

# CHRISTIANS AGAINST ALL ANIMAL ABUSE

SPRING 2008

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## **I hope you like this Motif!**



It is that of the Moravian Church, a Christian denomination earlier than that of Lutheranism and with links to the martyred preacher of Prague: John Huss. The denomination is quite small these days and the communities around which many of the churches stand are now no longer exclusive to members of their movement; yet a wonderful peace still permeates such places. Indeed, I think of Fulneck – famous for its public school – and Gracehill in Northern Ireland.

I don't wonder that such places convey a sense of peace and an awareness of the numinous. Perhaps it could be that their motif is a factor behind this, as well as their major hymn which conveys the same emphasis: '*Our lamb has conquered, Let us follow Him!*' Indeed, such a spiritual movement – to which John Wesley the founder of Methodism owed his conversion! - with its priority on spiritually orientated education, has been something they've had in common with the Jesuits.

Secular education – as I've said many times - merely provides the mental tools to turn little rascals in to big ones. Need one wonder, therefore, that hooliganism and appalling thuggery is on an astronomic assent within this Labour controlled state? Yes, a state which has downgraded family life, rejected Christian priorities, and turned education in to nothing more than a competitive 'rat race': all apologies to the rodent! Indeed, it is hardly surprising that as the forces of nature, via winds, seas and earth tremors become more frequent, that one dear fellow I know assures me that Armageddon is round the corner! He is an octogenarian and is convinced he'll enter 'the great tribulation' within our lifetime! Indeed, he's published an attractive book entitled 'All Creatures Do Go To Heaven' and though I confess to finding it heavy to digest in parts, I find much that is enlightening but even more that is very thought provoking. Bernard Coombes is the author and his e-mail is: [petsinheaven@optusnet.com.au](mailto:petsinheaven@optusnet.com.au)

Sadly, during recent decades when the short sighted and less spiritual Anglican churches were happy to get rid of their church schools, our Roman brethren were wise enough and adamant in keeping theirs going. Would to God that the other smaller denominations had all held on to theirs as well! Fancy handing over the souls of our little ones in to the hands of a godless secularist state whose moral priorities – when they exist at all! - are as vastly removed from the Christian ethics of sex, marriage and family life as the moon is from cheese!

## **A Pagan Cross Or A Sacrificial Lamb**

Christianity needs to get its priorities in correct order of priority: the godly and humble Francis Of Assisi needs to be of more influence than the proud and 'scholastic' Thomas Aquinas who denied a soul to all but man! And the emphasis on Jesus being worshipped in the form of a sacrificed herbivorous gentle creature – a lamb – may well need more prominence than that of a 'God Man' nailed to the wood of a tree', especially when one cannot be sure as to the actual form it took!

Enlightened biblical theology will appreciate that whereas Jesus took upon Himself manhood for our salvation, that at the last He appears in the form of a loving, gentle animal. Yes, and in this latter figurative form we find our blest Redeemer worshipped by the four representatives of the animal kingdom: These latter - leading the Sanctus (holy, holy, holy!) before the throne in Heaven – are then followed by twenty-four human representatives: the elders who possibly

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represent both the Old Testament patriarchs and the New Testament apostles. (See Revelation chapters 4 & 5) - It's truly a book shrouded by allegory; and is open to varied interpretations!

Indeed, that a chauvinistically motivated early church father – Irenaeus of Lyons – should have misinterpreted part of the above passages of holy writ so as to pander to the vanity of a fallen humanity was quite unforgivable. He quite wrongly – and in opposition to others of his day - referred to the four animals of this Apocalypse as figurative of the four gospel accounts and, in so doing, revealed that a text taken out of context can end up as a pretext! But then Irenaeus - followed by some later theologians - was hardly any less guilty than were much later interpreters of the Bible in Britain. Indeed, I refer to those recent scholars of the latter part of our past century! In the Book of Revelation the four animals already touched upon are clearly misinterpreted by them as ‘four living creatures’.

