

GOOD NEWS FOR ALL CREATION



...AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM
(ISAIAH 11:6)

GOOD NEWS FOR ALL CREATION

Vegetarianism as Christian Stewardship



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TO CHRISTIANS AND NON-CHRISTIANS WHO SEEK THE REALM OF
GOD, A WORLD IN WHICH “THEY SHALL NOT HURT OR DESTROY”

(ISAIAH 11:9)

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INTRODUCTION



THIS BOOK EXPLORES THE reasons why more and more Christians, like us, are finding that vegetarianism is central to our witness of Christian faith and stewardship. Vegetarianism has deepened our Christian faith, and our faith has strengthened our resolve to maintain a vegetarian diet. Our vegetarianism is much more than simply a dietary preference, and we don't see it as a burden or self-sacrifice. Rather, we see our diet as an integral part of our Christian witness, manifesting core values such as love, compassion, and peace. For us, vegetarianism is a gift that makes our lives more uplifting, liberating, and joyful. In addition, as for many vegetarian Christians, the diet symbolically expresses our belief that God plans to reconcile the world to God's original intentions (see Chapter 4).

It is important to note from the outset that most Christian vegetarians do not believe that Jesus himself was a vegetarian, and most do not hold that vegetarianism is a moral obligation for all Christians at all places and at all times. We recognize that, at times, some people must eat meat to survive. However, nearly all Americans today have easy access to a wide range of tasty,

healthy, plant-based foods, a situation that makes meat-eating unnecessary for survival.

For those of you who are already Christian vegetarians, this book also suggests how we might better relate to close family and friends and to society in general. Many Christian vegetarians consider it an act of Christian love to inform people about vegetarianism's benefits, because vegetarianism can improve people's health and add meaning to their lives.

In addition to the issues just discussed, Chapter 1 looks at how vegetarianism relates to the Bible* and Christian tradition. Chapter 2 explores the reasons that many Christians choose vegetarianism as a component of their Christian witness. Chapter 3 proposes that God cares about all victims and opposes victimization. Chapter 4 considers vegetarianism as a form of stewardship that assists God in reconciling all Creation to God's original, peaceful intentions. Chapter 5 discusses challenges for vegetarians living in a meat-eating society. Chapter 6 summarizes our thoughts into what we hope is a coherent conclusion. Appendix A offers advice for dealing with nonvegetarian family and friends. Appendix B suggests strategies for promoting vegetarianism within the Christian community. Appendix C summarizes nutritional basics for vegetarians. Finally, Appendix D provides information on groups, books, magazines, websites, and other resources relevant to Christianity and vegetarianism.

*Throughout, we will use the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. We encourage readers to use their own preferred translations. In general, this will not fundamentally change the passages' meanings or their relevance to our points.



CHRISTIANITY AND DIET

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS LIVE? Every day, we make countless decisions that impact the lives of fellow humans, non-human creatures, and the integrity of the world around us. Many of us give little thought to these choices, using our own personal habits and our culture's customs to guide our lives. Habit and custom yield comfortable answers that often feel right and are rarely criticized by others.

Christianity challenges us to explore all our important choices and question whether they accord with God's will. Certain actions that are legally permitted and sanctioned by religious authorities may not be right, as all of us know only too well. Yet how can Christians discern what God wants us to do? Christians look to the Bible, of course. We believe that a prayerful and open-hearted consideration of Scripture lends strong support for plant-based diets.

The Bible

The Bible is God's handbook for our lives. Yet Christians sometimes find that the Bible does not provide clear and unambiguous guidance. We are required to read, consider our present situation, and pray about how to proceed.

Over time, and perhaps with the aid of the Holy Spirit, people have gained greater understanding of God's will on an array of controversial issues. Faithful Christians once believed that the Bible endorsed slavery and cited passages in Genesis 9, Titus 2, and 1 Peter for support. Today, however, Christians uniformly agree that slavery violates fundamental biblical principles of compassion, mercy, and justice.

Remaining mindful of the difficulties of biblical interpretation and our human limitations, we must cautiously inquire about God's will in all matters, including diet. The Bible does not mandate that all people must abstain from eating animals. There are many sections that mention people eating animals without condemnation. In addition, Luke 24:43 depicts Jesus eating fish.¹

Of course, life in biblical times was difficult, and food was sometimes scarce. Many people would have found abstinence from meat a risky practice, particularly those who traditionally relied on meat for sustenance, such as nomadic people and those living near water. For example, many ancient Hebrews were nomadic shepherds and would have likely found vegetarianism dangerous during times of food scarcity.

That said, even if eating meat is not inherently sinful, its contribution to serious world problems *today* raises ethical concerns

for all Christians. As we will see in this book, diets centered on meat contribute to higher levels of pollution, harm our bodies, support global poverty, and lead to horrendous treatment of God's creatures.

But what does the Bible say about vegetarianism? The term "vegetarian" was coined about 200 years ago,² but the Bible describes the diet as God's first choice for human beings, even before the advent of intensive or "factory" farming and all the horrors that the meat industry supports today. Indeed, Genesis depicts the Garden of Eden as wholly nonviolent, with God instructing Adam and all animals to eat a vegetarian diet: "And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed . . . and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and . . . everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food' " (1:29–30). God then reviews this vegetarian Creation and finds it "very good" (1:31).

We agree with the Rev. Dr. Andrew Linzey that the Bible teaches us that Creation is for God and not, as some might assert, for humans.³ It is true that Genesis 1:28 states, "God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" Yet, the very next verse tells humankind to eat only plant matter. Consequently, we understand humankind's "dominion" to be a sacred responsibility. Humans are called to be good stewards of God's Creation, protecting and nourishing the earth and its inhabitants. Whatever God intended, we don't see how the Bible can support a notion that "dominion" includes oppression.

Genesis 2 describes humans and animals as having mutually beneficial relationships. Genesis 2:18–19 relates, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’ ” and God then created animals. According to this passage, animals were made as Adam’s companions and helpers, not his food.

However, after God expelled Adam and Eve from Eden, food was no longer readily available. Certain descendants of Adam may have believed they needed to eat whatever was available, including animals. Yet it was only after the Flood that the Bible actually describes God explicitly granting Noah permission to consume flesh. Of course, immediately following the Flood, there was limited vegetation, and Noah’s family may have needed to eat flesh. While Genesis 9:2–4 relates Noah’s having permission to eat animals, it does not require that all Noah’s descendants eat meat. Interestingly, the Bible states that humans and animals will henceforth live in enmity, with conflict and hatred between God’s creatures. This is a heavy price to pay for meat-eating, and many vegetarians are thankful that their diet gives them a greater sense of peace and communion with animals and the rest of God’s Creation.

Importantly, the Bible relates five times that God made a covenant with animals, as well as humans, not to deliver another Flood (Genesis 9:8–17). The Rev. J. R. Hyland notes that the Hebrews used repetition to emphasize a point, in this case God’s concern for all living creatures.⁴

During this “middle age,” between the time of the Garden of Eden and the end of time, harsh living has made it appear necessary for humans to exploit animals for labor and/or food.

Apparently, the ancient Hebrews sometimes could not avoid harming animals, but their Scriptures and traditions required minimizing pain and forbade cruelty. For example, kosher slaughter prevented the common practice of the time before refrigeration of cutting off an animal's limb, packing the wound, and keeping the animal alive, to prolong the animal's value as a meat source. Kosher slaughter, God's mandate in the days before technology that allowed animals to be stunned before slaughter, involves a single cut of the carotid arteries in the neck and requires that the animal be dead before any of her flesh is consumed. If the cut does not produce rapid death, or if the knife's blade has a nick, the animal has suffered and the meat is inedible for human consumption. Jewish law also requires helping injured, hungry, or thirsty animals, even on the Sabbath.⁵

One may discern from the Bible several possible reasons that God cares about animals, but one likely explanation has largely been lost in translation. The Hebrew Scriptures describe humans and animals as having the same essence: *nephesh*. Yet translators in Genesis have called *nephesh* "soul" (King James Version) or "being" (Revised Standard Version) for humans (2:7) and "creature" for animals (2:19, KJV and RSV). The author of Ecclesiastes, recognizing the similar essence of humans and animals, expressed the common fate of all living beings: "All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?" (3:20–21)

Humans and animals' both being *nephesh* may account for animals' presence in eternity (Revelation 5:13) and the Bible's affirmation that God preserves animals (Psalm 36:6; Ephesians

1:10; Colossians 1:20). The Bible does not forbid animal exploitation in all circumstances, but it does encourage people to show compassion and concern for animals. Indeed, the Bible states that God created Adam in God's own image. "Created in God's image" surely does not refer to physical attributes, but instead appears to mean that humans have the capacity to reflect God's love and compassion.

In Genesis 1–2, no creature harmed another in the Garden of Eden, and the Bible reminds us later that God's ideal is nonviolent and vegetarian. Isaiah prophesies a return to an Eden-like existence when the Messiah comes. All animals in this perfect world will again be vegetarian, as Isaiah writes, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them . . . and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (11:6–7, 9).

Hosea, speaking for God, relates a similar peaceful vision: "I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground, and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety" (2:18). Importantly, Hosea states that God made this covenant of peace with all creatures, as well as humans. Isaiah's and Hosea's images are similar to that of Revelation's author, who envisions that, at the end of time, heaven will descend to earth and "death will be no more" (21:4).

Again, we don't think that the Bible unequivocally opposes

eating animals or using animals in other ways. The Bible emphasizes the importance of human life, and some people in some times or regions may have required meat for sustenance. Yet Christians in the West consume animals merely to satisfy a taste preference, and this seems to us to conflict with biblical ideals. No doubt, one may interpret individual verses in self-serving ways, just as slave owners once turned to certain biblical verses for support. But our call to be good stewards of God's Creation is a recurrent biblical theme that favors following a vegetarian diet, if at all possible.

Christian Tradition

Christian tradition has evolved over 2,000 years in response to a wide range of political, social, and historical forces. For example, in the first centuries after Jesus' death, highly diverse sects interpreted Jesus' ministry differently. The early church leaders dedicated much effort to denouncing "heresies" of competing sects; as a result, church traditions and teachings have reflected, in part, early controversies.⁶

How does Christian tradition inform diet? For the past 1,900 years, most Christians have eaten meat, but interestingly, many of the early Christians were vegetarians. Several early Christian groups, including the Jewish Christians, were vegetarian.⁷ The Jewish Christians, who were among Jesus' first followers, received Jesus' ministry as encouraging abstinence from meat. Subsequent Jewish Christian sects of the first centuries of the common era (CE), including the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Elcha-

saites, and Ossaeans, continued to espouse vegetarianism. Many Gnostics and Gnostic groups, such as the Manicheans, were also vegetarian.

James (Jesus' brother) was widely recognized as vegetarian, and ancient sources also describe Matthew and all the apostles as abstaining from flesh.⁸ Many early church leaders practiced vegetarianism, including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Arnobius, the Desert Fathers, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Tertullian.⁹ St. Augustine, who did not believe that Christianity mandated vegetarianism, acknowledged in the fourth century that Christian vegetarians were "without number"¹⁰ indicating widespread vegetarianism.

In the Middle Ages, the Bogomils, who resembled the earlier Manicheans, were also vegetarian. Similarly, the Albigensians advocated vegetarianism as an ideal.¹¹

More recently, several Christian leaders have adopted and/or encouraged vegetarianism, including John Wesley (founder of the Methodists), Ellen G. White (a founder of Seventh-Day Adventism), William and Catherine Booth (cofounders of the Salvation Army), and Albert Schweitzer. In the nineteenth century, members of the Bible Christian sect established the first vegetarian groups in England and the United States. Among popular figures, Christian vegetarians have included the author Leo Tolstoy, health advocates Dr. John H. Kellogg (creator of corn flakes) and Sylvester Graham (creator of graham crackers), and the Rev. Fred Rogers (best known for the TV show *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*).

Diet has always been a contentious issue among Christians. Paul's letter to the Romans (14:1–2, 19–21) in particular reflects

tensions between his meat-eating Gentile followers and the vegetarian Jewish Christians.¹² Eventually, a nonvegetarian Catholic Church, with the assistance of the Roman Empire, dominated Christendom. The Church frequently declared that vegetarianism, once an early Christian ideal, was now a heresy. In fact, during the Church's assault on the Albigensians, soldiers identified "heretics" as those who refused to kill and eat animals.¹³ Of course, the Catholic Church has not uniformly opposed vegetarianism. Several of its orders have required or encouraged vegetarianism, including the Benedictines, Carthusians, Carmelites, Dominicans, and Trappists.

An important Christian tradition is to avoid overindulgence. Faith and good works are much more important than satisfying the desires of the flesh. Paul wrote, "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Paul did not advocate vegetarianism in general, but he did tell the Roman church members that "it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Romans 14:21). Similarly, Paul wrote, "Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall" (1 Corinthians 8:13).



2

VEGETARIANISM: GOOD NEWS FOR CREATION

VEGETARIAN CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT vegetarianism expresses core Christian principles such as concern for human health and the environment, compassion for other people, and mercy toward all who suffer. We'd like to explore each of these in turn, looking at the biblical ideal, and then discuss how a vegetarian diet is one very good way of striving toward that ideal.

Good News for Human Health

The apostle Paul taught that we should take care of our bodies, which are sacred gifts from God. He wrote to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19) Yet our bodies are ill-suited to manage the huge quantities of meat that many people consume, such as three servings a day, and modern animal agriculture produces particularly unhealthy

foods. Numerous studies have shown that meat-based diets contribute to heart disease, cancer, and several other diseases.

