

# Christian Vegetarian Association UK

Working towards a violence-free world

Home of Veg4Lent



## NEWSLETTER

Advent - December 2006 - No. 2



### *Our Threefold Ministry*

1. *Of Environment and Health*
2. *Of Animal Rights and Welfare*
3. *Of Discipleship*

### *Our Threefold Mission*

1. *To support and encourage Christian Vegetarians in the United Kingdom.*
2. *To share with non-vegetarian Christians how a vegetarian diet can add meaning to one's faith, aid one's spirituality, and enhance one's moral life.*
3. *To show all those with eyes to see that a plant-based way of life represents good, responsible Christian stewardship for all of God's Creation.*

### *Our In-Flight Team*

*Paul Taylor - Correspondence Secretary*  
*Fr John Ryder - Spokesperson*  
*Eleisha C Newman - Newsletter Editor*  
*Don Gwillim - Administrator*

### *Our Website*

*[www.christianvegetarian.co.uk](http://www.christianvegetarian.co.uk)*

### *Our UK Chat-site*

*<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/christveg>*

### *Our Patrons*

*Pastor James Thompson - the "Animal Padre" & Founder of 'Christians Against All Animal Abuse*  
*Fr. Derek Reeve - Roman Catholic Priest (Retired), Southsea, Hampshire*  
*Anthony Neesham - Veg4Lent Founder, now based in the USA*  
*Deborah Jones - General Secretary & Editor of "The Ark", Catholic Concern for Animals*  
*Rev. J.R. Hyland - Editor "Humane Religion", USA*  
*Samantha Chandler - Correspondence Secretary, Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals*

**"Let the Heavens Rejoice and Earth Be Glad", *Psalm 95, v11.***

**Photo: Don Gwillim - Petworth Park Oct 2006 - See back page.**

**Editorial...**

Decisions, decisions! To what extent can we decide what sort of Christmas we are going to have? If we relax and accept the world as it is for the season, do the values of 'live and let live' prevail? To what extent can our Christmas peace-making compromise our deeper values?

It can be useful to contrast 'the world' with 'the spiritual' at this time. The contradictions and confusions that characterize our society are usually too inconvenient to be contemplated. But with Christmas, the secret expectations of children are playfully invited to make themselves known. Then the conflicts of values which we hopelessly muddle through with may begin to assume the dignity of a 'paradox', as a sense of wonder and mystery is allowed to slip in. And dusty grown-ups begin to feel again, to recall their childhoods, and remember their neglected loves too.

Concessions, concessions! To what extent ought we to decide what sort of Christmas we are going to have? If we let Christ enter with the children, how open are we to accepting the world as God has made it, and who commands that it yet shall be? To what extent can our Christmas campaigning compromise God's unfathomable values?

If only we could unfold God's Kingdom as we may a Christmas tablecloth, ironing out injustices as though they were creases, washing away bloodshed as though it were an overlooked sherry stain, restoring peace as though it were etiquette.

When we have reasoned with the children 'how?', and 'why?' and 'to what effect?' our world is the way it is, may we not merrily relax as we turn our imaginations into God's service, enquire further about His works and purposes, and wonder at how things would shape up for all His creatures, if we lived more observantly of Him?

*Eleisha Carol Newman*

**Invitation to submit items  
& publication dates:****Lenten Newsletter**

Final submission date: 11 January 2007  
Publication: Week beginning 12 Feb. 2007  
(Ash Wednesday - 21 February 2007,  
Good Friday - 6th April 2007)

**Pentecost Newsletter:**

Final submission date: 11 May 2007  
Publication: Week beginning 28 May 2007  
(Pentecost Sunday - 27th May 2007)

**Harvest Newsletter:**

Final submission date: 11 Sept. 2007  
Publication: Week beginning 1 Oct. 2007  
(Harvest Thanksgiving - c. 30th Sept. -07)

**Advent Newsletter:**

Final Submission date: 11 Nov. 2007  
Publication: Week beginning 19th Nov. -07  
(First Sunday of Advent - 2nd Dec. 2007)

