



Christian Vegetarian Association UK

Home of Veg4Lent

Working towards a violence-free world

Foresta, Pines Road, Liphook, GU30 7PL

Email: chairman@cvauk.org www.cvauk.org

Christmas for all Creation 2004

A big THANK YOU to all who took part in this campaign

Christmas Campaign template letter

Dear Editor,

As a Christian, I dread the approach to Christmas. With all the excitement of shopping and arranging the festivities, one terrible outrage is being overlooked. That is the suffering being caused to countless living creatures as they are intensively reared and then slaughtered to provide 'festive-fare' on the day.

It is a cause of shame to me that the Christian Church has not seen fit to condemn or apologise for its complicity in this horror, especially as the festival being celebrated is the birth of the Prince of Peace.

There have been many practices in the past for which the Church has eventually repented and apologised – pogroms, the Crusades, the Inquisition, slave trade, and much more. One day it may see that it is contrary to the principles of Christian compassion and service to continue the cruel practice of eating our fellow-creatures. If any reader would like information about the Christian Vegetarian Association, please write to me.

Yours faithfully,

Vegetarianism Honours God's Creation

Patrons: Pastor James Thompson - the Animal Padre & Founder - Christians Against All Animal Abuse

Rev. J.R. Hyland - Editor, Humane Religion, USA **Fr John Ryder** - Anglican Priest, I of W.

Fr Derek Reeve - Catholic Priest (Retired), Southsea, Hampshire.

Samantha Chandler - Correspondence Secretary, Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals

Deborah Jones - General Secretary & Editor of *The Ark*, Catholic Concern for Animals.

Chairperson: Don Gwillim. General Secretary: Antony Neesham



Affiliated Ministry
CVA (USA)

List of local newspapers approached.

John & Wendy Brayshaw	Hampshire Chronicle	Ursula Low
Morley Advertiser (Nr Wakefield)	Beth Gorley	Stratford Herald
Heather Cox	Belfast Telegraph	Redditch Standard
The Daily Echo (Bournemouth)	The Irish News	Margaret Mutch
The Swanage Advertiser	United News	The Ellen Times (Aberdeenshire)
Sarah Dunning	Ballymena Times & Observer	Ellen Advertiser
The Watford Observer	Derry Journal	Fr John Ryder
Eileen Girling	Coleraine Chronicle	County Press
Hull Daily Mail	Mourne Observer	R.J.M. Steel
John Gilheany	Rita Hammonds	Ledbury Reporter
Western Mail etc	Lancaashire Evening Post	Margaret Turner
Don Gwillim	Sue Hodson	Bucks Examiner
Petersfield Post	Peterborough Evening Telegraph	Yvonne M. Nicholl
The Farnham Herald	Stamford Mercury	Pembrokeshire paper
Surrey Advertiser	Erica Jones	Helena Youle
The Aldershot News	Liphook Herald	

Tony Neesham (U.S.A.) sent our template letter to approx. 100 local papers in the U.K. (NB. Impossible to monitor)

John & Wendy Brayshaw sent the following variation of our template letter to the Morley Advertiser (Nr Wakefield)

Dear Editor,

As Christians, we dread this approach to Christmas. With all the excitement of shopping and arranging the festivities, one terrible outrage is being overlooked. That is the suffering being caused to countless living creatures as they are intensively reared and then slaughtered to provide 'festive fare' on the day. It is a cause of shame to us that the Christian Church has not seen fit to condemn or apologise for its complicity in this horror, especially as the Festival being celebrated is the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Whilst we believe it is up to each individual's conscience whether or not they do eat meat, we would ask readers to please consider buying 'free range' products - where the animals have at least had a GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE before being used for food. If you would like further information, please contact:

Compassion in World Farming, etc or Christian Vegetarian Association UK, etc.

Sue Hodson sent the following variation to the Peterborough Evening Telegraph and the Stamford Mercury.

