite experiences of taste as well as ability

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for sound. Yes, and before long, those strange encumbrances from their sides, which didn't make any sense at all within the shell, would soon give them the ability to hop and then fly.



Dear reader, it is similar with us. Things occur within this life for which we simply have no answer. Many faculties – including spiritual and moral – begin to develop, and many of them just don't make sense. But then, one day – and none is immune from it! – a traumatic and, sometimes, quite frightening experience occurs which each of us must solitarily pass through. It is our own passing in to eternity. And when this occurs it might seem as alarming to ourselves or to our loved ones as breaking through a shell. Yet, on the other side we begin to learn the reason for all those developing factors, many of which seem meaningless or utterly confusing on this side. So take heart when you are at the graveside or crematorium of the one you loved so dearly. Did not even St Paul say: "Ear has not heard, eye has not seen, and neither has it entered in to the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love him!"

What Kind Of Image Do We Convey?

It's been a long and drawn out winter, but - thanks to the good Lord! - the start of Spring is here. However, society as a whole has hardly lifted itself above doom and gloom. And even with Spring Day here as I type this letter, I find myself confronted outside with frump folk who appear as if they lived night and day in patched denim jeans. The gentler sex – ladies appears inappropriate! – no longer come across as vivacious, sparkling wearers of some gay blouse, a colourful flared skirt and pretty legs within them. Such past expressions of gaiety lifted the very spirit of man; if nothing else! You don't have to agree but I wish they'd return!

I really feel that we have evolved in to being a cross breed between Lowry's match stick paintings and that of the past Russian Communist image of all folk appearing identical - peas from the same pod! And as for the top designers of fashion, well they are reflected in a visit to the average Marks & Spencer displays. Yes, drab, dismal colours which cultivate a disposition of negativity and gloom. Yet, they wonder why their sales go down; and, no doubt, women wonder why – in their spirit of emancipation and equal rights – that same sex liaisons appear to be on the increase, with a dearth of interest from the other side. However, of much more relevance to this News Letter: what kinds of image do animal rights activists and pet lovers convey to the general public? Let's consider them both separately:

The Animal Rights Image:

Here we have – far too often – an image of police confrontation with barriers being pulled down (often a very dangerous situation). Yes, and police horses braying in fright and on the verge of stampede, while members of the gentler sex yell out: 'scum bags!'. And, of course, goaded on by less refined skinhead speakers with a most unkempt appearance hogging the microphone and repeating the same inflammatory stuff over and over again.

Well, one appreciates that frustration through police diversion of a route can result in the worst elements of human nature being expressed; but I have to ask myself – even though the press and TV coverage may love it – what image does all this kind of thing get over to the

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public? Well – for myself – I sense that it is a very poor one. Admittedly, there is a popular saying which affirms that there is no such thing as bad publicity; that all publicity works for the good. However, I choose to think otherwise How enlightening it is to find one or two cultured, educated and refined folk speaking up for our great Cause. But, alas, they are hardly the majority of orators for the movement. And if there is one speaker who is more militant than most then it is to a Robin Webb to whom I would take off my hat. For way back on several demos I've had the good fortune to hear him. Yes, and to observe him as well; and though few indeed would be as outspoken as he is, he remains a gentleman throughout. And, likewise, one could think of octogenarian Joan Court: a Cambridge graduate with culture and breeding, yet equally as forceful and as committed as Robin. I tell you: such people as these reveal what is so desperately needed in our fight for our brothers and sisters of the animal kingdom. And - shown here in the photo below! - one was again privileged, indeed, to meet up with Joan, at a Demo. which took place in Oxford just a couple of months ago..



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The Buddhists Who Attended Huntingdon?