But thankfully, I come across one notable exception. It is the modern Catholic version known as: the Jerusalem Bible; and to my mind it outshines all the others. For it not only consistently interprets the Greek word ‘zoon’ for animal - rather than imply a fierce beast ‘therion’ as does the King James - or indeed as a ‘living creature’ as do the contemporary Protestant versions, but its literary style is quite beautiful.

However, I appear to have got sidetracked! What ever our preference, we also need to see the Saviour not only portrayed in the depiction of a man nailed to a cross of one form or another, but at least, equally so as a sacrificed herbivorous animal. For Christ's mission was, and is, to redeem the whole creation; and to have interpreted His redemptive work as confined to a Puritan style elect of humanity – all else to be damned – is, to my mind, a blasphemous distortion of the Gospel we're called to ‘proclaim to every creature under the heavens’.

The Wesley brothers of the Methodist 17<sup>th</sup> century Spiritual Awakening were encircled by drab, legalistic expressions of ‘Reformed’ Puritan theology, which made the self assumed elect feel smug, and left all others untouched and mostly uncared for. Yes, it was in such a spiritually dry and dead state that Methodism began to shine as a heavenly beacon. The Wesley brothers of Epworth believed in and preached a far more embracing message to the masses. Indeed, they even expressed it in song: ‘*For all, for all, my Saviour died. For all, for all, was crucified!*’ Their gospel referred to more than humanity's plight, and their hymns repeatedly exalted ‘the Lamb who was slain’. Little wonder, then, that some branches of Methodism – along with John Wesley himself – began taking up a vegetarian life style. Yes, and long before it became the respectable food option it now holds in people's lives today!

## **Walking The Walk For ‘Humane Research Trust’ Funds**

At Craigiebuckler Parish Church, Aberdeen, there will be the annual animal blessing service on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June at 3 pm, to which all animal lovers are most welcome, along with their pets. The organizer is Mrs Myrna Forrester whom I'm privileged to have known since we initiated this venture. This was way back in the late 1980s and her annual service of animal blessing continues to thrive; respected ministers of the Kirk officiating

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Myrna is also a strong supporter of the Humane Research Trust based in Bramhall, Cheshire. Here is a group of us having recently ‘walked the Walk’ from Rhyl to Prestatyn in order to raise awareness and funds for the same.

## **The Appalling Reasoning Of BBC’s Question Time**

As it recently came from Newcastle Upon Tyne, the city of my birth, I was eager to listen to it a few weeks back; and the muddle headed reasoning that was expressed – both by the panel as well as the audience participants! – made me ashamed of my Nova Castrian background. Admittedly, one audience participant reasoned along the lines of ‘situational ethics’ ‘If, for example, a maniac were about to machine gun a whole host of defenceless people and you spied a gun nearby, would it not be more just to kill the villain in order to stop a blood bath of the defenceless rather than stand back and do nothing?’ Well, quite regrettably, none on the panel seemed to appreciate such a question. Tory spokesman Alan Duncan said he was in a quandary as to whether it could ever be right to restore the death penalty. “He really didn’t know!”. And as for Labour spokeswoman Ruth Kelly, she made it very clear that she could ‘never under any circumstances’ justify taking another’s life. Yes, all the more surprising when the person the specific debate was centred around was none other than the horrendous Ipswich serial killer; yes, of vulnerable and utterly defenceless young women!

But then, the worst of woolly thinking was to follow: a youngish man stood up to proudly affirm that he was a practising Christian. My ears pricked up in admiration; but then he went on to mention the death of Saddam Hussein, and to say it had been a travesty of justice that our nation had not intervened to stop it from being transacted. Well, I thought to myself, ‘what a one sided and nonsensical form of reasoning; but then he is, obviously, only a simple-minded fellow with a heart of misguided compassion. One must make allowances!’