It is a cause of great sadness to me and fellow Christian vegetarians that the celebration of the birth of Christ should be the occasion for the mass slaughter of largely intensively-reared living creatures to provide 'festive fare'. Poultry suffer as much as, or even more than, other factory farmed animals. They are packed tightly into dark barns and often mutilate each other in their distress. The slaughter process too is often far from humane.

We are often urged to 'put Christ back into Christmas' and one way for Christians to do this would be to show the compassion of Christ by replacing on their festive table a once-living creature with a delicious, easily available vegetarian alternative.

If any reader would like information about the Christian Vegetarian Association please visit their website at www.cvauk.org

Sue Hodson, Local contact CVAUK

Yvonne M Nicholl Submitted the following letter to her local paper:

A different Christmas

Sir, I celebrate the festive season as the birth of the 'Prince of Peace', but am ever mindful of Christmas-tide and consider many aspects surrounding it.

God proposed a simple lifestyle for mankind and an extremely modest one also: In Genesis, verse 1:29, 'I give you every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it'. So why should we not be content to live on natural resources - fruits, herbs and vegetables. Imagine a world righted by a physical and spiritual diet - one and the same!!

Therefore, my message next year would be hope and simplicity. Hope that there will be stewards who will take on the values of creation - and finally simplicity in that we retain God's generous offerings upon our earth without exploiting our resident creatures. May we restore the harmony we were given.

God bless you all, merry Christmas.

Yvonne M. Nicholl,

Founder, Pembrokeshire Pure Vegetarian Campaign,

Fr John Ryder Template letter published in the 'County Press' Isle of Wight, early in December. Fr John received 3 letters (see below), phone calls and was even stopped in the street. All communications were complimentary.

Dear Fr John,

I saw your letter in the County Press and am writing for more information. I have health problems and one of my greatest comforts (and joys) is being a Christian. Another pleasure is my pets, I have been a vegetarian for nearly 5 years and will never eat another animal again.

I agreed with everything in your letter. May I also add your church is one of the loveliest places I have been and I go there as often as I can.

Yours faithfully,
Belinda Smyth, East Cowes



Dear Fr John,

I feel I must write to tell you how interested I was to read your article in the County Press regarding the awful suffering caused to animals, particularly for the Christmas festivity. How can a celebration of the Christ - mass equate with slaughter and cruelty.

I gave up eating meat seventy six years ago since when vegetarianism has grown much, so let us hope and pray that the principle of non-killing will become a part of the Christian tradition.

Yours sincerely,
Doreen Haines, Binstead resident.

Dear Fr John,

With reference to your admirable letter in the County Press, isn't it strange that the three main religions of the world celebrate their most sacred festivals with the most appalling slaughter of creatures.

Christian - Christmas Turkey, Easter Lamb.

Jewish - Passover Lambs throats cut & bled to death.

Muslim - Ramadan strict fasting followed by (I believe) sheep & Goat slaughter.

It has been said that until mankind stops eating his fellow creatures, he will continue to killing his fellow men. Surely a Holy Day should be celebrated without killing.

Our prayers join with your public stand against this totally unnecessary cruelty in the name of religion, (you will already know how delicious vegetarian food is anyway).

Yours sincerely,
D.Dyke, Binstead resident.

PS I remember seeing a TV programme on the Russian Orthodox Church where after the services, in the home, a special cake was baked and eaten. Much more civilised!

Sarah Dunning had the following letter published in the Church magazine and sent our letter to the Watford Observer.

Where Will Your Turkey Come From?

The traditional Christmas meal to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Prince of Peace, will most likely be centred around roast turkey. Every year roughly 23 million turkeys are slaughtered in the UK, 6 million of these for the Christmas demand. And, with people wanting to buy as cheaply as possible, do they realise that the less they pay, the more the turkey will pay in terms of suffering?

Most of the UK's turkeys live with 25,000 other birds in a dimly-lit windowless shed in barren, overcrowded and usually filthy conditions. Some will undergo painful de-beaking in order to reduce aggression caused by their unnatural living conditions. All will have been produced by artificial insemination, very stressful to both male and female birds; having been bred for maximum breast meat, they are so top-heavy that they cannot mate naturally. Their short lives will be lived out in misery.