**Contents....**

- "May We Suggest...." - Interpreting Scripture
- "Don't Exaggerate..." - Some Facts & Figures
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- "Birds of a Feather..." - Rallies & Events
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**Testimonial...****CVAUK Correspondence Secretary - Paul Taylor**

I was brought up a so-called 'Christian' by parents who didn't go to church, whose knowledge of the teachings of Jesus made no sense to me as a child and by a grandparent whose version of Christianity centred on a deep mistrust of people and an irrational fear and hatred of the world. But, I was told that I was a Christian so that was that - a default Christian. I was frightened of my father, so it followed that I should be frightened of God.

My father was employed as a chauffeur to the Bishop of Southwell. Guided by the Bishop and a lovely lady who lived next door to us, I became a server at Southwell Minster. When the Bishop's secret affair with a Playboy bunny-girl was made public, my father resigned and moved the family out of the area. I decided I'd had enough of Christianity and threw myself whole-heartedly into a life of full-time delinquency.

Something was missing though, and during my later teenage years and through my twenties and beyond, I followed many other spiritual paths which took me to Yoga, Buddhism, Zen, paganism - nature-based religions, shamanism &c. I stopped eating animal flesh, oscillating between vegetarian and vegan, following a Zen Buddhist way of life, practising Soto Zen meditation and attending retreats at a Zen Buddhist monastery.

During this time I was surprised one day to find myself thinking about Jesus Christ. Nothing could have been further from my mind but the thoughts and feelings continued. I was extremely anti-Christianity and I couldn't understand why I should be troubled by Jesus Christ when I was immersed in Buddhism and the Buddha. This was not a situation I wanted to encourage so I ignored it and actively resisted for some time.

I finally gave up the resistance and discovered similarities (and differences), between Zen and Christian mysticism, which have led me on further to the realisation that although I had not recognized my companion, Jesus had never left my side nor had given up on me. A vegetarian for 24 years, I am only now discovering what it means to drink the cup that Jesus drinks.

## ***CVAUK Newsletter - Code of Practice...***

### ***It is the intention of the CVAUK Team:***

- 1.... *To produce a newsletter as frequently as is required in order to serve, encourage and equip you, our members, with the expertise, Theological back-up, and campaign advice that will best serve the objectives of our threefold mission and ministries (see front cover).*
- 2.... *To undertake the above through the material economies that we can make of our pooled resources.*
- 3.... *To avoid confrontation, so far as is possible.*
- 4.... *To obtain all appropriate permissions before distributing information, whether inside or outside of a church.*
- 5.... *To encourage and support each other in the practice of our Christian Faith through sharing views in this Newsletter and in other suitable forms of communication, all in conformity with the Code of Practice (currently draft, but to be agreed and subsequently revised in future AGMs).*
- 6.... *To ensure that any statements, letters and articles published in the name of CVAUK are in agreement with existing Animal Welfare and Environmental declarations by the recognized Ecclesiastical authorities, or any approved statements made by members of clergy or otherwise respected theologians (see Appendix 1, 2 & 3 of CVAUK Draft Code of Practice; up-dated compilations for members' reference to be produced in due course).*
- 7.... *To restrict our public debate of Biblical subjects to those included in shared Canonical texts.*
- 8.... *To avoid controversial and/or categorical statements that cannot be substantiated by Scripture, Historical evidence or Scientific proofs in accordance with accepted methodologies.*

***The CVAUK Team currently comprises only four members, and so we would like to remind you, wherever you can, to be self-regulating in these matters. Your active contribution and feedback to this Newsletter (or direct to the Team members) is needed in order for it to fulfil its purpose. Members are also invited to join the In-Flight Team and become more involved in the day-to-day running of the Association and join campaigns.***