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However, when panellist speakers – such as cabinet speaker Ruth Kelly - are, intellectually, little better at reasoning than Heaven help the future of Britain! I say this because I doubt very much whether any member of that panel would have been vegetarian! Most probably they will have no second thoughts about eating lamb chops, intensively reared birds; and the by product of the latter: battery eggs. Their hearts go out to the vilest of folk while, apparently, they could hardly care a toss for the victims of injustice, be they either animal or human.

## **Crime does not pay? Pull the other leg!**

Such folk of misguided compassion and topsy-turvy priority show nothing but contemptuous indifference towards a serial killer's sadistically murdered victims - plus the latter's distraught and shattered families? They've now created an age in which prisons have been changed in to comfortable residences with often the latest mod cons provided, plus free educational courses and 'keep fit gymnasiums' of the highest quality. I know because I have been shown around some of them!

Yet the 'ignoramuses' running this country's gaols and judicial systems prefer not to see it any other way. There's too much taxpayers money in the kitty *for them* than to substitute the present long sentences in 'holiday camp' style prisons for sharp, severely strict, yet shorter army type 'glass house' or 'boot camp' style forms of correction. Most 'who possess the wisdom of the years' know, full well, that the latter would cost far less and be infinitely more effective. But under a corrupt political regime one can hardly expect common sense to win.

Do not tell me that crime does not pay in Britain today. Under New Labour, it pays very well indeed; but be under no misguided misapprehension, the top beneficiaries and chief drain on the taxpayer, are not so much the residents detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. Are they not surely, the whole – top heavy - parasitical prison and judicial conglomerate? Yes, with a whole host of subsidiaries leeches on to the same!

## **Education & Wisdom Are Frequently Poles Apart**

Indeed, I well remember a group of clergy getting aerated at a dinner table when I leaned in support of restoring capital punishment for premeditated murder. Their verdict was unanimous: "*The answer is in the 10 Commandments: 'Thou shalt not kill!'*"; and I happened to be the only Vegetarian at the table! Most were either Oxford or Cambridge graduates, yet they failed to see that '*Thou shalt not kill*' only referred, in context, to a fellow Israelite. In the same context the Children Of Israel were not only 'supposedly' commanded to kill all ages amongst the enemy, but as part of their dubious worship to ritually slaughter cattle wholesale.

Yes indeed, those who reject a concept of an evolving moral and spiritual progression within the Bible will end up as uncharitable and intolerant as do some Muslims in seeking to obey their Koran; and the ones who always suffer most are herbivorous animals! And take it from me, should any Jews succeed in building another temple on the very site of the mosque of Omar – something a militant group are increasingly keen to do - then Heaven help us all; and, not least the animals to be ritually slaughtered throughout each day. Yet these Israeli Zionists – strongly supported in prayer by many Christian fundamentalists 'of much learning!' – are seeing this as the fulfilling of biblical prophecy. These are taking texts out of contexts; and what is more, though we may have been conditioned to consider Solomon's original temple to

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have been a place of untold beauty, it was 'in practical terms' nothing much better than a smelly slaughterhouse for cattle and birds. Little wonder that incense was constantly burned!

On another subject, there are various levels and degrees of free will. But one thing is sure: without the same a life becomes no more than an automaton, and neither praise nor virtue can be given to such. Yet, such logic appears to be beyond the grasp of ultra conservative clerics known as Calvinists with whom I once briefly studied in Scotland. For myself, I cannot categorize so many pets I've known – never mind humans! – as being void of all choice! Consequently, the following sermon given by my pen friend and kindred spirit in 'Down Under' has proved a source of blessing. I believe it will be a source of blessing to you as well!

## 'Great is Thy Faithfulness

*"Righteousness and justice are the foundations of Your throne; Love and faithfulness go before You."* Psalm 89:14

Well, it is wonderful to see you here this morning with your pets! I know they mean a lot to you, as ours always have to us. We love their trust, their faithfulness, their love, and the special little ways they often reserve just for us with whom they live.