A small proportion of turkeys are reared in slightly better free-range conditions, or organic systems; higher animal welfare standards are an integral part of the organic package. Of course they cost more, but the turkey has not paid such a high price to subsidise your purse. How much cruelty are you prepared to condone for your celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Good Shepherd? Where will your turkey come from?

Heather Cox

Initial letter published in the Daily Echo (Bournemouth) and The Poole Advertiser.

Terrible outrage of Christmas Daily Echo (Bournemouth) 20.12.04

With the approach to Christmas and the excitement in arranging the festivities, one terrible outrage is being overlooked. That is the tremendous suffering being caused to countless living sentient creatures as they are intensively reared and then slaughtered, often inhumanely to provide festive fare on the day. It is shameful and extremely sad that the Christian church has not condemned or apologised for its complicity in this horror, especially as the festival being celebrated is the birth of the 'Prince of Peace'. This is sheer hypocrisy!

There have been many practices in the past for which the Church has eventually repented and apologised – pogroms, the Crusades, the Inquisition, slave trade, and much more. The Church leads from behind! One day it may see that it is contrary to the principles of Christian compassion and service to continue the cruel practice of killing and eating our fellow-creatures - God's creation. This terrible suffering and exploitation was never God's intention! Plants, not animals, can and were meant to serve human needs. A vegan/vegetarian lifestyle would be much more beneficial to the environment, better health and to feed the world's hungry.

'Dominion' means to be 'responsible for', 'to care for', not deliberately kill or abuse creation. One principle which most people, Christian or not, would support is that we should try to ensure the least harm is committed in the world and the least pain suffered as possible.

Surely, as individuals, we should take the responsibility to think things out for ourselves and maybe then Christians could hopefully help lead the church on this important issue: Goodwill and peace to all creation. If any reader would like information about the Christian Vegetarian Association, please visit their website at www.cvauk.org.

MRS HEATHER W COX, De Moulham Road, Swanage.



I'll eat anything Daily Echo 24.12.04

IN REFERENCE to the letter of December 16, creatures do have life right. I would just like to inform Mrs Cox that humans are not herbivores, nor carnivores, but omnivores, which means we can eat both plants and meat, as that is how we are designed.

If God had wanted us to eat just plants he would have made us that way. Humans can choose if they want to eat just plants or a mixture of both.

Mrs S APPLEBY, Address Supplied, Bournemouth.

Read the Bible Daily Echo 24.12.04

MRS Heather Cox of the Christian Vegetarian Association blithely ignores the plain heading of the Bible in her defence of vegetarianism.

Firstly, after the flood Noah was told by God all flesh could be his food (Genesis 9v3). Secondly the Passover instituted at the "Exodus of Israel from Egypt entailed eating lamb (Exodus 12). Finally Jesus and his disciples ate of it (Matthew 26) so we have no better example of God, sanctioned meat eating in Scripture. Study the good book!

JULIAN KENNEDY Beaufort Road Southbourne

Jesus would have been a vegetarian. Daily Echo 3.1.05

In answer to Mrs S. Appleby and Julian Kennedy "Just to say" Friday December 24th. Christians who condone the cruelty inflicted on God's creatures in today's world, by quoting isolated passages out of the Bible, without any reference whatsoever to God's justice and mercy, are in danger of condemning God in order to justify themselves. Pope Paul wrote that "any interpretation of the Bible that contradicts a rational understanding of God's goodness and mercy, is incorrect. Do they really believe that a loving God would condone our cruel, barbaric treatment of animals in today's factory farms? However Bible stories are interpreted, one certainty is to picture Jesus, Holy, Divinely compassionate, with a knife in His hand cutting the throats of life loving innocent creatures is definitely contradictory!

Recycling grain through animals is a very inefficient way of getting our sustenance. In today's world where thousands are dying of starvation every day and knowing that the Earth can sustain 10 billion vegetarians but only 3 billion meat eaters, would Jesus really condone a meat based diet?