Heart Disease

Vegetarianism substantially reduces the risk of heart disease in several ways.¹ The amount of cholesterol in the blood correlates strongly with heart disease,² and diets heavily laden with cholesterol and saturated fat elevate cholesterol.³ Even the leanest meat is high in cholesterol and saturated fat.⁴ The Framingham Study, the longest-running clinical study in medical history, found that coronary artery disease was rare among people with cholesterol less than 150 mg/dL.⁵

In addition, free radicals contribute to clogging of the arteries that feed the heart, brain, and other organs. Iron, which is concentrated in animal flesh, promotes free radical formation. Vegetables contain a wide range of free radical scavengers (often called antioxidants) that eliminate free radicals. There is a far greater range of free radical scavengers in natural plant foods than in multivitamins.⁶

The relative importance of cholesterol, free radicals, and other factors in heart disease is not clear. However, Dr. Dean Ornish found that a low-fat vegetarian diet combined with moderate exercise, stress management, smoking cessation, and group support actually reverses obstruction of arteries that serve the heart.⁷ Similarly, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr., of the Cleveland Clinic followed 18 patients with known coronary artery disease who lowered their cholesterol to less than 150 mg/dL with a low-fat plant-based diet and, if needed, medications. None had a single heart attack during 12 years of follow-up.⁸ The

Cornell/China Project found that rural Chinese, who eat less animal fat and protein and derive the bulk of their nutrition from plant sources, have far less heart disease mortality than Americans. In people under 65 years old, heart disease mortality is 16.7 times greater among American men than rural Chinese men, and 5.6 times greater among American women than rural Chinese women. Rural Chinese typically have cholesterol levels from 90 to 175, while nonvegetarian Americans with cholesterol levels below 180 are uncommon.⁹ Dr. T. Colin Campbell, a principal investigator of the Cornell/China project, has concluded that both animal protein and animal fat contribute substantially to heart disease.¹⁰

Cancer

By several mechanisms, meat and other animal products are also associated with breast, colon, and other types of cancers.¹¹ Cooked meat contains large quantities of heterocyclic amines, which cause mutations that lead to cancer.¹² Breast cancer studies have dramatically shown the impact of Western lifestyles on health. Japanese women have a much lower breast cancer rate than American women, which is likely related to the Japanese diet's having a much lower percentage of calories from fat.¹³ Countries with higher fat intakes, particularly animal fat, have higher rates of breast cancer.¹⁴ In Japan, affluent women, who consume much more flesh, have an 8.5 times greater risk of breast cancer than women with low incomes.¹⁵ In fact, as Japanese lifestyles and diets have "westernized," rates of cancer of the lung, mouth, throat, breast, ovary, uterus, prostate, pancreas, and colon have continued to rise.¹⁶

Obesity and Diabetes

Vegetarians have reduced rates of obesity and diabetes.¹⁷ While fat in food is converted to fat in our bodies with about 97 percent efficiency, converting carbohydrates to fat consumes about 24 percent of the carbohydrates' energy content. Fiber in grains and fructose sugar in fruits help people feel full, which discourages overeating.¹⁸ In study after study, vegetarians are shown to weigh less and have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight than their meat-eating peers. On the other hand, the Atkins diet, which has been around since the 1970s, has never been subjected to a long-term study, perhaps because Atkins recognized that his diet would not work over the long term. Like all fad diets, and unlike healthy long-term eating strategies, people on the Atkins diet almost always regain the lost weight. In addition, the Atkins diet and other such high-protein, high-fat, low-carbohydrate diets predispose those who follow them to heart and kidney disease, gout, and constipation. In addition, milk consumption has been linked to juvenile-onset diabetes,¹⁹ and pediatricians Dr. Benjamin Spock and Dr. Charles Attwood are among many physicians and nutritionists who, for several reasons, have discouraged dairy consumption among children.²⁰

Osteoporosis

Animal protein intake strongly correlates with bone loss and risk of hip fracture, while non-animal foods protect the bones.²¹ Animal proteins are heavily laden with sulfur-containing amino acids, which metabolize to sulfuric acid and acidify the blood. The body leaches calcium from bones to neutralize the acid, weakening the bones. In addition, acidic blood directly stimu-

lates cells that break down bone and inhibits cells that make bone.²² In contrast, vegetables and fruits contain base precursors, not found in animal foods, that neutralize acids and protect bones.²³ Numerous studies have shown that reduced animal protein and increased vegetable protein help protect bones.²⁴ Harvard Medical School's Nurse's Health Study of 77,761 women who were followed for 12 years found that milk consumption does not reduce the risk of bone fractures; in fact, the data suggested that milk consumption may increase fracture risk.²⁵ An *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* review of every study on the issue since 1985 found conflicting evidence regarding dairy's effects on bone health and concluded, "without more well-controlled studies, the body of scientific evidence appears inadequate to support a recommendation for daily intake of dairy foods to promote bone health in the general US population."²⁶

Other Health Concerns

The food industry laces animals' feed and water with antibiotics, including penicillin, inorganic arsenic (the most toxic form of arsenic), and erythromycin. The antibiotics promote growth by reducing the amount of bacteria in animals' intestines and by preventing infection, to which crowded, stressed animals are predisposed. In addition to other effects (e.g., arsenic is carcinogenic), routine antibiotic use leads to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, thereby reducing antibiotics' effectiveness when treating people suffering from food poisoning or other infectious diseases.²⁷ Thoroughly cooking meat kills bacteria, but also raises the concentration of cancer-causing heterocyclic amines.²⁸

The animal agriculture industry also continues to feed animals

ground-up carcasses—a practice that appears to be responsible for new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human equivalent of “mad cow disease.” This devastating condition has killed more than 140 people in Europe and also threatens Americans.²⁹ The U.S. and Canada have ignored the principal World Health Organization recommendations to prevent mad cow disease—recommendations that are legally required in Japan and throughout Europe—with the result that at least one infected cow’s flesh has entered the American food supply.³⁰ Even today, farmers feed cow intestines, brains, and other parts humans won’t eat to chickens and then feed chicken parts back to cows.³¹ Intensive animal agriculture has also promoted the spread of deadly *E. coli* 0157:H7.³² Overall, approximately 5,000 people die of food borne diseases in the United States each year,³³ and more than two thirds of food poisoning has animal sources.³⁴ In addition, many food poisoning cases traced to plant consumption actually involve plants contaminated by animal feces or flesh.

To increase growth and productivity, farmers give hormones to animals. Widely used in the United States, these hormones are known to cause several types of cancer and reproductive dysfunction in humans. While U.S. farmers claim that using hormones to promote growth is safe, the European Union has prohibited this practice since 1995.³⁵

Many people have turned to fish, which have health-promoting omega-3 fatty acids. However, pollution of the waterways has increased the dangers of eating fish. For example, much of the salmon consumed today is from fish farms, which harbor high levels of organochlorides, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Researchers have linked these compounds to

cancer, developmental defects, and stunted intelligence.³⁶ As discussed in Appendix C, there are healthy plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Overall, vegetarianism correlates with longevity. When taken together, a vegetarian diet, exercise, low body mass index, abstinence from smoking, and hormone replacement therapy (among postmenopausal women) account for an increased life expectancy of up to ten years.³⁷

Is Vegetarianism Natural?

It is true that humans are able to digest flesh. It is also likely that our early ancestors consumed some meat. However, it is also true that our anatomy much more strongly resembles that of plant-eating creatures. For example, like herbivores (but unlike carnivores), our colons are long and complex (not simple and short) and our intestines are ten to eleven times longer than our bodies (not three to six times longer).³⁸ Because of our long gastrointestinal systems, meat decays as it moves slowly through our gut, exposing us to meat's harmful by-products. Also, those of us who consume larger quantities of meat tend to consume less fiber, because meat contains no fiber. Fiber is vital to intestinal health, and people in meat-eating cultures have high rates of diseases of the colon, including cancer and diverticulitis. In addition, lack of fiber leads to hard stools and straining during bowel movements. This damages the valves in veins that drain blood from the body's lower half, predisposing the individual to hemorrhoids, varicose veins, and deep vein thromboses.³⁹

Human anatomy and physiology resemble herbivores in many other ways. Our saliva contains digestive enzymes (unlike carni-

vores); our dental incisors are broad, flattened, and spade-shaped (not short and pointed); our canine teeth are short and blunted (not long, sharp, and curved); our molars are flattened with nodular cusps (not sharp blades like many carnivores); and our nails are flattened (not sharp claws). Of course, most humans have to cook most flesh to make it tender enough to chew and to kill the bacteria that might otherwise kill us.

Is Meat Necessary for Health?

Misinformation from the animal agricultural industry and their friends in government has convinced many people that animal products are necessary for human health. One problem is that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is charged with the conflicting responsibilities of promoting American agricultural products and making dietary recommendations. The USDA is further compromised by industry influence. U.S. Circuit Judge James Robertson ruled that the USDA violated federal law by withholding documents revealing bias among its committee charged with drafting the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000*. The committee was supposed to be unbiased, but six of the eleven committee members actually had links to the meat, egg, or dairy industries.⁴⁰

Despite its biases, the USDA has recognized that vegetarian diets can be not only healthful, but better for human health than diets that include meat.⁴¹ The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the Dieticians of Canada have endorsed vegetarian diets even more emphatically.⁴² In their report, they found, “Vegetarians have been reported to have lower body mass indices than nonvegetarians, as well as lower rates of death of



ischemic heart disease; vegetarians also show lower blood cholesterol levels; lower blood pressure; and lower rates of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and prostate and colon cancer.” They concluded, “appropriately planned vegetarian diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.”⁴³ Indeed, millions of healthy, lifelong vegetarians demonstrate that humans can thrive on vegetarian diets.

Good News for the World’s Hungry

Jesus preached, “For I was hungry and you gave me food . . . as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:35, 40). While approximately 1.1 billion of the world’s people are considered overweight, an equal number are underfed and malnourished.⁴⁴ Tens of millions die annually

from starvation or disease related to malnutrition, mostly children. Yet worldwide in 1998, 37 percent of all harvested grain was fed to animals being raised for slaughter; in the United States that figure was 66 percent.⁴⁵ Meat wastes between 66 and 92 percent of grains' proteins and calories.⁴⁶ While political and social factors significantly impact world hunger, meat-based diets only contribute to the problem.⁴⁷

Some people despair that the problem of world hunger is so great that our efforts seem pointless. Yet Jesus looked favorably upon the Good Samaritan, who rescued one victim in a world filled with other victims of violence and injustice. When asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37–40). This accords with 1 John 4:8, which says, "God is love." Love includes addressing the desperate needs of our neighbors, as best we can. Many people, usually through no fault of their own, struggle to feed themselves and their families. Even if eating meat had no effect on world hunger, there would remain something obscene about eating meat when so many people are chronically hungry and malnourished. A plant-based diet, similar to that consumed by our less fortunate brothers and sisters, helps put us in sympathy with hungry people and helps remind us to work for ways to relieve their plight. Saying grace before a simple vegetarian meal acknowledges that we are grateful for having food to eat.

It is ironic that vegetarians are often accused of caring more

about animals than humans, even though they encourage a diet that feeds humans, not animals. Those who assert “Humans come first” should choose to eat lower on the food chain. The Worldwatch Institute, an environmental think tank, explains, “Grain is used much more efficiently when consumed directly by humans. Meat production depends on feeding nearly 40 percent of the world’s grains to animals, creating competition for grain between affluent meat-eaters and the world’s poor.”⁴⁸

Good News for Animals

The Bible states, “The righteous man has regard for the life of his beast” (Proverbs 12:10), and Jesus’ central message was one of mercy and compassion. At one point Jesus compared his love for humanity to a hen’s love for her brood (Luke 13:34). Most Christians will agree that cruelty to animals is not just immoral but also unchristian, yet many people go to great lengths to deny the suffering of farmed animals, who are also God’s creatures.

Indeed, even though a Gallup poll in 2003 found that 96 percent of U.S. citizens, most of whom are Christian, oppose cruelty to animals, the U.S. meat industry treats animals with complete disregard for their God-given needs and desires. Animals on farms are exempted from even the very few protections granted other animals by the Animal Welfare Act, and most states exempt “standard agricultural practices” from animal cruelty statutes.⁴⁹

God created every animal with needs, wants, and desires. God designed pigs to root around in the soil, play with each other, and take mud baths. God designed chickens to make nests, lay

eggs, and raise their chicks. God designed all animals with a desire for sunlight, fresh air, fresh water, and so on, and he designed all animals to grow at a rate that doesn't tax their limbs and organs.

All of these things are denied to animals who are turned into food by the meat industries. Scientists are playing God by manipulating animals to grow so quickly that their hearts, lungs, and limbs can't keep up. Farmers refuse animals everything natural as they pack them into sheds full of excrement. In sum, God's will is thwarted completely by the industries that have decided that they know better than God how God's creatures should live and grow.

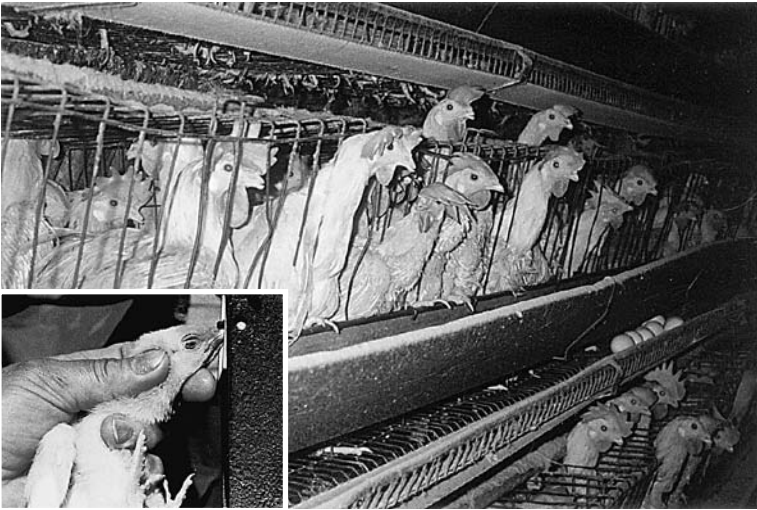
The trade magazine *Hog Farm Management* sums up the industry's attitude: "Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory."⁵⁰ Indeed, Oregon State University Professor of Animal Agriculture Peter Cheeke has acknowledged:

Most people who eat meat don't think too deeply about all the processes involved in converting a living animal to meat on their plate. . . . In my opinion, if most urban meat-eaters were to visit an industrial broiler house, to see how the birds are raised, . . . they would not be impressed and some, perhaps many of them would swear off eating chicken and perhaps all meat. For modern animal agriculture, the less the consumer knows about what's happening before the meat hits the plate, the better. If true, is this an ethical situation? Should we [in animal agriculture] be reluctant to let people know what really goes on, because we're not really proud of it and concerned that it might turn them to vegetarianism?⁵¹

Although animal agriculture industry representatives routinely assure the public that farmers must maintain humane standards or else lose money to death and disease, in fact modern veterinary medicine, particularly routine use of antibiotics, helps prevent losses that would otherwise result from the highly abusive environments that typify modern farms. Furthermore, farmers consider disease and mortality rates acceptable as long as productivity increases sufficiently to outweigh death losses. As Dr. Bernard Rollin from Colorado State University has pointed out, “chickens are cheap, cages are expensive.”⁵² Finally, since the USDA will certify meat for human consumption even if the animal arrives at the slaughterhouse with broken wings and bones or if the carcass has wounds filled with pus and oozing blood or infectious matter, the industry only has to keep the animals alive, not healthy, until slaughter.

Let’s talk specifics. All of the issues discussed below come from industry sources. Everything described is the industry standard. Although the industry claims that it “cares” about animal welfare, it will not dispute any of the facts and figures mentioned below, because they are all fully documented and based on the industry itself. It’s an odd sort of care you’ll read about below, far from the care offered by the Good Shepherd, who will lay down his life for his sheep. And of course, all of this is abuse beyond simply denying to God’s creatures everything that God designed them to be and to do.

Even though most U.S. citizens strongly oppose cruelty to animals, Americans are causing more animals to suffer and die than ever before. Annually, the U.S. food industry slaughters approximately 10 billion farmed animals—each one with desires, feel-



Egg-laying hens in battery cages. Inset: chick beak-searing.

ings, and, we believe, a spark of life coming from God. Before they die, the vast majority of the animals live in misery—approximately 98 percent of them in severely cramped confinement on “factory farms.”⁵³ Examples of animal suffering include:

1. The roughly 300 million egg-laying hens currently living in the United States spend their lives in cages so small that they can't spread even one wing. The wire mesh damages their feet. The filthy air is saturated with ammonia from the hens' feces, and the ammonia hurts their lungs and eyes. Farmers sear off the end of each bird's beak—without pain relief—because otherwise the stressed and crowded birds would injure and kill each other. When the hens' bodies stop making enough eggs, producers subject the hens to a forced molt to shock the animals' bodies into one more laying cycle. For

up to 14 days, they are denied all food. The starvation and stress kill 5 to 10 percent of them. Despite this high mortality, the forced molting boosts profits. Farmers slaughter the hens when the hens' egg-laying permanently declines.