**Please send Newsletter Items and Comments to:**

Email: <godsend.eleisha@gmail.com>

**Eleisha Carol Newman - CVAUK Newsletter Editor**

**Please send all other Correspondence & Requests to:**

Email: <dongwil@uk2.net>

**Don Gwillim - CVAUK Administrator**

### ***May We Suggest....***

*What if Jesus were the man who stopped on the road to Jericho, and every human were the Man lying by the wayside? What if He took the man to Bethlehem, to the very Inn where the Christchild was born? What if the landlord of the Inn were none other than God the Father, and the rest and refreshment given were that of the Holy Spirit? Would not the price paid by the good Samaritan be the bloodshed and the pains borne on the cross? Would not the Samaritan's mount be every beast employed to serve our needs throughout the length of our lives? In what way would each of us occupy ourselves in that purgatory of recovery at the Inn, until Christ, the good Samaritan, returns? How will he find us when he returns? Gladly assisting the landlord of the Inn and earning him profit, whilst looking out expectantly for our Saviour's return? Or eating and drinking that which bears a high price; up to no good? Through our baptism, we Christians have a foretaste of our death and an inkling of God's love. Perhaps then, for us, the Church is our 'Guild of Master Stewards' formed to give us guidance in our conduct, and the human family is the Inn and the whole world is the stable where the Christ is born*

### ***Our Spokesman, Fr John Ryder, writes.....***

**I have recently been devastated by the death of a faithful cat, who has been my companion and confidant through many difficult times.**

**I do not believe in euthanasia for humans. But there are no hospices for cats, where top medical care can be combined with the constant presence and comfort of loves ones. So I felt something had to be done.**

**Even though this was only days in advance of his inevitable death from natural causes, and I believe I did the best for him, the decision still tortures me.**

**One of the main themes of Advent is 'Judgement'. I am not a wet liberal, I believe there will be a Day of Judgement, and I am glad of it.**

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**Even though I do not in any sense consider myself innocent. Have you ever looked into the eyes of someone who loves you but whom you have hurt? And seen the pain? This is how I imagine the Day of Judgment will be.**

**First, we will need to look into the eyes of those whom we have hurt, and come to understand to take on their pain.**

**Then, we will need to look into our Father's eyes, and see His pain; His pain both because of what we have done to others, and because of what we have thereby done to ourselves. The fact that His eyes will continue to look upon us with love will make looking into them all the more painful.**

**And finally, we will have to look into Our Lord's eyes. As He holds out His Cross to us, this will be our final humiliation, and healing.**

**I hope my beloved cat will not be there to accuse me. But I know every animal we have ever caused to be reared unnaturally, or had slaughtered, so that we could eat meat, or drink milk, or wear leather, or have just the right breed of pet available to us when we want it, will be there:: looking lovingly but accusingly saying "But you were made in the image of God! How could you do this to us?"**

**And our loving Father, equally hurt by the pain of all his creatures, will support them and say, "How could my instructions have been clearer? I told you what your diet should be, and that I would hold you responsible for the life of all my creatures."**

**May our tears of repentance now, as we prepare for His coming, make the Final Day easier for us to bear.**

**Fr John Ryder**

**The Gospel of Matthew** gives us a sketchy account of the birth of Jesus, without any direct mention of animals. **The Gospel of Mark** omits the nativity altogether, beginning with John the Baptist crying out in the wastelands. **The Gospel of John** proclaims the birth of The Word made flesh, full of truth and grace, but with no specific mention of other creatures either. For any animal-conscious Christmas Story, therefore, we are dependent upon **Luke, the Physician amongst the Evangelists**, who focused most on promoting the healing nature of Christ's ministry and miracles.

It is Luke who tells us that Emmanuel is placed in a manger, and that the shepherds were watching over their sheep. It is Luke who tells us that when Jesus was presented at the Temple with two doves, the Holy Spirit ensured that they were received by Simeon and Anna, both people pleasing to God.

Luke also includes the detail that an angel appeared to Zechariah to the right of the altar where incense was burned, which was the golden altar upon which no animals were sacrificed. This altar was complemented by a golden table, a golden menorah (candle stand), and golden show cases for displaying bread. This golden altar was placed to the East of the Temple, where a special wing had been built which had a window to allow the light to come in.