Today is a special day in the year when we remember, not only our pets, but all the animals world-wide, some of which face extinction, frequently because of man's greed. Others are treated with cruelty, such as the bears in places like Asia. Others live in appalling conditions, even here in Australia. If you ever watch the RSPCA television programme, you will know what I mean when I speak of wanton neglect; often because people don't even know what they are doing. We can be grateful for organizations such as the RSPCA, and WIRES, which rescues and cares for injured or distressed native birds and animals.

For centuries, mankind believed that birds and animals had no real intelligence. They could be taught certain things but the general belief was that their behaviour was purely instinctive. Gradually, scientists and others are beginning to realise that birds, animals and even insects have minds that reason. Some years ago I read an article written by a scientist. He said that one day he observed a wasp trying to take a spider it had caught, down into its hole. A stone had fallen in the way of the wasp's hole. The scientist wrote of his astonishment when he observed that the wasp was, in his opinion, not blindly or instinctively trying to move the stone, but calculating how best it could be done!

A few months ago, there was a thought-provoking little article in The Newcastle Herald, written by John von Radowitz. It was headed "Flies Make Up Their Minds To Be Irritating." The article went on to record that scientists have found evidence of free will in fruit flies! It said that if confirmed the discovery might overturn basic assumptions about differences between humans and animals. Some researchers (the article continued) are asserting that the blowfly or wasp that will not leave you alone is not innocently reacting to a biological programme, but is actually *choosing* to be a pest!

Dr George Sugihara, one of the researchers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the university of California said, "The results indicate a mechanism which might be common to many other animals and could form the biological foundation for what we experience as free will." (The research is reported in the online journal PLUS ONE). God created the universe, and His hand is upon it. All creation lives and sings to the tune of its Creator, far beyond what mankind has ever dreamed of, but slowly new facts are emerging to astonish us. The Psalmist gazes in awe upon the immensity of the universe and asks, "*What is man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You care for him?*" (Psalm 8).

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The 18<sup>th</sup> century English poet, William Blake reflected deeply on the seen and unseen world around him. He wrote a beautiful poem called "The Tiger," which marvels at the beauty and power of such a creature. Verse one goes:

*"Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"*

Throughout the ages, mankind has, in awe and amazement, looked upon the world and the universe around him, recording his wonder in word and song, and now science is leading us into new kinds of wonders. I see here none other than the hand of our Creator God. Nothing else explains it or can explain it. Of course that view is not universal. My understanding is based on faith. Not everyone's is.

Let's move on. It is fine to ponder the intelligence of birds, animals and even insects, but there must be more. It would be rather boring if all we could say about the other creatures with whom we share our world was that they had intelligence. Even computers have intelligence!

There must be more, and there is. While not sure about insects, we do know that God has given animals personality. Not only do we know that from our own experience with our own pets, but again science is reaching out. There have been numerous studies done on animals in the wild to confirm it. There was a study on kangaroos some time ago. A mob of kangaroos was followed. All were given names and their habits and activities watched and recorded carefully. It was soon unmistakably clear that each animal had a distinct personality. The results were brought to us via a fascinating TV programme. Other tests done on other animals confirm it. It would seem all animals and birds have personalities that identify them individually.

There is also something beyond personality itself. Intelligence and personality are great, and some believe the animal kingdom is confined to those alone. Here, let me stick out my neck. I believe that animals have a soul. I believe it from the biblical evidence, which I am happy to share with anyone. It all hinges on the Hebrew word Nephesh, which is translated 'breath of life,' which in Hebrew means 'soul.'