2. Turkeys and chickens raised for meat also suffer from severe crowding, and turkeys are subjected to painful procedures such as partial beak and toe amputation without pain relief.⁵⁴ Farmers receive many chicks via the U.S. Postal Service, and up to 30 percent (millions annually) die in transport. Since chicks are cheap and their suffering has no economic cost, mail service is less costly than more humane alternatives.⁵⁵ Farmers crowd up to 30,000 chickens in enclosed sheds equipped with automatic feeders and waterers. Chickens and turkeys, who are selectively bred for excessive muscle growth, develop painful lameness and suffer from lung collapse, heart failure, and crippling leg conditions. Even though chickens are sent to slaughter at six to seven weeks of life, about 5 percent die during this period, primarily because their bodies grow too quickly for their limbs and organs. Turkeys are so obese that they are often unable to stand and are forced to sit in their own waste, which predisposes them to diseases. Typically, there is little ventilation, and the droppings create an air thick with ammonia, dust, and bacteria.

3. Farmers castrate calves, pigs, and lambs without pain relief. Typically, farmers cut open the pigs' scrotums and cut or pull out the testicles. Branding steers, also done without pain relief, inflicts a third-degree burn. In addition, farmers scoop

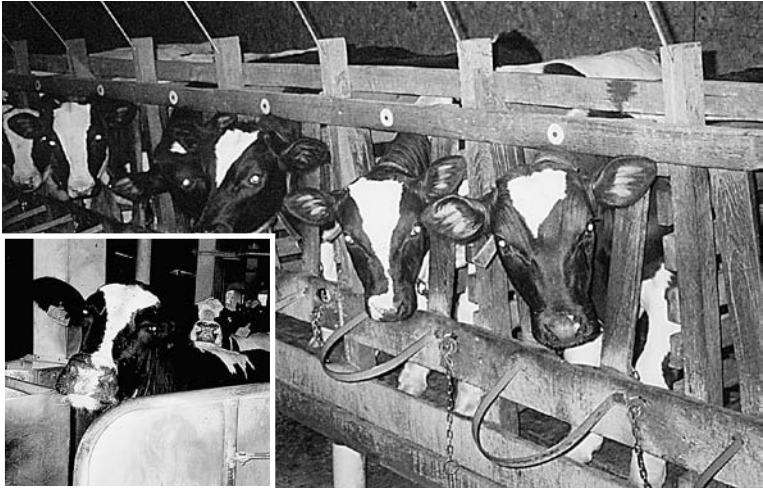


Factory-farmed pigs confined to metal and concrete pens (left), gestation crates (top right), and farrowing stalls (bottom right).

out or cut off the horns of calves without applying painkillers.⁵⁶

4. Pigs react to the stress of severe crowding with pathological behaviors such as tail biting. Rather than alleviate the conditions that prompt destructive behaviors, farmers simply cut off pigs' tails, again without pain relief. For easy identification, farmers also cut off parts of pigs' ears. Farmers impregnate sows repeatedly to maximize the number of piglets born. Sows are confined for years in narrow and barren stalls that don't allow them even to turn around, and the hard floors hurt their feet and joints. A similar crate keeps them completely immobile for weeks while nursing.⁵⁷

5. Cows farmed for milk suffer from any array of diseases and



Crated calves raised for veal. Inset: Cows in a milking parlor.

problems, including hoof rot, udder infections, and more. While in nature cows would nurse their young throughout the day, because cows are hooked up to machines two or three times per day and pumped dry, about one third of dairy cows have udder infections. Added bovine growth hormone, which stimulates milk production, worsens these problems. The cows are permitted to nurse their young for less than one day—just long enough to get the mother’s colostrum—and mother and calf both bellow after the farmers separate them. Most male calves are either slaughtered immediately or raised for “special-fed veal.”

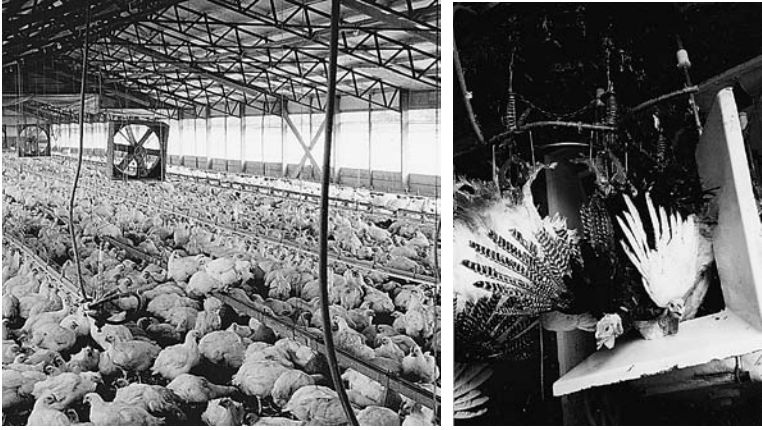
6. Farmers feed calves raised for veal an iron-deficient diet so that the calves’ flesh will stay pale and white—the color consumers expect. The calves become anemic, weak, and prone



Turkeys being transported to slaughter.

to infection. To prevent muscle development (in other words, to keep the calves' flesh tender), producers also confine the calves to crates less than two feet wide—so narrow that the calves can't turn around or even lie down comfortably. Denied their natural desires to suckle and play, they often engage in neurotic behaviors such as sucking the boards of crates and tongue-rolling.⁵⁸

7. Many animals suffer and die en route to slaughter. According to the industry, each year 400,000 pigs arrive at slaughter unable to walk off the trucks, and 100,000 arrive dead.⁵⁹ One study found that 29 percent of "spent" hens had freshly broken bones prior to preslaughter stunning.⁶⁰ This is not a problem for producers, because spent hens yield poor quality meat, which is chopped up into fine pieces and used primarily for chicken soup or animal feed. Transporters pack ani-



*Left: Inside a “broiler house,” where chickens are raised for meat.
Right: Turkeys entering a slaughterhouse.*

mals tightly together, deny them all food and water, and expose them to extremes of weather.

8. Slaughterhouse workers “process” animals with maximum speed, resulting in rough, careless treatment. Slaughterhouse workers use whips and electric prods to move the killing line forward, because the animals are terrified by the sights and smells of slaughter.⁶¹ Gail Eisnitz has reported widespread cruelty such as skinning cows alive and drowning conscious pigs in scalding hot water (for hair removal).⁶² Chickens have the worst experience of all: They are snapped into metal shackles by their often-broken legs, their throats are slit open, and they’re immersed in scalding hot water (for feather removal), often enduring all of this while they are fully conscious.

While the number of animals who suffer and die on farms is

staggering, the number of fish consumed worldwide appears to be far greater. Each year, fishers remove 86 million tons (172 billion pounds) of fish from the oceans alone,⁶³ and this does not include “by-catch”—discarded, commercially undesirable fish and other marine creatures. In the oceans, nets catch most fish. After struggling for hours or days, often suffering severe flesh damage, fish usually die from rapid decompression that ruptures their air bladders or from suffocation on ships’ decks.⁶⁴ Fish surely suffer when caught by anglers, because their mouths and lips are richly endowed with pain receptors. A hooked fish typically pulls against the hook and line, damaging sensitive tissues. Gradually, the fish suffers oxygen deprivation as the angler “plays” the doomed creature. Fish farms, like those confining birds and mammals, crowd the fish together, causing oxygen deprivation and parasitic, bacterial, and viral infections.⁶⁵

Author Carol Adams has noted that every time you make a purchase, you make a statement. You are telling producers, “I approve. Do it again.”⁶⁶ Since the average American consumes about four thousand animals from farms in a lifetime, a decision to abstain from animal flesh is good news for God’s creatures.

Good News for the Environment

Genesis describes how God reviewed the entire Creation and declared it “very good” (1:31). Then, God instructed Adam to “till and keep” the garden (2:15), not to exploit it. According to the Bible, God laid out a plan for keeping the earth and its resources fruitful and bounteous by ordaining a host of protective laws. Chief among these laws were the stipulations for the Sab-

bath and the Jubilee years, which are set aside as times of regeneration for animals and the earth (Leviticus 25). In the book of Leviticus, God's commands are made even clearer when we are told that all Creation belongs to God and that we are simply caretakers of Creation. It says explicitly that humans are travelers in borrowed bodies and on a borrowed planet (Leviticus 25:23). We are to treat our bodies and the earth with respect and care.

Similarly, Paul wrote, "All things were created through him [Christ/God] and for him" (Colossians 1:16). This accords with the Psalmist, who wrote, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). Modern animal agriculture, however, has proven harmful to the environment. Simply put, raising crops to feed animals is an inefficient and vastly polluting way of feeding ourselves, and it seems to us to violate humankind's sacred task to care for God's Creation.

Rainforests

Animal agriculture is a major force behind projects to clear forests and drain wetlands. These activities dramatically change ecosystems, resulting in ecological imbalances and a high rate of species extinctions. Before humans existed, an estimated one to three plant and animal species became extinct each year. Scientists estimate that now at least one thousand species become extinct annually.⁶⁷

Between 1960 and 1990, one fifth of the world's tropical forest cover was lost, largely to clear land for cattle grazing in order to export beef to the United States and Europe.⁶⁸ From 1985 to 1990 alone, an estimated 210 million acres of tropical forests were cut or cleared⁶⁹—an area nearly the size of Texas and Okla-



homa combined. Farming tropical rainforests quickly depletes the nutrient-weak soil and renders it essentially infertile. When farmers remove the trees to clear the land, they deprive the soil of deep roots that, since trees regulate water storage and release, means an increase in topsoil depletion, flooding, and mudslides.⁷⁰ Denuding tropical rainforests also hastens global warming⁷¹ and alters weather patterns so that destructive storms occur more frequently.⁷² While wealthy nations or landowners plunder the rainforests, regional poverty remains widespread.

Soil Erosion

Intensive agriculture, formed in large part to satisfy the international market for meat, degrades soils throughout the world. Worldwide, topsoil erosion greatly exceeds soil reconstitution, and this is turning 15 million acres infertile each year.⁷³ A leading cause of topsoil erosion in the United States is monoculture

of corn and soybeans for pig and chicken feed.⁷⁴ The Bible calls for Sabbath years for the land, which is good ecological advice. However, farmers never allow the land to rejuvenate. Crop rotation would help prevent soil erosion, allow nutrients to replenish themselves naturally, and help resist destruction by insects and infectious organisms, but intensive monoculture often provides greater short-term yields. As crops become increasingly vulnerable, many farmers seek genetically modified strains, but these new entities pose significant risks to the environment and human populations.⁷⁵

Many people argue that we need intensive agriculture to feed the world's hungry. Yet as discussed above, hunger does not reflect the world's agricultural production, which is more than sufficient to feed all people. The problem is food distribution, including the fact that farmed animals consume much of the world's harvest.

Resource Depletion

Animals, like humans, expend the vast majority of the calories they consume simply existing, which is why raising animals for food in North America requires 70 percent of all the crops that we grow. That alone would justify a vegetarian diet, from the perspective of someone who felt that good stewardship includes conservation, rather than wastefulness. But things are actually even worse. It takes resources to grow the massive amounts of crops needed to feed animals. In addition, meat production requires massive amounts of fossil fuels that are necessary to run slaughterhouses, factory farms, and processing facilities; to move all the trucks that get grains to farms, animals to slaughter, and meat to grocery stores; and to refrigerate the meat. Growing

worldwide demand for meat has contributed to rapidly declining world energy supplies, and severe worldwide oil shortages are likely by 2050.⁷⁶

Growing all those crops to feed animals, as well as operating those factory farms and slaughterhouses, also squanders water, a dwindling resource and often the limiting factor in soil productivity.⁷⁷ Intensive irrigation depletes water reserves, including aquifers that require thousands of years to replenish. In the United States, the huge Ogallala aquifer's water table has fallen dramatically because farmers drain about three cubic miles per year. Kansas has pumped 40 percent of its share of this aquifer, and many wells in north Texas have run dry. Overall, roughly one third of the Ogallala aquifer's volume was pumped between 1960 and 1990,⁷⁸ and the average rate of Ogallala depletion is equivalent to roughly two-thirds the flow of the Colorado River.⁷⁹ Because intensive farming and irrigation have depleted topsoil, and topsoil is needed to retain rainwater, the Midwest's fertility increasingly depends on diminishing aquifer reserves. At current Ogallala aquifer usage, the "world's breadbasket" in the Midwest will become largely a dust bowl by the mid-21st century.⁸⁰ Worldwide, the annual groundwater net deficit is about ten times the Colorado River's annual flow.⁸¹

Pollution

Animal agriculture also contributes heavily to pollution. In the United States, according to a U.S. Senate report, animals raised for food produce 130 times as much excrement as humans,⁸² and unlike human waste, its disposal is largely unregulated.⁸³ Much of this waste ends up in wells and waterways, contaminating drink-

ing water and killing aquatic life. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and pesticides also contaminate water through runoff from fields.

Animal agriculture also adds to global warming by adding carbon dioxide and methane gas to the atmosphere.⁸⁴ Deforestation increases carbon dioxide levels, as does burning fossil fuels to satisfy animal agriculture's energy requirements.

Fishing

Fishing is also environmentally destructive. Huge trawlers damage fragile ecosystems on the ocean floor. Giant fishnets, sometimes miles long, reduce fish populations and indiscriminately catch and kill huge numbers of “by-catch,” including dolphins and turtles, whom fishermen discard overboard. Today, drift nets are often made of monofilament nylon, which is very strong and is not biodegradable. Frequently, whales run into the nets and drag them far from their original positions. The whales often die of starvation or infection, and the dislocated nets continue to catch and kill fish and other marine life—and will do so perhaps for hundreds or even thousands of years.⁸⁵

The widespread, self-serving view that the world was made for humans has encouraged people to despoil the earth. Ironically, ecological devastation now constitutes the greatest long-term threat to human civilization.

Conclusion

Fundamental Christian values include preserving one's own health, feeding the hungry, preventing animal abuse, and protecting the environment. Vegetarianism effectively promotes these values.



3

GOD'S CONCERN FOR VICTIMS

MANY CHRISTIANS AGREE THAT God cares about the weak and vulnerable and that God sides with victims.¹ This teaching starts in the Hebrew Scriptures, which, for example, depict God delivering the suffering Israelites from bondage in Egypt. God continued to protect the Israelites as long as they obeyed divine law. The later prophets repeatedly encouraged compassion and mercy as an expression of divine will,² and Jesus' ministry reinforced this message.

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, declared, "Blessed are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7) and, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Indeed, Jesus stressed God's concern for the weak, hungry, and vulnerable, and he saw wealth and power as obstacles to the realm of God. While the Gospels focus primarily on people, they do not ignore animals. Jesus said that God feeds the birds of the air (Matthew 6:26) and does not forget sparrows (Luke 12:6).

We humans are continually tempted to victimize the weak and vulnerable. Indeed, nearly every tribe and nation has, in its history, persecuted another people or peoples. For example, even though America's Declaration of Independence asserts that "all men are created equal," Americans have committed atrocities against other people, including Native Americans and other people of color. Clearly, we need reminding that God asks for compassion and mercy.