From Luke we may also deduce that the angel appeared with the dawn, because this was the time that the sacrifice was offered on the altar where incense was burned. How similar this all seems to our Christian Liturgy. Was the star Jesus was born under our own bright Sun? Was Our Lady's modesty *as she gave birth to the Son of God* veiled in the dazzling light which cheers all creatures, and not the black of night? Did she raise him up above her head like Sacred Bread as their bodies broke apart? St Luke encourages us to think about such details, reminding us of our own creaturely-ness. Whether Christmas reminds you of the first day or the last day, the alpha or the omega, the darkness or the light, it is a time for opening our eyes a little bit wider to what God wishes us to see.

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The CVAUK Team would like to make "May We Suggest..." a regular feature in our Newsletter, and eventually to compile an authoritative booklet of helpful interpretations of challenging Scripture passages. Please help in this task by submitting any interpretations which have helped you. They may be written by a recognized member of the Clergy, a qualified Theologian, or have received an imprimatur or other endorsement to say that they are in accordance with the Christian faith. If you have heard something helpful written in a sermon, write it down and ask the Preacher/Homilist to put his name and qualification to it. Or, without being an authority on the subject, you may have grasped an insight in prayer which you would like CVAUK Theologians and advisers to give their agreement to. The CVAUK will consider ALL submitted interpretations, and the most helpful will also be published.

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## ***Don't Exaggerate...*** **Turkeys for Christmas?...**

It may take a while for a human to appreciate the aesthetic of a Turkey, but they can be quite proud of their own textured and colourful looks. Their eyes are large in proportion to their delicate heads, and are dark, and almond-shaped. Turkeys are intelligent, gentle, and live in organized social networks of harems protected by dominant males, the mothers in turn being very protective of their young. They live wild in Northern and Central American woodlands, roosting in trees, eating vegetation and some insects. When they spread their wings, they can fly up to 50 miles per hour, and can live to be 10 years or more old.

In the UK alone, 35 million turkeys are killed each year, 22 million of these on licensed premises, requiring their transportation. Ten million turkeys die just for Christmas, at the hands of men hired casually for the season with no expertise. UK legislation permits two methods for slaughtering turkeys; by decapitation or dislocation of the neck. Dislocation is the most usual practice, although 'animal experiments' have shown that immediate unconsciousness is unlikely with this method even in skilled hands. Although they are supposed to be dead before their bodies are boiled, stripped and chopped, this may not be the case. If slaughter is carried out at the place where the birds are reared, no license is required.

Turkeys are usually reared in sheds, and it is now common practice to de-beak, de-snood, and breed by artificial insemination. Most farmed turkeys around the world are bred by only three companies. Between 6% and 15% of turkeys reared die in the sheds due to an increasing number of infectious diseases which they are prone to, or of dehydration/starvation because they cannot obtain water or food in their living conditions. Aggression breaks out amongst the de-socialized birds, with cannibalism and eye-pecking. Unnaturally stimulated growth leads to leg deformation, and lameness, whilst the un-cleanliness and overcrowding causes burns and other injuries. Transportation results in further rough treatment and deprivations. They are usually slaughtered between the ages of 12 and 26 weeks, but sometimes when only 10 weeks old. (More information <http://www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/turkeys/index.html>)

## **Chicago City Leads World in Restaurant Prohibition...**

Chicago is the first city in the United States to ban restaurants from selling Foie Gras pate. Due to the torture inflicted upon the ducks and geese whose livers are swollen with force-feeding, Chicago City is confident that its decision will withstand legal challenge.

## **2005-2006 UK Supermarket Animal Welfare Awards...**

CIWF rated Waitrose the best Supermarket in the UK in overall performance on farm animal welfare, with a total of 49 out of a possible 60 points. Marks and Spencers ranked second, just two points behind, receiving an additional award for investment and innovation in animal welfare. The Cooperative Group were commended for being the most improved, in third place. Tesco ranked fourth, and Sainsbury's fifth.