First, according to the Book of Genesis, (1:22) God blessed the animals. Dr John H. Sailhamer, writing in "The Expositor's Bible Commentary" says: 'The importance of the blessing in (Genesis 1) verse 28 cannot be overlooked. ... the living creatures have already been blessed on the fifth day (verse 22); thus the author's view of the blessing extends beyond man to the whole of God's living creatures.' An American writer Kit Goodwin points out that in the Old Testament 'soul' is mentioned 244 times. In those 244 cases, there are only four times where a word other than "nephesh" is used to describe 'soul'. Very significantly for our case, Genesis 1:30 has these words: "...and to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the **breath of life** (nephesh in combination with chayyah), I give every green plant for food. And it was so." (NIV).

I'm not prepared to argue the point. I am sure there will be others with compelling reasons for animals' not having souls, but I think the biblical evidence is quite conclusive. I am however quite prepared for others to have their own, possibly contrary, views, and that's OK.

Moving on again, I've had animals all my life and I have loved them all, as I am certain you've loved each of yours. Those in close and loving contact with their animals see in them the highest of noble qualities: patience, devotion, forgiveness, love, loyalty, trust – even grief. They offer a love that is completely selfless and a faithfulness that is boundless. God indeed blessed the animals, and He gave them those peerless qualities. I am captivated by a magpie that lives near us. She trusts me completely and accepts food from time to time, from my hand. Yesterday, she carolled a song, just to me. I felt honoured.

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There are countless tales of faith and love, but I would like to share with you one that you may have heard of – the true story of “Greyfriars Bobby.” Bobby was a Skye terrier, and his owner was an Edinburgh policeman by the name of John Gray. The story is from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The constable patrolled the Edinburgh streets, usually at night, and was accompanied always by his lovely little Skye terrier, Bobby.

Unfortunately, in 1858 John Gray fell ill and died. Among those at his funeral at Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh was his little mate, Bobby. That night, John Gray’s relatives discussed what to do with Bobby, but the little dog had made up his own mind. During the night he slipped his lead and ran back to the cemetery.

The following morning the curator of the cemetery found him lying on his master’s grave and shooed him home. The next morning however, there was Bobby back again, defiantly lying on his master’s grave and was again sent off. The same thing happened again and then again. The graveyard curator, a kind man, took pity on the grieving little animal, lying there in the cold, and brought him some food. That was the start of an amazing saga of faithfulness. Bobby was there every day, for the rest of his life. Fourteen years later, in 1872, he died. The beautiful little dog was buried not far from his master.

The story, however, inspired the people of Edinburgh and beyond.. A statue of Bobby was erected in Edinburgh and can be seen to this day, and I am privileged to say that I myself have seen it. The story of Bobby is not unique; nor are the stories confined to dogs. There are countless tales of animals of all sorts, as well as birds, who have displayed intelligence, as well as peerless love, faith, devotion and loyalty in their interaction with us. Their lives of love and faithfulness remind us of the words of our text: “...*Love and faithfulness go before You.*”

Paul, in our reading from Romans chapter 8, speaks of the Lord’s faithfulness from which nothing can ever separate us; neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation. (Rom 8:38,39). Love and faithfulness are among the highest pinnacles of virtue. God’s love and faithfulness surround us, to touch us and to help us to become more like Him.

God has given us a beautiful world; more beautiful than we can possibly imagine, and as we look about us, and up to the starry firmament, we can see signs of His majesty and power. (Romans 1:20). Look even closer, and there, chasing a ball or barking a greeting or sleeping comfortably on the lounge or curled up on a lap or singing sweetly is a delightful creature, a beautiful, faithful and loving gift from God, Who has placed them in our keeping. May we always honour them, and all creatures great and small.