Given that compassion and mercy were central to Jesus' ministry, why have Christians, like so many other groups, engaged in destructive, violent activities? For example, Christians committed atrocities during the Crusades and the Inquisition, and many Christians have embraced racist ideologies and practices. How could devout Christians believe that such activities accord with God's will?

Perhaps we may start to arrive at an answer by considering that we naturally desire pleasurable sensations and avoid discomfort. Then, it seems, we tend to look for justifications, and we can deceive ourselves quite easily. Indeed, Proverbs 21:2 observes, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes. . . ." It appears that many Christians utilize dubious, self-serving interpretations of the Bible to justify their actions. These interpretations may help account for widespread Christian endorsement of institutions that abuse innocent individuals, such as human enslavement in the past and factory farming today.

There seem to have been several ways by which a Christian who victimizes innocent individuals maintains a self-image as a "good Christian." In addition to selective biblical reading and interpretation, many Christians have gravitated toward minis-

ters and other Christian authorities who offer comforting messages. Historically, it seems, Christians have often been attracted to “Christian” messages that endorse their desires, lifestyles, and cultural prejudices. We believe, for example that many pastors misrepresent fundamental Christian teachings and traditions when they assert that the earth was made only for humankind and that we may oppress innocent creatures and despoil the earth as we please. Conversely, ministers who offer unappealing messages to their congregations may find themselves unpopular and, eventually, without a following. Indeed, vegetarian ministers rarely preach in favor of the diet, perhaps because doing so would make parishioners uncomfortable and might interfere with the ministers’ efforts to attend to parishioners’ spiritual and social needs.

Sometimes, camouflaging the truth helps relieve guilty feelings. For instance, a wide range of words and images help obscure the connections between what people eat and the suffering and death of animals.³ People eat “beef,” not “cows’ flesh”; “veal,” not “calves’ flesh”; “pork,” not “pigs’ flesh”; “mutton,” not “sheep’s flesh.” Even though people don’t hide the source of meat from birds (chickens, ducks, turkeys) and fish, these is perhaps because people often hold these animals in low esteem and experience little ethical discomfort while eating them.

Blaming the Victim

Another mechanism by which many people reconcile themselves to destructiveness and victimization is to blame the victim. Some people believe that pigs deserve little mercy because they perceive pigs as filthy, stupid, and gluttonous. However, pigs are

actually highly sociable and intelligent and, if given the opportunity to have a den and not a stall, keep their surroundings clean. Furthermore, domestic pigs are much fatter than their wild ancestors because of selective breeding, unrestricted access to food, and inactivity due to living conditions where they cannot move and have nothing to stimulate them to forage or root around for.

We often feel justified in punishing those who have wronged us, but we seldom appreciate our complicity. For example, when wild animals kill “livestock,” outraged ranchers advocate “predator control” to eradicate the “vermin.” Yet the predators are simply behaving according to their natures: killing only to eat, not to injure the ranchers’ profit margins. Ranchers seem not to understand that they have contributed to the problem by eradicating the predators’ normal prey. In order to free grazing land for commercial animal agriculture, ranchers have left the predators few choices but to attack the ranchers’ “property.”

Sacrifice

Often, we victimize innocent individuals as a kind of sacrificial act. Though Christians generally believe that animal sacrifices are unnecessary today, our culture continues to kill animals in a sacrificial manner. Many people believe, incorrectly, that they need meat for good health, and they regard animal slaughter as a necessary sacrifice for their own well-being. Even those who recognize that vegetarian diets are generally more healthful often seem convinced that animals must be killed to honor certain holidays and other celebrations. Here, it appears, the sacrificial mentality attempts to excuse human indulgence.

Does God desire sacrifices? The Hebrew Scriptures describe God accepting sacrifices, which is paradoxical given the many passages that show God's concern for animals. Perhaps the ancient Hebrews assumed that God required sacrifices. Just as all other people at that time sacrificed to their various gods, the Hebrews likely believed that the one God to whom they prayed demanded sacrifices. As the Hebrews grew in faith and understanding, their need for sacrifice waned.

Indeed, the later prophets, including Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, objected to sacrifice. A recurrent theme in these prophets' teachings is that God wants righteousness, not sacrifice. For instance, Micah prophesied that God is not satisfied by either human or animal sacrifice:

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6–8)

Hosea expressed this theme similarly when he said, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings” (6:6).

Jeremiah asserted that sacrifice was not necessary after the Exodus from Egypt: “For in the day that I brought them out of

the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Jeremiah 7:22).⁴ Jeremiah also related God’s concerns for the weak and oppressed, criticizing Jehoiakim’s “dishonest gain” and “shedding of innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence” (Jeremiah 22:17). Jeremiah told Jehoiakim that God preferred Jehoiakim’s father: “Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well” (22:15–16).

One may receive the gospel message of Jesus as continuing this prophetic tradition and counseling against sacrificing other individuals for our own benefit. Twice in Matthew, Jesus echoed Hosea’s words, saying, “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice” (9:13, 12:7). Jesus didn’t object to self-sacrifice in order to serve God’s will, and the Bible relates that he chose painful crucifixion as a necessary submission to God’s plans. Yet Jesus doesn’t seem to endorse sacrificing other individuals for our own benefit, however tempting that may be. His Sermon on the Mount stressed God’s concern for the weak and the vulnerable. He ministered with love and compassion to those who were crippled, sinners, and women, which was scandalous in an age when men generally regarded these people as inferior. He memorably spared an adulteress, challenging the crowd, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7).

Christianity teaches that we are new creations in Christ. Being reborn in Christ means, among other things, redirecting our lives from our own desires toward realizing God’s will, even if this includes self-sacrifice. Paul wrote, “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as

a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Since we should dedicate our bodies to serving God, we should be mindful of what goes into our bodies. If we pollute our bodies with tobacco, drugs, or harmful animal products, we are serving our own desires, not God’s.

While Christ’s sacrifice was to redeem humankind, animal sacrifice fails to redeem. As Carol Adams has noted, “The suffering of animals, our sacrificial lambs, does not bring about our redemption but furthers our suffering, suffering from preventable diseases related to eating animals, suffering from environmental problems, suffering from the inauthenticity that institutionalized violence promotes.”⁵



4

RECONCILING CREATION TO GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENTIONS

GENESIS DESCRIBES THE GARDEN of Eden as peaceful and vegetarian, which presumably reflects God's original intentions. According to Isaiah 11:6–9, at the end of time, all the world's creatures will once again be vegetarian and enjoy peace. Isaiah envisions Creation restored to an Eden-like world in which all creatures will be reconciled with God and with each other. However, we now live in fallen times, which began when God told the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). After the Flood, when there was little vegetation, God gave Noah permission to eat flesh. But the price was great; henceforth, humans and animals would live with even greater fear and hatred: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . ." (Genesis 9:2).

Many Christian vegetarians believe that God does not want

suffering and death, and they hope for a world in which all beings will thrive and live harmlessly. However, critics have argued that this is not realistic. Humans have a taste for meat, and we find it difficult to refrain from satisfying our desires. Furthermore, carnivores have teeth and digestive tracts adapted to consuming flesh, and many carnivores could not thrive on vegetarian diets. Nonetheless, like Isaiah, we do believe reconciliation is possible, but it will require God's grace and God's creative hand.

In order for carnivorous animals to become vegetarian, as Isaiah prophesied, God will need to intervene. Christian vegetarians believe that the Creator has the power to restore Creation to a peaceful, vegetarian world, and the Bible teaches us that God will reconcile all Creation. Paul wrote that Christians, being new creations in Christ, should participate in this reconciliation. He wrote to the Corinthians:

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making this appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17–20).

Our “ministry of reconciliation” involves being “ambassadors

for Christ” to reconcile the world to God. We should be good stewards of God’s Creation, which was Adam’s responsibility in the Garden of Eden. Indeed, much of the human and animal suffering in the world today, and the likelihood of future suffering, reflects humans’ desire to claim the world as their own, rather than God’s.

The temptation to see the world as humankind’s domain is strong. We all seek pleasure and avoid pain and suffering. However, until modern times, it seemed that people had little control over their destinies. Factors over which humans had no control largely determined human welfare, such as the weather, mysterious diseases, or the ambitions of neighboring countries. The ancient Hebrews, probably sensing their vulnerability, understood that God was the author of history and not themselves. They worshipped God in reverence for God’s creativity and benevolence, and they feared incurring God’s wrath by disobeying God’s laws.

Today, it seems that science, rather than God, accounts for natural events. Science seems to offer adequate explanations for the weather, earthquakes, and other natural events. We can even explain animal and human behavior in scientific terms. Thanks to technology—applied science—human wealth and power have expanded beyond the wildest imaginations of people who lived only a few generations ago. Humans exploit nearly every living and nonliving thing on this planet, permitting unprecedented human population growth and widespread human comfort and luxury.

Is human technological progress an unqualified success? We think not. At an individual level, modern chemicals and indus-

trial by-products have sickened countless people; and modern mechanization, genetic manipulation, and antibiotic additives have made factory farming possible, causing billions of animals to suffer. At a societal level, pollution and unrestricted resource consumption are likely to cause severe environmental degradation, harmful global climate changes, and worldwide resource shortages in the near future.¹ Even optimists generally agree that resource depletion is a problem; however, they believe that human ingenuity and technology will prevent disaster.²

Given humankind's impressive technological accomplishments, it is tempting to expect technology to continue to solve our problems. However, this expectation seems unreasonable, since misuse of technology is largely responsible for endemic heart disease and cancer, environmental degradation, resource depletion, and many other causes of human and animal suffering. Technology is value-free, but we need values to prevent technology from becoming destructive. Faith in technology, rather than faith in God, does not engender peace in our hearts; and without peaceful intent, we cannot be true ambassadors of Christ's peace nor agents for the world's reconciliation.

Indeed, without benevolent intent, modern technologies that could greatly reduce misery are actually responsible for widespread suffering—and factory farming has depended on modern technologies. Meanwhile, we also have the technology to provide all Americans with healthful, tasty non-animal foods.

Christianity teaches that God created a world filled with love and peace. Now, we live in a fallen world, and only God can fully eliminate human sinfulness and nature's inherent violence. We can help this reconciliation by relating to the world and its

inhabitants with loving, compassionate stewardship. Then, with the grace of God, we may hasten the day when “they shall not hurt or destroy in all my [God’s] holy mountain” (Isaiah 11:9). For many Christian vegetarians, the diet is a symbolic expression of this ideal. Thus, each meal symbolically anticipates Creation’s reconciliation—a restoration to the harmonious, peaceful world God originally intended.



VEGETARIAN LIVING IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

MANY CHRISTIAN VEGETARIANS FIND the diet pleasurable, fulfilling, and liberating. When we try to lead lives that are as compassionate, healthful, and environmentally conscious as possible, we believe that we are, to the best of our ability, striving to live up to our call as Christians to live out our faith. Of course, if we are honest with ourselves, we recognize our imperfections and always strive to do better. But we derive a sense of inner peace from the conviction that we are genuinely trying to be good stewards of God's Creation.

Christian vegetarians often feel a special kinship with the world's animals, celebrating the beauty and wonder of God's other creatures. Have you ever visited a farm and let the animals smell you? Vegetarians often relate that they feel they are the animals' friends. Those who eat meat may approach animals on farms in a friendly manner, but meat-eaters must internally

acknowledge that they are paying to have these young, healthy creatures killed.

People often say, “I could never give up meat,” but vegetarians usually find they gain much more than they “lose.” Actually, many vegetarians enjoy a wider range of foods than most meat-eaters. They simply prepare beans, grains, fruits, and vegetables with more attention, care, and creativity.

Nevertheless, being vegetarian is sometimes unpleasant. Family and friends who fail to endorse our vegetarianism or even belittle the diet can make us feel alienated and lonely. In addition, it is difficult for those of us who cherish our Christian faith to see Christians we love and respect reject a central component of our Christian witness.

Christian vegetarians would likely benefit from understanding the reasons that fellow Christians do not adopt this diet. Given vegetarianism’s benefits to humans, animals, and the Earth, why do most Christians seem to resist vegetarianism? Many vegetarians can’t understand how meat-eaters fail to appreciate the compelling reasons for becoming vegetarian.

Many factors other than the need to nourish our bodies influence the location, menu, and timing of our meals. A meal is at the center of nearly all our celebrations and social events. Much business transpires over food, and friends almost always combine socializing with a meal or dessert. Indeed, many believe that certain events call for specific foods. Many Christians eat ham at Christmas, and people often serve expensive meats at formal affairs. To most people, Thanksgiving without turkey makes no sense. When regarding cooked flesh, meat-eaters see food, while vegetarians often see animal and human suffering and death.

Foods have gained symbolic meanings that have little correlation to their nutritional contents. Our food choices affect our self-image, and they communicate our social standing. For example, many people associate beef with virility.¹ Meat consumption, in general, suggests wealth, and certain kinds of meat, such as lobster and sirloin, indicate affluence, leisure, and refinement.

Meat's symbolic associations help explain why meat-eaters often view vegetarians with suspicion or even hostility. When people decline certain foods due to doctors' orders or because they don't like the taste, no offense is taken. However, by choosing to abstain from meat on principle, vegetarians appear to reject the many values associated with meat consumption. For example, when a vegetarian declines food that is the centerpiece of a celebration, meat-eaters may feel that the vegetarian does not appreciate the significance of the celebration itself.

Another source of tension between meat-eaters and vegetarians is that those who reject certain foods for ethical reasons make a political and moral statement. Even without speaking, vegetarians communicate the message that, in their opinion, it is wrong to eat meat. This message can be particularly disconcerting for the many meat-eaters who oppose cruelty to animals, want to have a healthier diet, care about world hunger, and/or want to protect the environment. Perhaps many meat-eaters, at a deeper level, feel guilty about their diet, and they resent vegetarians who rekindle unpleasant guilty feelings.

Many critics of vegetarianism have good intentions. Family and friends, in particular, may try to discourage new vegetarians out of concern and love, believing that a meatless diet is unhealthy. It's easy for vegetarians to enjoy a healthful diet, as

long as they follow a few simple guidelines. Appendix C summarizes proper nutritional basics.

Family members often express dismay for other reasons. For example, they may feel that holidays and celebrations will be less special if someone does not participate in the entire feast, or they may feel discouraged when someone declines a carefully prepared meat dish. Most of us wish to maintain loving, or at least civil, ties with family, and we are concerned that our diet may undermine valued and/or fragile relationships. Appendix A considers ways to reduce meat-eaters' defensiveness and hostility, and offers strategies for dealing with potential conflicts over diet. Appendix B suggests methods for promoting vegetarianism among Christians.



6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

JESUS ANSWERED THE MAN who asked which commandment is the greatest: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

How can we love God? Prayer is one way, but words are easy to say. Even having genuine faith is not enough—as James said, “faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:26). Jesus prayed for God’s kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), which we understand as a fervent desire for the Peaceable Kingdom prophesied by Isaiah. What better way to worship God than to assist in moving all Creation toward this harmonious ideal? Indeed, Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful” (Matthew 5:7), again indicating that showing mercy toward God’s Creation is one way of showing love for God. As discussed in Chapter 2, a

plant-based diet is good stewardship for God's Creation. Such a diet, then, may be viewed as an act of faith, loving God by serving God.