## **Scientific Research Findings...**

**Liverpool University, UK**, has analysed research carried out in 21 countries into morning sickness in pregnant women. There appears to be a link between nausea and diet, and researchers suggest that this response may have evolved to prevent pregnant women eating too much unhealthy food. Nausea and vomiting in pregnant women is associated with high intakes of sugar, alcohol, oils and meat, and can be triggered even at the smell or sight of these substances. Countries with high intakes of sugars, sweeteners, stimulants such as caffeine, meats, milk and eggs, had higher sickness rates in pregnant women. Countries with high intakes of cereals and pulses had fewer sick pregnant women.

**The Medical Research Council's human nutrition unit at Dunn, Cambridge University, UK**, have followed up a major European study conducted last year, which monitored the diets of nearly half a million men and women in 10 countries over a period of 5 years, which indicated that people who eat 2 portions of red or processed meat a day increase their risk of bowel cancer by 35%, compared with those who eat one portion weekly. The latest research shows that people who have a diet high in red meat have 'significant' increase in levels of DNA damage compared to vegetarians.

**Vanderbilt University in Nashville, USA**, have conducted research over 10 years on 2,000 volunteers, monitoring their fruit juice consumption. Alzheimer's disease is 76% lower for those who drink fruit and vegetable juices more than 3 times a week compared to those who drank them less than once a week. Two cups of green tea a day can also reduce the risk of mental decline in old age to up to a half.

**University of Chicago, USA**, researchers have calculated the relative carbon intensity of a standard vegan diet compared to a US-style carnivorous diet, from production, through processing, distribution, and cooking to consumption. An average weight male burger-eater emits the equivalent of 1.5 tonnes more CO<sub>2</sub> each year than does the standard vegan. (For more information: <http://www.ciwf.org.uk/eatlessmeat/html/news.html>)

**Environmental Law Foundation, UK**, Vice-President, Diana Schumacher, spoke at a joint CofE Diocese of Chichester Social Concerns Department and RC Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Justice and Peace 'Church and Environment Meeting', an ecumenical initiative that has been developing for ten years. She suggested that all of the little wrong decisions made by ordinary people in their daily lives is a major contributor to climate change, which is comforting because it means that there is something that we ordinary people can do to reverse the trend - put all those little mistakes right again. The big decision-makers seem powerless to influence the energy usage in the rooms where they meet. Can the same be said about our Religious Leaders, and dietary global decision-makers? Can they exercise any choice about what they themselves eat? The Environmental Law Foundation aims to secure environmental and social justice for all. (For more information: [www.elflaw.org](http://www.elflaw.org))

***Keep In Touch...******Vegetarian Animals... Rabbits****Tracy Gwillim writes:*

Everyone thinks differently about rabbits; childrens' pet, pest species, food or laboratory animal. Most people disregard them as of very little merit, intelligence or even worthy of thinking about. The truth is so far away from these disparaging remarks that when you try and tell people about the real rabbit, they think you are telling them a tall story.

We live with a trio of house rabbits. House rabbits are exactly that. Rabbits that live in your home, use a litter tray like a cat, and are generally part of the family. Rabbits are intelligent, vegetarian, loving, emotional creatures. To keep a solitary rabbit is cruel; they require a friend of their own kind. If you have ever witnessed two (or in our case three) bunnies cuddled up together, grooming and snuggling each other, you would never consider keeping a single rabbit.

Rabbits are often thought of as meek. However, our three will take on three poodles, pushing their way to the front of the queue if I am handing out vegetarian dog biscuits. Our dogs never underestimate a rabbit on a dog biscuit raid! Our new puppy Sunny would always be boxed around the face if he invaded Michael's (our dwarf rabbit) personal space. Sunny has been taught to respect Michael by Michael himself. However, our black female rabbit, Summer, adores any form of loving attention and will allow the dogs to lick her face and ears. Pippin, our chocolate Poodle, loves her and is often found being, let's say, a little too amorous with her. A word soon splits the unlikely pair up!