The last time that Doreen and I visited Huntingdon was to join in a vigil outside the animal hell hole there. How privileged we were to share this occasion with Saffron robed Buddhist monks. For myself, I did my little part for the Christian faith and Doreen reminded me of how – before we all dispersed – a police officer came across and said: ‘You’ve really given us food for much thought today. You’ve shown a different side from that uncouth mob which usually turns out!’ Well, we said nothing, but the message came across as clear as a bell. One cannot fight fire with fire; hatred with hatred, evil with evil. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth simply leads to toothless blind folk unable to articulate and see.

We are certainly on a verge of revolution for the cause of animal liberation; but let it not end up with the legacy of the past Russian revolution or the French one, both of which had their redeeming points. Yes, but far too many un-redeeming points as well! For – as we all know – there is a fanaticism that is more for feeding the mouths of upstarts on a soapbox than for feeding weaker forms of life than ones own. No uncouth mob mentality should ever be allowed to mar the name of either Animal Activism, animal rights or animal liberation. And, consequently, I find it enlightening as well as uplifting that so many well-dressed senior citizens are joining our ranks. These, along with up and coming compassionate academics, are what is surely needed if we are to gain more than what we lose in the eyes of the public.

The Pet Lover Image

I don’t know about you, but mixed images come to my mind. Some are exceedingly attractive. I think of those ‘living saints’: humble folk who share their home with stray and abandoned moggies and mongrels. But others are quite off-putting: those who mollycoddle pampered pedigrees for which they’ve paid a fortune. Yes, showing them off for some mistaken kind of, assumed, ‘upmanship’. Yes, docking their tails; or encouraging further breeding so that the poor creatures can only breathe with difficulty or only walk while their stomachs often trail the ground. Yes, and other types poisoned by chocolates and junk food!

Others are allowed to live with loads of their own kind while confined within human quarters that stink and become obnoxious for both animal as well as human alike. Well, having recently appeared on national TV I wish to emphasize that whereas the title they once ‘christened’ me with in the 1980s has stuck: ie: the animals’ padre! – this year’s reference to me as: ‘the pets’ padre’ is hardly accurate. For I’m sure you’ll agree that those requiring our number one priority for protection, love and care are the ones that most would forbid access in to their homes. I think of those sentient creatures intensively bred and horrendously abused for the carnivorous palates of Adam’s fallen race. And we vegetarians are far from guiltless if we buy those cheap dairy products that turn cows in to milk machines or birds in to batteries!

Another Oxford Demo. But Sadly I’ll Not Be There!!

Yes, and if it goes ahead it will be a contrast to the last attended. For this is again an inter-faith gathering in which the dear Buddhists have taken the initiative. Doreen and I would dearly love to have been coming. We’d agreed to speak on behalf of the Christian contingent!, but very sadly repairs on the line centred round Milton Keynes has resulted in the latter part of our journey being by a bus shuttle service, resulting in a five and a half hour journey each way from North Wales! This would have resulted in having to book three nights in Oxford and our finances just do not allow for it.

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I sense that if we were like Cancer Research or the British Heart Foundation – possibly like some prominent animal caring charities! – we would have put out loads of collection boxes by now as well as held a weekly stall outside super markets. This way, we could quite easily attend almost every worthwhile Demo. Yes, while booking in at a top hotel for the nights preceding and following! Indeed, I actually know of at least two who travel in affluence via top media charities mostly financed by genteel ladies rattling their collection tins, and you may well know of countless others also. It's certainly a cheap way of seeing the world under the pretence of being charitable. Yes, as charitable as the grocer who used the proceeds of his box for the blind with which to procure a new one!. As for Doreen and I, we simply string along on a shoestring, while some kind readers reward us with an annual generous donation.

Well, our hearts will be with those of you who can turn up again at Oxford. That Hell of an animal torture complex must not be allowed to blacken the image of Oxford. As an ex scholar myself, I see more than blue when I read of those present students who are being used as no more than stooges to bolster a decaying and most macabre pseudo-science. However, one thing is sure: if Aberdeen university's Marishal college – the largest granite building in Europe! - can become totally defunct of animal experimentation then so can the proposed 'animal torture' edifice planned for Oxford.