If we are to love God by showing respect for God's Creation, then, as Jesus said, it follows that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. To that end, we should seek ways to minimize our footprint on the earth, to make resources available for the rest of Creation, and to live modestly and humbly as servants of God. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples; he did not seek wealth or even comfort. He sought only to do the will of "[his] father, who is in Heaven." Jesus did not say, "Blessed are those who satisfy their desires." Rather, he said, "Blessed are the meek." Is it not arrogant and indulgent to squander world resources, particularly when impoverished people desperately need a share of those resources? Does it not show disrespect for God when our choices cause pain and suffering to God's creatures? Our lifestyles, including our diets, should be in sympathy with the world's poor, hungry, and downtrodden. We should not contribute to their misery. Eating meat voraciously while about one billion of God's children are malnourished seems indulgent, insensitive, and arrogant. Directly supporting factory farming's cruelties requires having eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear.

President George W. Bush's former senior speechwriter, Matthew Scully, wrote in his book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*, "So in every act of kindness we hold in our hands the mercy of our Maker, whose purposes are in life and not death, whose love does not stop at us but surrounds us, bestowing dignity and beauty and hope on every creature that lives and suffers and perishes."¹

Ultimately, for us, it comes down to this: Eating meat supports an industry that denies God's creatures their God-given needs and desires, abusing them as though they did not have the senses that God gave them; harms our bodies, which are on loan to us from God; degrades the environment, which is ours to care for; and steals money from the global poor, who are our neighbors, whom we are commanded to love as ourselves. Each person moving toward a plant-based diet contributes to God's plan to reconcile Creation to a peaceful, harmonious world.

How we live should reflect what we believe, and we think that living with integrity fosters the kind of salvation that Jesus witnessed at Zacchaeus' house: "Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost' " (Luke 19:8–10). Of course, Zacchaeus could not hope to abolish poverty, and his efforts to make amends for past wrongdoing may have proven insufficient, but spiritually, he had found salvation in his attempt to live honestly and righteously.

Many Americans, comfortable materially but not spiritually, suffer exceedingly high rates of anxiety and depression. We think that this is because many people, unlike Zacchaeus, have failed to appreciate Jesus' profound teaching that we are most happy when we have a sense of purpose derived from compassion, service, and striving to live up to our aspirations and better nature. As the author of Ecclesiastes wrote, "All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied" (6:7). While

sensual pleasures are brief and require repetition, the sense of satisfaction that comes from helping others can last a lifetime.

Gaining physical pleasures at the expense of innocent individuals is a stumbling block to receiving the complete peace and grace that Christ offers—as we recall, Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful” (Matthew 5:7). While life may be hard, and expressing love and compassion may require further sacrifice, Jesus’ selfless life, dedicated to God’s will, illustrates a path to joy and happiness. This is the message that we receive when we read, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

We have found the “burden” of vegetarianism light. Vegetarianism has meant giving up certain foods we once liked, but we have gained much more. Though we hope to continually expand the depth and breadth of our compassion in the world, for us, vegetarianism also seems an important personal step toward living according to God’s will, which we believe involves respecting and caring for our own bodies, the environment, hungry people, and animals. We see our vegetarianism as a gift that helps us feel peaceful and closer to all Creation. We are additionally thankful for having convenient access to tasty, healthful foods. In response to this opportunity to live without killing creatures, we wish to offer prayers of thanks—to pray ceaselessly, as the apostle Paul counseled. One way we do this is by remaining mindful of God’s creative goodness with every vegetarian meal—of remembering our commitment to a better world every

single time we eat, because we're making choices that accord with our Christian faith.

Some people ask us whether early church leaders and saints were sinful in eating animals. How about the apostle Paul, who did not find meat-eating inherently objectionable? We point out that life in 21st-century America differs markedly from Jesus' world. We have far more healthful non-animal foods available, and the industrialization of farming has made animal agriculture far more damaging in all respects than in ancient times. The health threats, environmental degradation, global poverty, and animal cruelty inherent in meat consumption today were not a reality in Jesus' day, when meat was consumed sparingly, the environment was respected, and the meat industry did not support global poverty and such horrific abuse of God's creatures.

There is so much violence and suffering in the world—from war-torn regions in Asia to starvation-plagued areas in Africa to our own inner cities. We pray and struggle to create a better world. As a part of our efforts, we embrace Christianity and Christ's witness as a loving answer to the madness, and we embrace vegetarianism as one way to decrease some of the violence, some of the ungodliness, some of the suffering.

We can always do more; we are not perfect. But our imperfection does not paralyze us and cause us to do nothing. As we struggle humbly to do more, we take solace in our attempts to live up to the words of the prophet Micah: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)



APPENDIX A

INTERACTING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

MANY CHRISTIANS, WHEN THEY learn that the meat industry is responsible for harming the world's poor, befouling God's earth, and abusing God's animals, are filled with a righteous indignation on the order of a Jeremiah or a St. John the Baptist. However understandable such reactions are, we feel that the following guidelines will be more useful in helping your friends and loved ones to understand your new way of life. We believe that these suggestions, like the passionate convictions of St. John the Baptist, derive from core Christian principles.

1. *Always be respectful.* We should remain mindful that all of us have feelings and want to feel good about ourselves. In the extreme, name-calling, sarcasm, or other belittling comments induce hard feelings and hamper effective communication.
2. *Always be compassionate.* We should seek kind and caring

ways to communicate unconditional love. Even when people do hurtful things to us, Christian love encourages us to recognize and honor the image of God in all Creation. Indeed, when Peter asked, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven’ ” (Matthew 18:21–22).

3. *Always be understanding.* Many people feel that vegetarianism threatens to eliminate their favorite foods and dampen their enjoyment of celebrations and important events. Their statements and actions, though they may sometimes appear thoughtless or even insulting, may reflect deep-seated fears. In addition, many people have good intentions when they resist vegetarian choices, even if their statements or actions may appear otherwise. Respond by giving them the benefit of the doubt. For example, you may say, “I’m sure you meant well. . . .”
4. *Explore facts, not motivations.* It is often tempting to believe we know what motivates other people. For example, if someone causes us to feel angry or hurt, it is natural to assume that the person upset us intentionally. In truth, human motivations are complex, and our assessment of others’ motives is almost always partly or totally wrong. In addition, because people seek self-esteem, they generally attribute good intentions to their actions. Consequently, they are usually offended if someone derides their motives. So, rather than accuse someone of hurtful intent, explore and discuss factual content in a nonjudgmental manner. For example, “There’s no scientific evidence for it, but where did you hear that plants can feel pain?” Or, “A lot of people have been taught

- that humankind's dominion over animals entitles us to exploit animals any way we please. I don't see it that way. . . ."
5. *Remember that Christianity teaches that we are all forgivable.* If we genuinely strive to live according to God's will, then we may be forgiven for past misdeeds. While we cannot avoid sin altogether, we believe that we may trust that God will judge us favorably if our hearts are dedicated to serving God. The Bible teaches us that even the apostle Paul, who once persecuted innocent Christians, was forgivable. On the Cross, Jesus asked God to forgive those who were torturing and murdering him: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We must be equally forgiving.
 6. *Seek common ground.* Your questions and comments may help identify areas where you agree with other people. For example, most people believe that we should try to make compassionate choices, and most people care about animals.
 7. *Take responsibility for your contribution to conflict.* When anger erupts during conversations about vegetarianism, it's helpful to remember that human conflict almost always involves contributions from both sides. You might say something like, "Sometimes, I can be a bit pushy." Or, "I'm not always sensitive to how others feel about things." This encourages the other person to explore his/her contribution, which is much more productive than telling the other person what you think his/her contribution was.
 8. *Always be honest.* Sometimes, ethical vegetarians try to avoid conflict by answering the question, "Why don't you eat meat?" with the reply, "Because I don't like the taste," or, "For health reasons." This response is untrue and therefore

not respectful. One may say simply, “For ethical reasons.” Then you may elect to say, “I’d rather not discuss it now,” if that’s the case.

9. *Don’t suppress your feelings.* Suppression tends to breed resentment and hostility, which often emerge later in unexpected and hurtful ways. Tell yourself, and perhaps your audience, how you feel. Silently or out loud, say, for example, “I’m feeling really angry now.” Avoid public displays of extreme emotion, which may embarrass you and/or other people. It is often appropriate and wise to discuss later how you felt, carefully choosing the right time and using non-judgmental language. In the course of conversation, you might say something like, “I didn’t think you really meant to hurt my feelings, and I wonder how we can help avoid similar conflict in the future.”
10. *Keep a sense of humor.* Nobody likes people who are always serious. You should not be overly sensitive to gentle teasing, even if it involves your vegetarianism.
11. *When talking about feelings, make first-person statements.* Second-person “you” statements often sound accusatory and make people feel defensive. First-person “I” statements are almost always better received. For example, don’t say to a friend, “You make me angry when you say that about my vegetarianism.” Rather, “I’m starting to feel angry. I think it’s because vegetarianism is very important to me.” This shifts the conversation’s focus to your anger, rather than your friend’s motivations for doing something that angered you. Note that you have not accused your friend of trying to make you angry, of being insensitive, or even of failing to

- take your vegetarianism seriously. Any such accusation would invite defensiveness and impede mutual understanding and growth. Instead, you have acknowledged your own feelings and explored them in a non-accusatory fashion.
12. *Explore feelings.* People may dispute the reliability of your scientific data or your interpretation of the Bible, but they can't deny your feelings. Similarly, their feelings have inherent validity. A compassionate, nonthreatening, nonjudgmental communication style is to relate feelings with an "I felt . . . I found . . . I find" triad. For example, "I once felt that there was nothing wrong with eating meat. Then I found out about factory farming's terrible treatment of animals, and now I find that my Christian faith inspires me to abstain from meat."
 13. *Seek mutual learning and growth.* We often try to change other people's minds, but ultimately only they can change their minds. When we talk to people, rather than *with* them, they tend to become defensive and closed to new ideas. When we explore each other's feelings and beliefs about diet, we may gain valuable insights about others' perspectives while effectively communicating our reasons for choosing vegetarianism.
 14. *Engage in active listening, which has three features.*¹ First, ask questions to learn about the other's perspectives and feelings, starting with open-ended questions and following up with more specific, concrete questions. Second, repeat responses with different words; this confirms your understanding and prevents miscommunication. Third, acknowledge the other's feelings. Once there has been active listen-

ing, both sides are much more prepared for constructive problem solving.

Promoting Vegetarianism

Knowing vegetarianism's many health and spiritual benefits, we may hope our family and friends adopt the diet. However, close acquaintances pose special problems because so many unrelated past issues between us may interfere with effective communication. For example, dietary choices may rekindle control issues when the interaction involves parents and children, or power issues between siblings. Sometimes, it is wisest to avoid discussing vegetarianism among close acquaintances because of the ancillary issues the conversation raises. The comments below illustrate how one may have constructive conversations.

Let's say your brother remarks that he needs to eat animal products. He agrees that vegetarianism is desirable, but he worries that it would leave him feeling weak and unsatisfied. He might have even tried vegetarianism briefly. In the course of conversation, you might try to communicate several notions:

1. *"It sounds like you can't imagine yourself not eating meat."* By rephrasing his comment, you demonstrate that you're listening and you understand his concerns.
2. *"I know many people whose energy levels have increased with a vegetarian diet. Have you tried going without meat before? What happened?"* It is important to keep conversations two-sided. If you seem determined to change his mind, he will naturally resist. On the other hand, if he receives you as wanting to

engage in a mutual exchange of information, he will be far less defensive and readily engage in constructive discussion. It is important that your interest in his story is genuine because merely acting interested is usually quite obvious. Also, sincere interest has practical value: You may learn why people do not share your perspectives, and this assists your vegetarian advocacy.

3. *"I know other people who have had trouble adopting vegetarianism."* This communicates that you don't assume he is a bad person. Such respectful, nonjudgmental communication prevents defensiveness. To further protect his self-esteem, you may preface factual information with, "Many people don't know that. . . ." Or for concepts, "Few people have thought about. . . ."
4. *"It's great that you're eating less meat now than in the past, and that you have been thinking about being vegetarian."* By offering encouragement, you validate his efforts and help build an alliance towards further change.
5. *"It's not always easy expressing Christ's love in our daily lives, and I wish I could be more compassionate in certain circumstances also."* It's important to acknowledge your own limitations, rather than appearing holier-than-thou. Such acknowledgment is honest and humble, and strengthens your sense of connection to your brother by identifying an ongoing project that you have in common.
6. *"For me, witnessing to Christian love includes trying to minimize my consumption of animal products."* You have personalized the statement, making clear that this is your understanding of Christian witness and not assuming that it is true for

everyone. You have not said that he should be a vegetarian, which would put him on the defensive. Indeed, he will be much more likely to seriously consider becoming vegetarian if he concludes, by himself, that vegetarianism is an effective way to express Christ's love.

7. *"When you did cut back on meat, I wonder whether your diet was balanced and healthful. Perhaps different vegetarian foods would have made you feel more energetic. I know some good vegetarian books that might help."* (See Appendix D.) This concluding comment offers information, not advice. At a later date, you might follow up on this discussion with something nonthreatening like, "I remember we talked about how you might try to reduce or eliminate meat from your diet. How are things going?"

Tightrope-Walking in Everyday Life

Let's consider some difficult situations.² You're invited over for a dinner at which the host will likely serve meat and does not know that you are vegetarian. Refusing a carefully prepared dish will disappoint or even offend the host. We suggest that you inform the host of your diet before you attend. Stress that you don't want anything special prepared for you and that you are sure the vegetable offerings will fully satisfy you.

If a host has prepared a special meal for you, but it contains small quantities of animal products you do not want to consume, this may pose a difficult problem. Refusing the food would certainly hurt the host's feelings, yet you don't want to compromise your dietary principles. Respect for the host's efforts and the

maintenance of good will are important considerations when ultimately deciding whether or not to consume the food. If there are trace amounts of animal products in the food, such as casein (a milk protein) in an otherwise dairy-free product, then you might choose to eat the meal, but politely suggest a different brand that the host might try in the future. It may be necessary to relax one's vegetarian purity when eating at someone else's home, or run the risk of finding oneself an unwelcome guest. However unappealing this might seem to you, your minor compromise will help animals and the Christian vegetarian movement, because it will help others see vegetarians as accommodating, where refusing the meal would discourage any other guests, and your host, from even considering the diet.

If you are treating people to a meal at a restaurant and don't want to buy meat, it's ideal to seek a vegetarian restaurant or pre-order a vegetarian meal for everyone. Alternatively, you may simply announce, "I'd love to treat everyone to a vegetarian (or vegan) meal," making it clear that they will have to pay for their meal if they insist on meat. People should not expect you to buy meat for them if this would violate your principles.

If you have vegetarian children or adolescents, you should be well informed about childhood and adolescent nutrition. Still, grandparents often believe that meat is necessary for healthful growth, and they may try to serve your children meat. You should let the grandparents know that you appreciate their concern, but stress that vegetarianism expresses values important to your family. Show the grandparents scientific literature demonstrating the healthfulness of a properly balanced vegetarian diet for children and adolescents.³

Sometimes, friends will apologize for eating meat in front of you. Inside, you might feel that their diet harms humans and animals much more than it harms your own sensibilities, but to say so would likely not be well received. However, if seeing people eat meat upsets you, you might say, "I appreciate your sensitivity to my feelings," and add, "Sometime, I'd like to discuss the reasons I've chosen to be vegetarian."