Finally, the World Watch Institute informs us that "The human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every major category of environmental damage now threatening the human future---deforestation, erosion, fresh water scarcity, air and water pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, social injustice, the destabilisation of communities, and the spread of disease." We all have a duty to care, Christian or non-Christian. Let's start with ourselves and go veggie.

For confirmation or further information please contact myself or visit the Christian Vegetarian Association UK website at www.cvauk.org for contact details.

Heather Cox, 20 De Moulham Road, Swanage, BH19 1NY

'Go veggie but do your maths first' Daily Echo 6.1.05

GO VEGGIE (Jesus would have been Vegetarian, Letters, Jan 3) What an excellent idea !But have you thought of the consequences ? No more cows, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, geese, turkeys, ducks (have I missed anything?) and the fishing industry would disappear. Now consider this: the total mass of the eaters cannot be more than 10 per cent of the eaten or else the food supply runs out and we get famine. Assuming the average weight of a person (including children) is 100lbs (45kg) and a population of about 60 million, we would need $60 \times 45 \times 10 = 27,000,000,000$ Kg of edible plant life.

How many acres would be needed to grow that amount? Perhaps a local farmer could enlighten us. Still, I suppose it would solve the fox hunting problem as they will no longer be an issue with arable farmers and rabbits will have to be exterminated to protect the food supply. So what will foxes eat? Cats and small dogs? And on what will you feed your cats and dogs? You do know what a tin of cat/dog food contains, don't you? By the way, have you heard the scream of a lettuce as it is ripped out of the ground or considered the agony of an apple being vivisectioned?

GED ODGEAR, Fairmile Road, Christchurch

'...then they try to destroy you' Daily Echo 13.1.05

I WAS concerned by Ged Odgear's Alerter (Echo Jan 6) claiming that the world cannot sustain a vegan diet. Even top ecologists are recommending us to change our food habits because animal-based food is not sustainable. Their main concern is water supply, a day's food for a meat eater requires more than 15,000 litres of water compared with 5,000 for a vegetarian and just 1,150 for a vegan.

Most of the grain we produce feeds animals where it takes 10 times more food to produce animal protein than the equivalent vegetable protein. We could feed the world if we lost our greed for animal products.

Ged also asks what would become of the millions of animals and birds reared for our use. They are all unnatural creatures bred to obtain the maximum profit. A cow now produces 10 times the milk it produced 20 years ago, and new drugs are on the way to increase that even further. Few of us see any of these animals in the fields except for cows and sheep, because they are cruelly kept in factory farms where chemicals including antibiotics are used to make them grow faster and keep them alive. Science is now using GM technology to make them even more productive. The fishing industry will destroy itself anyway Ged, because it is already scraping the bottom of the barrel and in the process destroying the food chain and the food supply of the seals and dolphins. Sea vegetables contain all the nutrition we need but few of us use them. Finally, Ged, you ask how would we feed our cats and dogs without meat and fish? Well, Vegans make a good job of it.

I think it was Gandhi who said: "When you come up with an idea, first they ridicule you, then they persecute you, then they try to destroy you before at last they listen." I think the time has come to listen.

JOHN RAWLINGS, Luckham Close, Bournemouth

Ursula Lowe

Ursula sent our template letter to the Stratford Herald and the Redditch Standard. The Redditch Standard published the letter on the 24th Dec. 2004.

Protest at vicious letter Redditch Standard 7.1.05

I REALLY must protest at the vicious letter from U Lowe in your December 24 issue.

Throughout the animal and insect world, bigger animals have always eaten the smaller animals and insects, does God smite them down, does God say this is wrong? Of course he/she doesn't.

And when she bites into her lettuce (the article sounds as if it is written by a lady for some reason) does Christianity say this is wrong simply because a lettuce can't scream after being pulled out of the ground, cuts its foot off, chops it into little pieces and then stuffs it into her mouth.

Everything that grows has life, but just because a plant cannot express feelings doesn't mean to say that it cannot feel pain or emotion.

Personally I'm having a goose for my Christmas dinner or rather, by the time you might read this letter, I had goose for my Christmas dinner!