Should my saffron robed colleagues still go ahead demonstrating on Saturday afternoon of the 1st of April, then my prayers will be with them. Regrettable indeed, however, that even these kind, compassionate and caring folk should be refused permission to the actual site; and that outside the zone they are only allowed to hold such a respectable vigil for no more than 30 minutes! Yes, if we could have made it – and we dearly wanted to! – I would only have been delegated 5 minutes in which to speak as a representative of the state church 'by law established'. Well that's a joke under this Blairite regime if ever there were one. It's methods are beginning to come out of its cracks in the same way as are the fruits and folly of the vivisection labs. Enough said!

Well, thank God for the laws of Karma! How true that in dishing out cruelty we are inviting it to come back to ourselves! And to the argument that certain drugs are on the market, and wouldn't be there except for animal experimentation! Yes, perfectly true, but then how appallingly short sighted. This immoral practice of vivisection has severely hindered the use of discovering and researching humane medications. Incidentally, medically acknowledged deaths in the UK resulting from prescription drugs have risen from 648 in 2001 to 1,013 in 2005 – a 50 percent increase in just five years! One wonders how many more unacknowledged deaths there have been! If such statistics do not ring alarm bells, what will? Only a short sighted civilisation will be blind to the fact that the cruelty it sows it will reap..

Admittedly, Christianity may bring in Christ as a scapegoat and substitute for all our transgressions and moral inadequacies; but even then: though Divine reconciliation may be the outcome, and God no longer turns His face away from us, a refined concept of Purgatorial cleansing is, quite probably, far more to the point than self centered' clap happies or morbid intercessors 'for mercy at the hour of their death' may wish to envisage. St Paul, himself, hinted at progressive stages in the hereafter, and St Peter spoke of those needing deliverance years after their earthly sojourn. The extreme concept of a 'Jesus paid it all' theology may well be a relief to the guilt ridden professing believer; but the closer followers of our Lord will be too busy emulating the work of Christ on earth than in being 'time-locked' in reiterating: 'I'm saved for time and eternity!' Yes, a claim that others may very much doubt!

Having faith that could remove mountains will not compensate for a love that seeks not it's own. Yes, such as that of St Theresa – the little flower! -: who asked that she might spend her Heaven doing good down here! Indeed, love that is altruistic should be the fruit of each child of God; whereas love that is primarily concerned with seeking to continually convince oneself of one's own personal acceptance by God, appears utterly selfish. God knows our hearts, and

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He has given us all a task to do while we remain upon this planet earth. As for the hereafter, it is surely enough for us to leave that with a just and merciful heavenly Father whose Son told us about so many future dwellings within His Father's kingdom. I like the words of the blind George Mathieson's hymn written after he was jilted 'O love that will not let me go'!. But here are just three verses from a lovelier hymn still. It was written in his years of maturity:

Gather us in Thou Love that gatherest all.	Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light
Gather our rival Faiths within Thy fold	Each looks upon one tint and calls it Heaven
Bend each man's temple-veil and bid it fall	Thou art the fullness of our partial sight
That we may know that Thou hast been of old	We are not perfect till we find the seven
Gather us in	Gather us in

Some seek a Father in the heavens above
Some seek a human image to adore
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love
Within Thy mansions we have all and more
Gather us in

A Letter from The Scottish Highlands That Speaks For Itself:

Dear James,

Today's news about those people made ill by drug trials really proves how useless and dangerous it is to test drugs on animals, as these drugs have been. Animal testing gave no hint of their effects on humans - cardiac arrest, multiple organ failure, bodies swollen out of recognition and next of kin told they may die soon.

BUAV and others need to get on the news and point out that these effects AND WORSE are what animals endure day in and day out in labs. Yet the BBC had some apologist on, saying this proves the need for more testing on animals. When will we ever learn ??!