People often try to show inconsistencies in vegetarians' actions. For example, you might reflexively kill a biting mosquito, and someone laughs, "So you don't want to kill cows, but it's okay to kill mosquitoes?" Though this comment probably does not call for lengthy philosophical discussions, behind the so-called humor is a serious challenge. You might say something like, "It's not always easy for me to remain mindful of living peacefully, but I'm continually striving to do better. It seems to me that my inability to do everything is a bad excuse for doing nothing." This acknowledges your own limitations and respectfully addresses the question.

Sometimes, we may feel frustrated that so few people seem to share our concerns. We recognize that their diet contributes to the suffering and death of countless innocent individuals, and we despair at our inability to stop the ongoing injustices. Of course, no matter what we do, we can't stop all the world's evils. We can't save all the innocent victims, but we can spare some of them. And we can save ourselves from complicity in the wrongdoing and from making destructive choices that invariably alienate us from fellow humans, animals, and the world. In addition, we can pray for God to work among us and with us to protect both animals and humans.



APPENDIX B

DISCIPLESHIP

JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS FOLLOWERS, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20). With baptism, we become new creations in Christ, dedicated to following Jesus’ path of love, compassion, and peace, and encouraging others to do likewise. For many Christian vegetarians, this commitment to help bring about the realm of God “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10) is central to their Christian witness.

Vegetarian advocacy is a form of Christian stewardship and discipleship, because vegetarianism honors God by showing respect for God’s environment, animals, and humans. When our lives honor God, we feel closer to God and spiritually more fulfilled. So, encouraging people to try vegetarianism is offering a gift, for them as well as for the rest of Creation.

Telling people what to do rarely influences their actions, unless you have power over them. Voluntary change requires changing one's perceptions. Nobody considers oneself to be irrational. When someone appears irrational, we usually don't fully appreciate his/her worldview—the core set of beliefs based on one's knowledge and past experiences. People don't see their own choices as irrational—they believe that their actions derive from their worldviews. Consequently, there are two principal ways people may change. First, they may find that their worldviews are incomplete or incorrect. For example, once informed of the cruelties inherent in modern factory farming, many people will stop regarding modern animal agriculture as a benign institution. Hopefully, people will increasingly recognize that factory farming is cruel and conclude that it violates God's will.

The second way that people change is by realizing that their behavior actually does not faithfully reflect their worldviews. People are seldom aware of such inconsistencies, because they often uncritically adopt attitudes and behaviors from a culture that provides conflicting messages. This is dramatically the case when it comes to animal welfare because children are taught to be kind to animals and simultaneously told to eat their meat “or you won't get dessert.” Regarding animal welfare, Christians almost universally agree that Jesus preached love, compassion, and mercy, and most Christians oppose animal cruelty. However, they often fail to connect their compassion for animals with their daily dietary choices. Discussing society's inconsistencies can encourage people to reexamine their own attitudes.

Many people simply don't know about the cruelties inherent in modern animal agriculture, and a critical question is, why

don't they know? The reasons for this are complex, and an attempt to explain fully is beyond the scope of this book. No doubt, one reason is that the animal agriculture industries effectively hide their practices from the public, restricting access to factory farms and slaughterhouses and employing skilled public relations personnel to mislead the public. However, the information is quite readily available online as well as in books and videos, to those who wish to educate themselves.

It seems that many people choose to remain uninformed. Most already believe that animals deserve respectful treatment and strongly suspect that the animal agriculture industries often treat animals badly. Evidently, many people recognize that learning about the animal agriculture industry would likely leave them in an uncomfortable predicament. They don't want to give up meat or see themselves as contributing to cruelty. No wonder people so often receive Christian vegetarians with hostility. We seem to offer an unpleasant choice—change your lifestyle or your self-image.

People generally avoid threats to their lifestyles and self-images. It turns out, however, that vegetarianism is good news for Christians (as well as non-Christians). When one learns of the benefits to human health, animals, world hunger, and the environment, vegetarianism becomes much more palatable.

We recommend that, when you're discussing vegetarianism, you try to keep bringing the conversation back to the fact that eating meat is not necessary for good health and that, today, it causes cruelty to animals and environmental problems while harming human health and the global poor. Whatever biblical justification there is for eating meat 2,000 years ago, none of it

answers the central arguments for Christian vegetarianism—that eating meat today causes serious violations of basic Christian values like compassion, environmental stewardship, and respect for our own bodies.

Specific Recommendations for Christian Vegetarian Discipleship

Lectures

The Christian Vegetarian Association (CVA) has a slide show available in 35mm slides and in Microsoft PowerPoint, with accompanying text, which has been well received. We have also prepared a video.

When offering a lecture or workshop in church or some other public forum, it is important to use images and metaphors that resonate with the audience. For Christian vegetarian advocacy, this means talking in terms that Christians find meaningful, such as compassion, love, mercy, and humility. Jesus exemplified these attributes, and Christians understand that we are called to follow Christ's example.

Other Christian frameworks may resonate with your audience. For example, encourage people to think about viewing all of Creation from God's perspective, rather than a human perspective; this will help them see nature and animals as objects of compassion and concern. Often, the human view is that animals raised on farms are meant to be eaten. In contrast, it is hard to imagine that God, who looked upon all Creation and called it "very good" (Genesis 1:31), approves of humankind's cruelty

and destructiveness. Indeed, you may point out that factory farming deprives animals of all the natural behaviors God designed them to have.

It is often helpful to recall that God gave Adam a vegetarian diet and that Isaiah prophesied that at the end of time all creatures, once again, will be vegetarian. Of course, many will respond that Christian traditions, practices, and teachings seem to support meat-eating, or will point out biblical justifications for eating meat (e.g., animal sacrifice or the loaves and fishes miracle). Historically, most Christians have eaten meat; however, many of the first Christians, including those closest to Jesus, received Jesus' ministry as encouraging vegetarianism. In addition, many modern Christian spiritual leaders have embraced vegetarianism. Below, we offer responses to commonly asked questions, including questions that discuss biblical passages that seem to support meat-eating.

In summary, vegetarianism is a statement that we wish to take care of our God-given bodies and that we are concerned about hungry humans, an ailing environment, and helpless animal victims. We may receive every plant-based meal with prayerful thanks to the Creator for allowing us to live peacefully among the world's creatures.

Leafleting

Many activists have found that leafleting at Christian concerts and events, at Christian colleges, and outside churches is effective and efficient. We recommend the CVA's booklet *Honoring God's Creation*,¹ which people have found concise and compelling. For Catholic audiences, Fr. John Dear's essay *Christianity*

and Vegetarianism (available as a booklet and on CD and cassette from PETA, www.peta.org) has been well received.

You should be well groomed and have a sign and/or wear a shirt that identifies you as a vegetarian advocate. CVA T-shirts are available for \$15, payable to the CVA: P.O. Box 201791, Cleveland, OH 44120.

If approached in a pleasant manner, many people will politely accept your booklets. Often, you need to be a little persistent, while remaining friendly of course, or people will ignore you. Some will decline, and a few will attempt to be humorous or sarcastic. In general, it is best to smile and wish them a good day. If someone says something really nasty, you might simply comment in an even tone, "That was an unkind thing to say." Of course, your attitude is as important as your literature. If your pamphlet says that vegetarianism expresses the love, compassion, and peace of Christ, but you communicate anger and hostility, the compassionate message is lost. To those who take the literature, you may say, "Thank you" or, "Have a great day!"

At churches, we recommend that you stay off private church property. Otherwise, it may appear that the church endorses your literature, and this may be resented. Unfortunately, this may restrict you to larger urban churches, because churchgoers elsewhere often park on church property. Call the church to check the worship hour(s). Start to leaflet about 20 minutes before the service starts or be there about 50 minutes after the start time to greet people as they leave.

Bible Study/Discussion

Often, a discussion can be rewarding for both you and other par-

ticipants. It is sometimes helpful to reflect on two or three biblical passages as springboards for conversations. Good candidates include Genesis 1:28–31, which invites discussion of dominion and demonstrates that the Bible’s ideal diet is vegetarian; Isaiah 11:6–9, which envisions a vegetarian Messianic Age; and Matthew 6:10 because it reminds people that we are to seek the kingdom of God on earth. Alternatively, you can explore why we favor members of certain species over others and then consider which animals matter to God.

Informal Interactions

Discussing your commitment to vegetarianism in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner encourages people to consider their own lifestyle choices. Chapter 6 and Appendix A address dealing with family and friends in greater detail, but a few additional thoughts are in order here. Some people argue that we should never discuss vegetarianism while people are eating meat, but others have found that this is an excellent time to have the discussion, if you can keep it from becoming hostile. If people bring up the topic over meals, you might smile and acknowledge the importance of dietary choices, and then say that you don’t like to talk about vegetarianism during meals. Keep handy some literature that you can offer to them, like *Honoring God’s Creation* and/or *Try Vegetarian!*² Afterwards, you may recall the earlier discussion and comment.

Your Community

Give your doctor a pamphlet about vegetarianism. Talk to your pastor about vegetarianism, and discuss ways to develop church

educational programs that explore the impact of diet on animals, human health, world hunger, and the environment. You may speak or arrange a speaker, or show a videotape. If your church will put them in its library, both the Christian Vegetarian Association and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) offer free books about Christianity and vegetarianism. If you can place literature in a “take-one” area, both groups will provide you with brochures at a discount or for free, and you can download their literature at no cost at www.ChristianVeg.com and at www.PETALiterature.com. Register with your community, library, and school speakers’ bureaus. Display your pro-vegetarian message with bumper stickers, pins, and clothing. Ask managers of health food stores, vegetarian restaurants, and other sympathetic outlets to offer CVA pamphlets in their literature sections.

News Media

Be on the lookout for editorials or news items about which you may comment with letters to the editors of your local newspapers. Also, contact your local newspapers’ food editors and ask that more vegetarian recipes be included. If possible, provide recipes yourself, remembering that simple and tasty dishes are often most helpful.

Take Care of Yourself

Effective vegetarian advocates nurture their own souls. Develop meaningful relationships and put some time aside to relax. Remember that vegetarianism is one aspect of expressing Christ’s love, compassion, and peace; try to relieve human and

nonhuman suffering in other ways when you can. Don't despair. Nobody can cure all the world's ills, but we can all help alleviate them.

Be Informed

In order to be an effective advocate for vegetarianism, it's important to learn about healthful eating and the reasons for vegetarianism. We hope you will find this book helpful and that you will obtain further information from the selected resources listed in Appendix D.

Replies to Frequent Questions

The following section is modified from the Christian Vegetarian Association's booklet *Honoring God's Creation*, which can be viewed at www.ChristianVeg.com and can be purchased at low cost in bulk.³ If you don't feel comfortable answering certain questions or objections, feel free to direct the questioner to the CVA. It's not necessary to be able to counter every argument—you may always note that Christian love, compassion, and mercy forbid cruelty and that this overarching principle encourages a plant-based diet today.

Although one can use the Bible to justify eating meat, the arguments all deal with eating meat 2,000 years ago and do not take into account just how cruelly animals are treated today, nor how detrimental the meat industry is for the earth, the global poor, and our health. In our experience, when we offer alternative biblical interpretations, our opinions often fall on deaf ears. However, all Christians agree that we are called to be good,

compassionate, responsible stewards of God's Creation, and we feel that it is impossible to suggest that eating meat is in line with that call. So, to summarize: Don't get too worked up over the biblical justifications for meat-eating; they don't justify what meat-eating entails today.

All that said, some people wonder how we would respond to specific passages that seem to endorse meat-eating, so the following are some answers to some of the more common questions:

Does the Bible support vegetarianism?

The Bible depicts vegetarianism as God's ideal, and the diet conforms to the central biblical principle of stewardship. In Eden, all creatures lived peacefully, and God told both humans and animals to consume only plant foods (Genesis 1:29–31). Several prophecies, such as Isaiah 11:6–9, foresee a return to this vegetarian world, where the wolf, lamb, lion, cow, bear, snake, and little child all coexist peacefully. Christian vegetarians, while acknowledging human sinfulness, believe we should strive towards the harmonious world Isaiah envisioned—to try to live in accordance with the prayer that Jesus taught us: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Didn't God put animals here for our use?

Adam's “dominion” over animals (Genesis 1:26, 28), we believe, conveys sacred stewardship, since God immediately afterward prescribed a vegetarian diet (1:29–30) in a world God that found “very good” (1:31). Genesis 2:18–19 relates, “Then the Lord

God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him,’ ” and God then created animals. This passage indicates that animals were made as Adam’s companions and helpers, not his food. Reading on, we find that animals did not fully meet Adam’s need, so God created Eve. Adam named the animals, which we believe shows concern and friendship. We don’t name the animals we eat.

God endowed pigs, cattle, sheep, and all farmed animals with their own desires and needs, which is apparent when these animals are given an opportunity to enjoy life. For example, pigs are curious, social, and more intelligent than cats or dogs. Pigs can even play some video games better than monkeys. Similarly, chickens enjoy one another’s company and like to play, dust bathe, and forage for food. Jesus compared his love for us to a hen’s love for her chicks (Luke 13:34).

Why did God give Noah permission to eat meat (Genesis 9:2–4)?

This passage is the first that clearly gives permission to eat animals. Even after the Fall, God instructed Adam to eat “the plants of the field” (Genesis 3:18). Perhaps the reason Noah was permitted to eat animals was that nearly all plants were destroyed by the Flood, leaving Noah few food choices. Alternatively, God may have yielded to human violence, which was responsible for the Flood itself (Genesis 6:11–13): “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence” (6:11). Noah, who had “found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8), was still a flawed man who got hopelessly drunk after the Flood (Genesis 9:21). Given humankind’s inher-

ent depravity, it may have been necessary for God to allow limited violence, in this case against animals, if God were to keep God's promise not to flood the earth again. Of course, the price paid for eating animals was great—humans and animals would forever live in mutual fear and enmity (Genesis 9:2).

Importantly, this passage does not command meat-eating, nor does it say that meat-eating is God's highest ideal. In biblical times as now, people are encouraged to live according to God's highest ideals. Jesus said, "[B]e perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48; cf. John 14:12).

Does God care for animals?

Proverbs 12:10 teaches, "A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast," and Psalm 145:9 reminds us that "The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made."

The Bible describes God's concern for animals repeatedly (Matthew 10:29, 12:11–12, 18:12–14) and forbids cruelty (Deuteronomy 22:10, 25:4). Importantly, after the Flood, God made a covenant, stated five times, with animals as well as humans. All creatures share in the Sabbath rest (Exodus 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:14). The Bible describes animals' praising God (Psalms 148:7–10, 150:6), shows animals present in eternity (Isaiah 65:25; Revelation 5:13), and affirms that God preserves animals (Psalm 36:6; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20). Animals and humans look to God for sustenance (Psalms 104:27–31, 147:9; Matthew 6:26; Luke 12:6) and deliverance (Jonah 3:7–9; Romans 8:18–23). If we buy the products of factory farming, we are paying people to violate these biblical principles.