*For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd: He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rev. 7:17).*

*By The Reverend Anthony Lang Of New South Wales*

## **Age Can Be No Bar To Animal Action**

It is very easy at 78 to take the advice of those who suggest slowing down and leading it to younger generations to take up the cause for animal liberation and welfare. “You’ve done your part Reverend. You now owe it to yourself and your family to spend more time with your dearest and to look after yourself! and “Start fighting for your own needs for a change!” Yes, so goes the kind of advice that others concerned about us, impart so often now that we’re senior citizens! (Incidentally, I reject out of hand the term OAP as insulting and can’t see why ‘the rank and file’ of mature years tolerate it!) Surely it is not how old one is chronologically that counts, as much as

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what ones age is biologically! And – to quote quite a saucy lady of the past who certainly knew the art of longevity! – “It is not the years in the men of my life that has bothered me, but rather the life in those years!” Well yes, I agree with Mae West. But of more relevance, thanks to Christian writer Rebecca Hughes Hall, I’ve learned of a wonderful lady whose lifestyle testifies to age being no barrier to animal activism

At the age of ninety dear Gwen Ware has founded **CARAT**. This means ‘Caring For The Animals Trust’. It is based at Gwen’s home, which is **11, Lower Barn Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 1HY**. Yes, a registered charity which, though having a mere 100 members helps really small groups and private individuals who have difficulty in raising funds for their needs. There are no overheads at CARAT, so Gwen informs me; and consequently, all money that is raised by them goes directly to benefit the animals in Greece. Yes, as I’ve said: this is via helping small groups of animal carers within Greece, as well as folk there who struggle on their own to alleviate the animal suffering which takes place. Gwen’s email is [marieannette@talktalk.net](mailto:marieannette@talktalk.net) Her phone number is 0208 660 6011. And, God Willing, she will soon have her own website. Then may our Good Shepherd prosper this wonderful Lady and her dedicated helpers!

## Supporting The Saintly Tony Moore At Aintree

It was more than a privilege to visit Aintree, not only to vocally and prayerfully protest against the barbaric Grand National but to give support to Tony Moore of FAACE: (photo below) who has done so much to oppose animal cruelty in Spain. Indeed, a mission that resulted in the death of his dear wife Vicki, the results of having been repeatedly tossed by a frenzied bull. An animal that was truly out of its mind due to the goading and stabbing by knives, of ‘church going’ Spaniards. Yes, and quite regrettably: many British holiday makers as well, who so frequently attend these vile and utterly barbaric spectacles,

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Indeed, while other societies appear so often to sit back and receive frequent donations; often awarding themselves with affluent salaries, travelling expenses and most congenial dwellings; stalwarts such as Tony Moore, and his more recent helpmeet live on a comparative pittance. Indeed, such folk are surely not only the salt of the earth but also the salt of the animal activist movement. Indeed, if anyone deserved a medal then it is septuagenarian Tony Moore of Southport. And 'thanks to God!' I say that he has found a most helpful friend in Matilda Mench; for this dear lady not only shares his vision but has also recently published a book on the life of Vicki; and though – through pressure of work - I haven't started on it yet, I sense it's going to be a most inspiring book at bedtime! Below is a photo of a few of us who were trying to prick the consciences of those entering the stadium:

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## Two wonderful people who've recently crossed the Jordan & await us on the other side

The top photo of those below, is of Jackie, a North Wales lady who quietly and unobtrusively joined in protests, could always be relied upon, conveyed true love in her heart, and very sadly died of cancer while comparatively young.

On the photo below that of Dear Jackie, we have a group picture taken at a spiritual retreat in Evesham. Seated to the far right is May (Bocking) of London: past leader, secretary, and main driving force behind the 'Catholic Study Circle For Animal Welfare' (now known as Catholic Concern For Animals). A dear lady whom Doreen and I were so honoured and blest to know!

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The very memory of such folk is a blessing to ones soul; and it makes me at times homesick for that Heavenly Canaan which awaits the righteous. We have no need to fear their parting for surely Our loss is Heaven's gain and they will see The King in all His Glory'

**'Could we but climb where Moses stood, and see that landscape o'er;  
Not Canaan's flood, nor death's dark stream, would fright us from that shore'**

**Rev. Isaac Watts**