Life is hellish here just now. It is the only appropriate word because it refers not to my lot but the miserable animals. The past week has seen the worst weather since I came here and the plight of the sheep in these fields reaches rock bottom. Last week I walked up to the farm to pay my rent and found no-one around so I nosed about. In the open-fronted tractor shed I found a pile of 8 dead sheep, obviously from exposure. Dumped like rubbish, which is all they are to these "caring farmers", left out in all weathers and of so little monetary value that they are given not a stick of shelter. So these gentle animals, caked with mud, eyes bloodshot, came to the end of their wretched lives. Humanity has turned its back on creatures like these. Where is compassion ? I even want to ask, where is God ?

I think that woman at Peterhead who wept at your programme was really despairing for all the other animals who never know care in their lives and have even less chance of receiving dignity in death.

This farmer, my landlord, seems a harmless type although I saw his nasty side last autumn when I got in the way of the harvesting while looking for my cat, but he has a wife and polite children and yet he can treat animals like this and send those who do not die of cold to their deaths on a daily basis.

It reminds me of the episode of World At War dealing with the Holocaust. At the end, Olivier said in his commentary, "After another day overseeing the murder of thousands of Jews, SS officers would leave the camps and return to their homes and families." That comparison again ! Well I don't know how people can sleep in warm beds when they know this is going on around them but this farmer is in his big house with lights blazing in every room and central heating. As I freeze in my cottage with mildew on the walls, I am glad I am so uncomfortable. It makes me at one with the sheep but still I cannot bear to think of them out all night freezing.

I can do no more about this than I can about any other animal abuse these days, because if I make waves I will have no home, damp or otherwise. BUT I went back for my video camera and filmed those sheep and when I get on my feet I will send the tape to NOWALES, the only group I still follow, for whatever use they can make of it.

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A month earlier I asked one of the farmhands about a sheep that had got out of the fields and was wandering on the road. He laughed: "They're doing that a lot just now because the neeps are done and they're looking for food." So there you have it: hungry animals are a joke. Next time you hear about caring farmers, remember this.

Well it is all about sheep so far, James, and none of this was a surprise to me but it is still painful to see it close-up. Feel free to quote any of this if it serves any purpose whatever!

Yes, well that's what I've precisely done Stewart. Indeed, you and I were fellow buddies protesting two decades ago outside Marischal College – a notorious vivisection laboratory – in Aberdeen. You were at the side of me with your gorgeous little dog. However, Stewart, our prayers and protests were not in vain. As you know, that colossus of evil is now redundant.

My dear friend let us never minimise what prayers, protests and persistence can truly accomplish. Here's a photo below of the two of us taken all those years ago:

Yours in our Great Cause, James



When An Incident Becomes More Than A Coincidence!

Dear Reader, I told you earlier about the message we can learn from an Easter chick. Here's one concerning an insect. preached in church at 'a saint of a man's' funeral. I told of how death, for a true practising Christian was comparable to a caterpillar casting off its chrysalis. No longer would its reasoning be from the perceptions of a creepy-crawly. Now it would be from the aspect of a creature with wings to soar. Well – no mistake! - it was January when I spoke from the lectern and, with people looking down at the front of the same, I wondered what had caught their eye. I certainly hadn't dropped any notes as I'd been preaching extemporary.

Then, all of a sudden - creeping over the edge and on to the open Bible -there appeared an exquisite butterfly. Yes, God was surely confirming that what I'd said about the passing over of this wonderful Mr Hampton was pleasing to Him. But that is not all! Doreen - who was the church organist - coming down the nave at the close of the service, was amazed to find this butterfly now resting in the favourite pew in which the deceased used to worship.

What a wonderful and truly glorious God is ours! And – if it be in His will! – I'll tell you of other similar incidents in following editions of this quarterly News Letter. Meanwhile may His love enfold you.