Does vegetarianism equate human and animal life?

Vegetarianism simply reflects respect for Creation—the diet benefits humans, animals, and the environment. Jesus said, “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. . . . Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6–7). This passage relates that, although God values humans more than animals, God remains concerned about all creatures. Indeed, God’s covenant in Genesis 9, in all five instances, is with all flesh, not just human.

What about animal sacrifices?

The Bible relates that God accepted animal sacrifices. Given the many biblical passages showing God’s concern for animals, one may conclude that the Hebrews’ need to relate to God with sacrifices was a more pressing need. The Bible does not say that God demands sacrifice—it only describes how sacrifice should be carried out if performed. Even Abraham’s sacrifice of the ram was his idea and not required by God (Genesis 22:13).

Regardless of sacrifice’s role in the worship of the ancient Hebrews, several later prophets objected to sacrifice, emphasizing that God prefers righteousness. Animal sacrifices are not required or even desired now, for at least two reasons. First, Paul encouraged self-sacrifice, writing, “[P]resent your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Second, traditional interpretations of Jesus’ death affirm that, because of him, animal sacrifice is no longer necessary. Christians, being new creations in Christ, may model Christ by choosing a loving relationship with all Cre-

ation. Indeed, Jesus twice quoted Hosea (6:6), saying, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Matthew 9:13, 12:7).

Didn’t Jesus eat meat?

Luke 24:43 describes Jesus’ eating fish after the Resurrection. However, Jesus’ diet 2,000 years ago in a Mediterranean fishing community does not mandate what Christians should eat today. Similarly, what Jesus wore does not dictate how we should dress today. We are blessed with a wide range of healthful, tasty, convenient plant foods, much like in Eden. Meanwhile, we believe that the way animals are treated today makes a mockery of God’s love for them.

What about Jesus casting demons into swine?

(Matthew 8:28–32; Mark 5:1–13; Luke 8:27–33)

It was widely held that demons must inhabit a body or be sent to the “abyss” (Luke 8:31), and when Jesus came to cure the possessed man, the demons begged that Jesus send them to a herd of swine. It is not exactly clear why Jesus chose to do as the demons asked. Perhaps, by doing so, Jesus was able to kill the demons when the possessed swine drowned themselves. In any event, Jesus’ actions can be more readily explained by concern for the possessed man than contempt for swine.

What about killing the fatted calf in celebration of the Prodigal Son’s return (Luke 15:23)?

Eating the “fatted calf” was a sign of joy and celebration that, presumably, Jesus’ audience understood. This was a parable, and no calf was actually killed. Vegetarians today continue to use lan-

guage and metaphors such as “to kill two birds with one stone,” but that doesn’t mean that we actually approve of such behavior.

What about the miracle of the bread and fishes (Matthew 15:34)?

Multiplying fish who are already dead to feed to people who have no objection to eating fish is an act of compassion that has no adverse impact on the fish. This story does not depict Jesus killing any animals, but rather miraculously feeding several thousand people. The people were hungry, and Jesus had compassion for them. Again, fishing 2,000 years ago was a far cry from the driftnets, long-lines, and aquaculture farms of today, which act as though fish were pieces of seaweed rather than God’s creatures.

What about Acts 10:13, in which Peter is instructed to “kill and eat” all creatures?

The point of Peter’s dream is that the Christian community should not be divided by the law of Moses, using the clearest metaphor of human divisiveness available at the time. Even Peter, who had this dream, recognized that it should not be taken literally to mean that he should proceed to kill and eat all animals. Instead, “Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the dream might mean” (Acts 10:17). He recognized its meaning when the Gentile Cornelius invited him to dinner. Peter realized that the dream was instructing him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and that the Jewish dietary laws should not prevent the spread of Christianity. At Cornelius’ dinner, Peter related to his hosts, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to

associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (Acts 10:28). Whatever the meaning, this dream does not argue that modern factory farms, with all their consequences, have God’s blessing.

What about 1 Timothy 4:1–4, in which “everything created by God is good”?

This passage reflects Paul’s efforts to fight against a split in the Christian community, and does not justify cruel treatment of animals. Here, Paul rebukes false doctrines that forbid marriage as well as certain foods. Christian vegetarians don’t forbid either marriage or meat. Rather, we encourage a plant-based diet as good, responsible, Christian stewardship. Modern animal agriculture is a human creation, and it harms humans, animals, and the earth. While we should thank God for our ability to enjoy food, we may also thank God for providing tasty vegetarian options. Indeed, many Christian vegetarians see each meal as a prayerful reminder of God’s grace and goodness. Each vegetarian meal reminds them of Isaiah’s prophecy that all Creation will live harmoniously at the end of time, as in Eden.

Are vegetarians “weak in faith” (Romans 14:1)?

Paul wrote to the Romans that “the weak man eats only vegetables” (14:2). At that time, Jews were banned from Rome, and a kosher butcher would have been arrested. Unable to obtain kosher meat, many Jews abstained from meat altogether, for fear of eating meat that had been offered to a pagan god. Paul maintained that eating meat, even if offered to idols, was not a spiri-

tual concern, because the pagan gods didn't exist. Only the "weak in faith" failed to appreciate that sacrifices to fictitious gods were meaningless. Paul said that meat-eaters should not condemn those who abstain, and vice versa (14:3). It appears that Paul wrote this to the Romans because Paul was concerned about differences on diet dividing the church. Paul was not justifying meat-eating *per se*, and this passage certainly does not endorse factory farming.

Is eating meat sinful?

There are many passages in which people consume meat, evidently with God's approval. So, by biblical criteria, eating meat is not inherently sinful. Indeed, many people have needed meat for nourishment. However, the Bible does not mandate eating meat. As discussed above, whatever may have been acceptable in the days of shepherds who cared for their flocks, the level of cruelty today is not in keeping with God's call for kindness for all God's creatures.

What about 1 Corinthians 10:25?

Paul wrote, "Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience" (1 Corinthians 10:25). We believe that this passage warns people against rejecting God's gifts. However, Christian vegetarians celebrate good food. We do not object to meat because it is from God but because man-made factory farming is so harmful.

What about Mark 7:18–19?

In this passage, Jesus said, "Do you not see that whatever goes

into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach and so passes on?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)" We see this is as further evidence that Jesus did not hold eating meat as inherently sinful, as discussed above.

Have there been many vegetarian Christians?

Our numbers are increasing rapidly, just as vegetarianism is growing in the general population. Also, many early Christians were vegetarian, including the Desert Fathers. Since then, the Trappist, Benedictine, and Carthusian orders have encouraged vegetarianism, as have Seventh-Day Adventists. In the nineteenth century, members of the Bible Christian sect established the first vegetarian groups in England and the United States.

Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, John Wesley (founder of Methodism), Ellen G. White (a founder of Seventh-Day Adventism), Salvation Army cofounders William and Catherine Booth, Leo Tolstoy, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Rev. Dr. Albert Schweitzer were Christians who became vegetarian, as is the popular Christian musician Moby.

Don't laws ensure the welfare of farmed animals?

Everything discussed in the section on factory farming is legal. In the United States and many other countries, standard procedures on farms are specifically exempted from all humane legislation, regardless of the pain and suffering they cause. Practices such as bodily mutilations, which would warrant felony animal cruelty charges if done to a dog or cat, are perfectly legal when done to a pig or chicken. At the slaughterhouse, "humane

slaughter” laws are weak and poorly enforced for pigs, cattle, and sheep; the slaughter of birds is completely exempt. We support efforts to improve conditions on farms, but for many reasons, including our desire not to pay others to do things we would not do ourselves, we feel compelled to be vegetarians.

What would happen to those whose livelihoods depend on animal agriculture?

The transition to a vegetarian world, if it happens, will occur slowly enough that few, if any, will be adversely affected—they will simply take different jobs.

Since animals eat each other, what’s wrong with humans eating animals?

Christians are not called to follow the law of the jungle (where “might makes right”), but to follow Christ—to be compassionate, merciful, and respectful of God’s Creation. In this fallen world, animals suffer, die, and kill each other. We are called to assist God in the reconciliation of all creation, as Jesus prayed, “Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Are humans naturally predators and therefore carnivores?

While humans can digest flesh, and it is likely that our ancestors did consume small amounts of meat, our anatomy much more strongly resembles that of plant-eating creatures. For example: like plant-eaters (but unlike meat-eaters), our colons are long and complex (not simple and short); our intestines are 10–11 times longer than our bodies (not 3 to 6 times longer); our saliva

contains digestive enzymes (unlike carnivores); and our teeth resemble those of plant-eaters—for instance, our incisors are short and blunt (not long, sharp, and curved).

The millions of healthy vegetarians (who tend to outlive nonvegetarians) demonstrate that it is not necessary or even desirable to eat meat.

But eating vegetables still requires taking life.

The Bible says that eating plants is God's ideal and what the peaceable Kingdom of Isaiah will involve. That's probably because plants lack the organs needed to experience pain—pain receptors and a brain. Also, since it takes far more calories to get meat energy than to get plant energy—because the animals expend most of the energy they consume simply existing—one actually causes fewer plants to die by eating them directly, rather than feeding them to farmed animals and eating the animals later.

How do Christian vegetarians celebrate holidays?

Vegetarians celebrate holidays fully and joyfully without consuming animals. Numerous cookbooks offer tasty vegetarian meals, from quick and easy to complex and elegant.

What if I don't think vegetarianism should be a priority?

Adopting a healthy vegetarian diet requires no extra time and very little commitment and can improve one's sense of well-being so that it becomes a joy for you, rather than a burden. Anyone can choose the diet while continuing to work on the same issues as before.

What can I do?

If you choose a plant-based diet, you significantly help humans, animals, and the environment while reducing global misery. As Christians, we are called to be faithful, which includes living in accord with our core values as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Being faithful also includes showing fellow Christians, in loving and compassionate ways, that non-animal foods promote good stewardship of God's Creation and are tasty, convenient, and nutritious.



APPENDIX C

VEGETARIAN NUTRITION

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND the world enjoy wholesome vegetarian diets. They thrive on a range of healthy, plant-based foods and don't need to worry about nutrition. Pure vegetarians (vegans—who abstain from all animal products, including dairy and eggs) need to be more careful, but healthful eating remains easy.

Important Nutrients

As discussed above, vegetarians are less likely to suffer from obesity, which is at epidemic levels in our society, and also have lower rates of North America's biggest killers—heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Vegetarians also report having more energy, needing less sleep, and feeling generally lighter than when they ate meat. However, like all diets, vegetarian diets must be appropriately planned in order to be healthy and as nutritionally opti-



A growing number of vegetarian food products are on the market, including a wide range of meat substitutes made from soy or wheat gluten.

TABLE ONE

Recommended Daily Intakes for Pure Vegetarian Adults

		Upper limit ^a
Calcium	1,000–1,300 milligrams	2,500 milligrams
Vitamin B12	3 micrograms	None
Vitamin D	5–15 micrograms (200–600 IU)	50 micrograms (1,000 IU)
Iodine	150 micrograms ^b	1,100 micrograms
Omega-3 fats	2.7–5.4 grams ^c	Unknown

Note: See “Staying a Healthy Vegan” (SHV) at www.veganoutreach.org/shv for the needs of other age groups and for more information on all of the topics in this section.

- a Could be harmful in amounts exceeding the upper limit.
- b One 150-microgram iodine tablet two to three times a week will generally meet needs.
- c Most easily obtained through 1 teaspoon of flaxseed oil. See SHV for additional sources.

mal as possible. The following nutrients are those about which people most often have questions.

Protein

Most of us get far more protein than we need, and vegetarians are no exception. Vegetarians should eat 0.4 grams of protein per day for every pound of healthy body weight.¹ If vegetarians consume adequate calories and a variety of foods each day, they will get enough protein. One need not combine foods at each meal to get “complete protein.”

TABLE TWO

Some High-Protein Plant Foods

	Serving size	Protein (grams)
Tofu	½ cup	10–20
Veggie dog/burger	1	6–18
Soybeans*	½ cup	14.3
Texturized soy protein	½ cup	11
Soy milk	1 cup	5–10
Lentils*	½ cup	8.9
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	8.0
Chickpeas*	½ cup	7.5
Sunflower seeds	2 tablespoons	5.0
Brown rice	1 cup	4.9

*Cooked

Calcium

Since meat drains calcium from your bones “like acid rain,” according to one researcher, it’s not clear what amount of calcium vegetarians need for strong bones, but it’s good to err on

the side of caution. Adequate Intakes (set by the National Academy of Sciences) are 1,200 milligrams (over age 50), 1,000 milligrams (ages 19–50), 1,300 milligrams (ages 9–18), 800 milligrams (ages 4–8), and 500 milligrams (ages 1–3).

TABLE THREE

Some High-Calcium Plant Foods

	Serving size	Calcium (milligrams)
Soy milk, fortified	1 cup	200–300
Figs, dried	5	258
Orange juice, fortified	1 cup	250
Blackstrap molasses	1 tablespoon	187
Collard greens*	½ cup	178
Navy beans*	½ cup	64
Almonds	2 tablespoons	50
Broccoli*	½ cup	50
Kale*	½ cup	47

*Cooked

Iron

Iron-deficiency anemia is a serious condition, from which vegetarians are no more likely to suffer than nonvegetarians.² If someone believes that they have anemia, they should consult a health professional, because attempting to diagnose iron-deficiency without a blood test is very unreliable. The Recommended Daily Allowance of iron for men and postmenopausal women is 14.4 milligrams, and 32.4 milligrams for premenopausal women.

Almost everyone has heard that red meat is a good source of iron. What people often do not know is that vegetarian diets are

normally as high or higher in iron than diets that include meat, and that vitamin C significantly helps in the absorption of the plant form of iron.

TABLE FOUR

Some High-Iron Plant Foods

	Serving size	Iron (milligrams)
Grape-Nuts®	½ cup	16.2
Bran flakes	1 cup	11
Soybeans*	½ cup	4.4
Blackstrap molasses	1 tablespoon	3.3
Pumpkin seeds	2 tablespoons	2.5
Chickpeas*	½ cup	2.4
Pinto beans*	½ cup	2.2
Apricots, dried	¼ cup	1.5
Spinach*	½ cup	1.5
Raisins	¼ cup	1.1

*Cooked

Vitamin B12

Vegans used to get Vitamin B12 in the water and in their organic foods, but modern water purification and food safety measures mean that we need to find a new source. Vitamin B12 prevents permanent nerve damage (e.g., blindness, deafness, and dementia), keeps the digestive system healthy, and reduces the risk of heart disease by lowering homocysteine levels. Early deficiency symptoms sometimes include fatigue, and tingling in the hands or feet. Pure vegetarians should get 3 micrograms/day through fortified foods, or 10 micrograms/day through a supplement. Those who do are likely to have an even better B12 level than

many nonvegetarians who do not supplement. Vitamin B12 intake is especially critical during pregnancy, lactation, childhood, and old age.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is produced by sunshine on bare skin (without sunscreen). Light-skinned people need ten to fifteen minutes of sunshine on their hands and face, two to three times a week. Dark-skinned people need up to six times this amount. People in cold or cloudy climates should meet needs through fortified foods or supplements. The bone density of pure vegetarians living in northern climates has been shown to increase from a supplement of 5 micrograms/day.