Des Adams via e-mail

Ann Priestner had this letter published in the Stockport Express, 16th December 2004.

Christmas is no fun for turkeys

AS a Christian I have in some ways dreaded Christmas. Not only with the usual things like the crowds when shopping but also something being overlooked.

The Christmas dinner. The suffering of the turkey and the thousands of living creatures intensively reared and then slaughtered to provide this feast for the day.

It seems unbelievable when it is to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. If any reader would like information about the Christian Vegetarian Association, please phone me at 0161 429 6146 or visit the web -site at www.cvauk.org.

Glenys P, Stockport (Ann Priestner)

John Gilheany had the following letter published in the **Western Mail**, 6th December 2004.

Blood price

Sir - It is a real shame that Christendom tends to allow a century or so to pass before apologising for its participation in needless bloodletting.

The medieval Crusades, Spanish Inquisition and slave trade of the British Empire have all been granted a gospel mandate at different stages in the moral evolution of society. Yet today's Christian conscience would hopefully renounce any link between violent oppression and the love of God; as revealed through an intelligent and intuitive understanding of the Bible.

The spirit of the scriptures as a whole, rather than the specific letter has been the impetus behind many a benevolent deed, institution and movement in Christian history. Yet instead of seeking to cultivate a compassionate process which Christ attempted to instil, contemporary religionists all too often seek to shrivel the infinite love of God.

A particularly grim consequence of theological neglect can be witnessed in the ruthless exploitation and rampant cruelty which has afflicted countless animal lives, over centuries. It is even the case that traditional celebrations for the birth of the Prince of Peace during the "season of goodwill" are routinely characterised by millions of turkey deaths, in the UK alone.

The challenge for the Church will be to reconcile the real message of peace" mercy and justice which the Bible contains with a credible form of Christian compassion.

For information about one such initiative, please visit the Christian Vegetarian Association UK website at: www.cvauk.org

JOHN M GILHEANY Mackintosh Place, Roath, Cardiff

Carol Jacklin did not submit our letter as she had already had published the following letter and picture in the Scunthorpe Herald, 29th November 2004.

We can stop this slaughter

THE way animals are killed in slaughterhouses is something most of us don't want to think about -but the incredible fact that nearly 2 5 million are slaughtered each day means it is an issue we can't ignore

People like to believe animals are killed humanely, but almost none of us ever set foot in these places and the truth is very different. In fact, millions of animals suffer pain and fear when they are improperly stunned before slaughter and may fail to lose consciousness at all facing a violent and terrifying death Around a quarter of all pigs are now killed using gas chambers, but the gas mixtures used in most of them cause huge distress to the animals before they eventually lose consciousness

Long delays between electrical stunning and the knifing which actually kills the animals means many recover consciousness while bleeding to death These shocking facts are well known but the Government will take no action and the slaughterhouses are only interested in maximising the speed at which they turn living creatures into cuts of meat

Luckily each of us has the power to do something about this By becoming vegetarian we stop supporting this brutal industry and reduce the number of animals enduring this fate On average, each vegetarian saves over a thousand animals from the abattoir

Carol Jacklin Pasture Road, Barton upon Humber



Suffering:

Pigs can suffer huge distress

Fr Derek Reeve sends a word of caution when dealing with the secular press:

My problem is that I am not happy about washing our dirty linen in public and I don't feel that the press is the proper place for us to be taking the churches to task for their attitudes to the animal creation and the environment generally. While I agree with you totally on the way in which Christians have condoned the wholesale slaughter of animals, I feel that we must address ourselves to them and not to the general public.

On the other hand I feel it is quite right for us to appeal to people generally to give thought to the vile slaughter that Christmas provokes, I think we should do this as individuals with a social conscience rather than as disenchanting Christians.

I hope you will accept these remarks in the spirit in which they are intended and I am still wholly in support of any approaches that we can make to the churches on behalf of our animal sisters and brothers and towards the adoption of vegetarianism by Jesus' followers.

Send all comments to Don Gwillim - Editor