Iodine

Pure vegetarians who do not regularly eat commercial baked goods or iodized salt, which are significant sources of iodine for most Americans, should consider including an iodine supplement in their diet.

Zinc

Recommended Daily Allowance is 11 milligrams for adult men, 8 milligrams for adult women. In some pure vegetarian diets, zinc may be lower than recommended; however, pure vegetarians do not show deficiency symptoms any more than do nonvegetarians. Sources of zinc include beans, corn, peas, cashews, peanuts, peanut butter, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds; cereals are often fortified with zinc. Foods high in protein and



Dairy-free milks, cheeses, desserts, and so forth, can be purchased, or prepared at home from soy, rice, or nuts (see recipe resources in Appendix D).

zinc, such as legumes and nuts, are good choices because protein increases zinc absorption. The leavening of bread (most bread is leavened) and fermenting of soy foods (tempeh and miso) also enhance zinc absorption.

Fats

Higher-fat foods like nuts and seeds (and their butters), avocados, and small amounts of vegetable oils (especially canola and olive) should be part of a healthy diet. These foods are particularly important for meeting children's caloric needs.

Vegetarians should include a daily source of linolenic acid (the omega-3 essential fatty acid). A large body of scientific evidence shows that omega-3 fatty acids have anti-blood-clotting,

anti-inflammatory, and cholesterol-lowering properties. Vegetarians are recommended to get about 2.2 grams for a 2,000 calorie/day diet.³ Linolenic acid is in walnuts (1.9 grams/ounce), tofu and soybeans (.8–1.0 grams/cup), canola oil (1.6 grams/tablespoon), ground flax seeds (2.1 grams/tablespoon), and flaxseed oil (2.5 grams/teaspoon). Pure vegetarians can most easily obtain omega-3 fats by eating 1 teaspoon of flaxseed oil per day (do not exceed 2 teaspoons/day). Flaxseed oil, sold in many natural food and grocery stores, should be kept refrigerated; it may be added to warm food, but cooking will damage the linolenic acid.



APPENDIX D

RESOURCES

THERE ARE MANY EXCELLENT groups, books, and websites for vegetarians. We've picked a few that we feel will best serve new vegetarians.

Vegetarian Advocacy Groups

Animal Place 3448 Laguna Creek Trail, Vacaville, CA 95688-9724; (707) 449-4814; www.AnimalPlace.org. Animal Place is an education center and sanctuary for abused and discarded farmed animals and other domestics. Animal Place publishes children's books and comics addressing animals raised for food production, teaches vegan cooking classes, coordinates an annual Veggie Cook-Off, coordinates a student internship program for UC Davis animal science majors, and publishes a weekly electronic newsletter on farmed animal information.

Christian Vegetarian Association P.O. Box 201791, Cleveland, OH 44120; (216) 283-6702; www.christianveg.com. The Christian Vegetarian Association is an international, ecumenical ministry. Its members assert that vegetarianism expresses core Christian moral principles such as love, compassion, and peace. The CVA produces the 16-page color booklet *Honoring God's Creation*, which answers commonly asked questions about Christianity and vegetarianism and provides recipes, nutritional information, and a resource guide.

Compassion Over Killing P.O. Box 9773, Washington, D.C. 20016; (301) 891-2458; www.cok.net. COK is a small but very effective advocacy group that has done pioneering work advocating for animals. It has done several undercover investigations that have exposed brutality on factory farms.

EarthSave International 1509 Seabright Avenue, Suite B1, Santa Cruz, CA 95062; (831) 423-0293; www.earthsave.org. EarthSave encourages environmental protection and personal health through plant-based diets. EarthSave has local chapters, which engage in local education and activism.

Farm Animal Reform Movement P.O. Box 30654, Bethesda, MD 20824; (888) FARM-USA; www.farmusa.org. Farm Animal Reform Movement promotes vegetarianism through public education campaigns, most notably The Great American Meatout, held annually the first day of Spring. FARM supports grassroots groups through the Sabina Fund.

RESOURCES

Farm Sanctuary East: P.O. Box 150, Watkins Glen, NY 14891; (607) 583-2225; *West*: P.O. Box 1065, Orland, CA 95963; (530) 865-4617; www.farmsanctuary.org. Farm Sanctuary rescues and protects farmed animals by providing shelters for rescued animals, prosecuting farmed animal abusers, promoting legislation to outlaw cruel stockyard and slaughterhouse practices, and distributing educational literature to the public.

Fund for Animals 200 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-2096; www.fund.org/home. While the Fund is primarily involved in wildlife issues, Spiritual Outreach Director Norm Phelps has done valuable work in addressing spiritual/faith issues. Phelps has written *The Dominion of Love*, and the Fund distributes his excellent booklet *Love for All Creatures: Frequently Asked Questions about the Bible and Animal Rights* as well as a condensed, two-page version of the booklet. Phelps is also preparing a fact sheet on Christianity and hunting.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals 501 Front Street, Norfolk, VA 23510; (757) 622-PETA; www.peta.org, www.goveg.com. PETA is a well-known animal rights organization that has been a leader in educating the public about vegetarianism. Its *Vegetarian Starter Kit* helps people make the transition to a plant-based diet. We highly recommend the essay by Fr. John Dear, *Christianity and Vegetarianism*, available in print or on audiocassette.

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 404, Washington, DC 20014; (202) 686-2210; www.pcrm.org. Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine supports vegetarianism through careful research and public education. Numerous PCRM reports have been published in scientific journals, and its New Four Food Groups campaign has been very successful. PCRM's Cancer Project shows how diet can substantially alter cancer risk, and its *Vegetarian Starter Kit* is very good.

United Poultry Concerns P.O. Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405-0150; (757) 678-7875; www.upc-online.org. United Poultry Concerns is dedicated exclusively to the plight of chickens and other domestic fowl. UPC encourages a vegan lifestyle through a chicken sanctuary, a vegan Thanksgiving open house, and educational materials, including its website, fact sheets, and cookbooks.

Vegan Outreach 211 Indian Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15238; (412) 968-0268; www.veganoutreach.org. Vegan Outreach has an effective base of volunteers who distribute its excellent literature, including *Why Vegan?*, *Try Vegetarian*, and *Vegan Starter Pack*. Despite its modest budget, Vegan Outreach has distributed over 1.5 million copies of its literature.

Books

Carol J. Adams, *Living Among Meat-Eaters* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).

Adams explores the reasons people resist vegetarianism, and she offers helpful advice for coping with obnoxious or insensitive meat-eaters.

Keith Akers, *The Lost Religion of Jesus: Simple Living and Nonviolence in Early Christianity* (New York: Lantern Books, 2000).

This book studies the Jewish Christian movement, which consisted of Jesus' first followers and their descendants. They believed in pacifism and vegetarianism, which they claimed to derive from Jesus' ministry. Many Christians will not be swayed by Akers' argument, however, because he relies heavily on extra-biblical historical sources to arrive at his conclusions about Jesus' ministry.

Neal D. Barnard, *Food for Life: How the New Four Food Groups Can Save Your Life* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993).

Dr. Barnard, president of Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, shows how a vegetarian diet promotes your health. Specifically, he shows how "New Four Food Groups"—whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and legumes—helps prevent the major U.S. killer diseases. The book concludes with menus and tasty recipes.

Karen Davis, *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1996).

Davis shows that chickens are sensitive, intelligent creatures deserving of respect and kindness. She exposes the poultry industry's massive cruelties, which result in unhealthy foods.

Gail A. Eisnitz, *Slaughterhouse: The Shocking Story of Greed, Neglect, and Inhumane Treatment Inside the U.S. Meat Industry* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997).

Eisnitz documents the trauma to animals and humans inherent in modern, high-speed slaughterhouses.

J. R. Hyland, *God's Covenant with Animals: A Biblical Basis for the Humane Treatment of All Creatures* (New York: Lantern Books, 2000).

Rev. Hyland discusses the biblical basis for vegetarianism, and pays particular attention to the theological implications of God's covenant with animals after the Flood.

Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

Prof. Linzey argues that reverence for God and respect for God's Creation mandate respectful treatment of animals. In particular, he maintains that we have a moral obligation to show respect to animals, because they were created by and belong to God.

George H. Malkmus, *Why Christians Get Sick* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1995).

How can we be good evangelists for Christianity, Malkmus asks, if we get sick and die as readily as non-Christians? In truth, Malkmus argues, the Bible points the way to longer, healthier lives with a vegetarian diet, as prescribed in Genesis.

Erik Marcus, *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: McBooks Press, 2001).

Marcus details the waste and cruelty inherent in modern animal agriculture, and he shows how the products of factory farms hurt our health. He summarizes the New Four Food Groups nicely.

Jim Mason and Peter Singer, *Animal Factories* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1980).

This book was one of the first to expose in detail modern factory farming's cruelties.

Vesanto Melina, Brenda Davis, and Victoria Harrison, *Becoming*

Vegetarian: The Complete Guide to Adopting a Healthy Vegetarian Diet (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1995).

This is an excellent guide to healthy vegetarian living for people of all ages, with recipes.

Vasu Murti, *They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy: Animal Rights and Vegetarianism in the Western Religious Traditions* (Available from 30 Villanova Lane, Oakland, CA 94611; 1995).

Murti shows that the Judeo-Christian traditions strongly encourage a vegetarian diet.

Eithne Nunez, *Be Your Own Doctor* (Weston, Florida: His Service Publishing, 2003).

Nunez offers sound nutritional advice with a Christian-faith-based focus.

Norm Phelps, *The Dominion of Love: Animal Rights According to the Bible* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002).

In a very clear, readable style, Phelps convincingly argues that humankind's cruel exploitation of animals fundamentally and unequivocally violates the two "prime directives" of the Bible: "You shall love the Lord your God" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

John Robbins, *The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and the World* (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 2001).

In this updated version of the widely acclaimed *Diet for a New America*, Robbins shows that modern animal agriculture is very destructive to the environment, contributes to world hunger, harms human health, and submits animals to miserable living conditions.

Martin Rowe, ed., *The Way of Compassion: Vegetarianism, Environmentalism, Animal Advocacy, and Social Justice* (New York: Stealth Technologies, 1999).

This is an excellent essay collection on diverse topics.

Richard H. Schwartz, *Judaism and Vegetarianism* (New York: Lantern Books, 2001).

Schwartz demonstrates that the Jewish teachings and traditions strongly support vegetarianism.

Matthew Scully, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

Scully, a political conservative and former speechwriter for President George W. Bush, argues that contemporary treatment of animals on farms violates the core Christian principle of mercy.

Stephen Webb, *Good Eating* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001).

Prof. Webb considers vegetarianism in the context of biblical narrative, arguing that vegetarianism expresses a hope and expectation that God will reconcile the entire world to God's original peaceful, harmonious intentions. Vegetarianism is not a Christian obligation, but rather a way to practice compassionate stewardship to animals. The book also discusses animal sacrifices, the Lord's Supper, pacifism, the place for animals in heaven, the history of Christianity's response to vegetarians, and contemporary theological positions on animal welfare.

Stephen Webb, *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Prof. Webb's scholarly study suggests that grace and redemption often involve loving and compassionate relationships with animals. This book requires serious thought and reflection, but is very readable and insightful.

Richard Alan Young, *Is God a Vegetarian? Christianity, Vegetarianism, and Animal Rights* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).

Prof. Young makes a compelling case that vegetarianism accords with God's highest ideals. Young explores the paradox that the

Bible describes God prescribing a vegetarian diet in the Garden of Eden, yet the Hebrew Scriptures provide for meat-eating, and the New Testament shows Jesus eating fish. Young argues that vegetarianism is a morally responsible Christian way of life.

Cookbooks

There are scores of good vegetarian cookbooks available. Here are some of our favorites.

Tanya Barnard and Sarah Kramer, ed., *How It All Vegan!* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999).

Tanya Barnard and Sarah Kramer, ed., *The Garden of Vegan* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999).

Gail Davis, *So, Now What Do I Eat? The Complete Guide to Vegetarian Convenience Foods* (Corrales, NM: Blue Coyote Press, 1998).

Bobbie Hinman and Millie Snyder, *Lean and Luscious and Meatless* (Rocklin, CA: Primar Pub., 1992).

Patricia LaShane, *Vegetarian Cooking for People with Diabetes*. (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1994).

Judy Krizmanic, *The Teen's Vegetarian Cookbook* (New York: Puffin Books, 1999). This book offers easy, tasty, and healthful recipes that teens would like.

Ingrid Newkirk, *The Compassionate Cook*. (New York: Warner Books, 1993).

Jennifer Raymond, *Fat-Free and Easy*. (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1997).

Jennifer Raymond, *The Peaceful Palate* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1996).

- Linda Rosensweig, *New Vegetarian Cuisine: 250 Low-Fat Recipes for Superior Health* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1994).
- Joanne Stepaniak, *The Uncheese Cookbook: Creating Amazing Dairy-Free Cheese Substitutes and Classic "Uncheese"* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1994).
- Joanne Stepaniak, *Vegan Vittles* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Co., 1996).
- Julie Wandling, *Thank God for Raw* (Akron, OH: Healthy for Him Publishing, 2002).
- Debra Wasserman and Ann Reed Mangels, *Simply Vegan: Quick Vegetarian Meals* (Baltimore: Vegetarian Resource Group, 1999).

Magazines

Satya 539 1st Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215; (718) 832-9556; www.satyamag.com. *Satya* provides excellent essays and reports on a wide range of issues that intersect animal advocacy, environmentalism, and vegetarianism.

Veg News 2471 43rd Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116; www.vegnews.com. This magazine includes excellent articles on a wide range of vegetarian topics.

Vegetarian Journal P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203; (410) 366-VEGE; www.vrg.org. This publication of the Vegetarian Resource Group provides nutritional advice, product reviews, and many recipes.

Vegetarian Times P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235; (877) 717-8923; www.vegetariantimes.com. This leading vegetarian magazine features recipes and nutritional advice.

Helpful Websites

These are a few of the many helpful vegetarian Web sites. Most include recipes or links to web sites with many recipes.

www.all-creatures.org

Comprehensive Christianity and vegetarianism Web site.

www.animalsvoice.com

Online network for animal advocacy.

www.blackvegetarians.org

Vegetarian recommendations directed at black people.

www.christianveg.com

Christian Vegetarian Association.

www.factoryfarming.org

Exposes cruelties of factory farming.

www.goveg.com

PETA's vegetarian Web site, which offers a free starter kit.

www.humanereligion.org

Essays on Christianity and animal welfare.

www.ivu.org

International Vegetarian Union.

www.jesusveg.com

Christianity and vegetarianism.

www.pcrm.org

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

www.tribeofheart.com

Features the outstanding documentary films *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *The Witness*.

RESOURCES

www.veg4lent.org

Advocates a vegetarian diet during, and hopefully after, Lent.

www.veganoutreach.org

Vegan Outreach.

www.vegetarianteen.com.

Vegetarian advice for teens.

www.vegsource.com

Links to a wide range of excellent Web sites.

www.vrg.org

Vegetarian Resource Group.



NOTES

Chapter One: Christianity and Diet

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Appendix C: Vegetarian Nutrition

Adapted from *Why Vegan?* (Pittsburgh: Vegan Outreach, 2003), 10–11.

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