Even if you cannot imagine allowing your rabbits to live loose in your home, please do not confine them to the run-of-the-mill pet shop hutches. Rabbits need room; lots of it. When confined, they become depressed, over-weight and their bones become weak. Indoor cages are available, so you can pop them away when you need to. They do not make good children's pets however; most adult rabbits do not like being picked up. They can scratch and bite very hard. They can also easily break their backs if dropped from a height. If kept with Guinea Pigs, they tend to bully them. The two species are completely different and have different needs, diet, and are not ideal companions.

Rabbits will learn and respond to their names being called and they love to play and hide away in cardboard boxes. They will quickly destroy any cabling that is not bunny-proofed! We have had our phone cut off twice by a previous female bunny that found a flaw in all our attempts to protect electrical wiring. Like dogs, rabbits should have yearly vaccinations. Two are needed, one for the dreaded myxomatosis, a wicked man-made disease designed to wipe out our wild rabbits from farmland, and another for viral haemorrhagic disease. You are really playing Russian Roulette with your bunnies' lives if you don't have them vaccinated.

Their diet should also be carefully chosen. The old-style mix (sadly still available at most pet shops) was really designed for putting weight on meat rabbits as quickly as possible. The rabbits that are forced to live on these mixes, usually only eat the parts that they like. This causes lots of digestive problems and also, due to lack of good quality fibre in their diet, their teeth grow all wrong and then they run into dreadful dental problems requiring frequent veterinary treatment. Many owners don't even notice the problem and the poor rabbit is left in pain, unable to eat properly, and ends up suffering from digestive problems, and horrible abscesses, that can both lead to premature death. Rabbits are not a cheap option as a pet, they require and deserve good quality veterinary care. They should be neutered like your dog to stop them breeding and to protect them from diseases such as uterine cancer, which affects 80% of un-neutered 'does' before the age of five.

It breaks my heart to think of the millions of rabbits that are used in laboratories all over the world for drug testing, cosmetic testing and vile experiments. Our rabbits are a source of laughter, relaxation and sheer pleasure on a daily basis. We have had several rabbits, many rescue cases, and every single one has had a completely unique character. Jake Sisko, a black mini lop was left in a flat with a snake who would have liked him for dinner. He was the most loving, sweet, adorable rabbit who would follow me everywhere, making sweet little buzzing noises and rubbing his chin on me at every available opportunity. Moogie, a crossbred female, adored being cuddled under a blanket, and Data, a dwarf bunny, had the most irascible nature ever!

We thank God for each and every one that has shared our home and our lives. They have taught us so much. One of God's most overlooked and misunderstood creatures. Living with the humble rabbit is truly a pleasure!

## A Christmas Culture of Life...

**Does your home have a prominent front window?** CVAUK Member, Ann Wills of Ruislip says; "I think it would be a good witness if Christians put a Nativity stable scene in their front window at Christmas. This is a silent but visible Christian show of faith and shows the prominence of animals in the Christmas story. This could be imaginatively lit to highlight it - not with candles in case of fire! Children love Nativity scenes and could have fun looking for animals to put in it. Displaying a stable scene in a front window is a way to show passers-by the real reason why we celebrate Christmas. It costs around £40 to buy a good sized stable, so perhaps handy DIY church members could make more affordable ones, which could be sold at church Christmas bazaars."

If your home does not have a prominent window suitable for a crib, there may be other ways of communicating the same message: Nativity posters, stained glass window decorations, acrylic mock-stained glass stickers &c.

Ann also suggests: "One idea from 'Roots' Christian magazine is for churches to hold a Crib Festival where everybody who wants to may bring a crib set to a special church service. At one church, over 100 nativity sets were displayed. Some were ancient and hand-carved, some were from other countries, and some were tiny. Small churches could combine with others in the area to hold a Crib Service." If you have a Crib Set, do remember to ask your Priest to bless it for you, with all of your creatures too, and not just when it is first acquired but every year before it is put on display. If your Priest or Minister does not at first wish to hold a Crib Service of this kind, he may change his mind if a large number of his people request individual blessings. It may also prove to be a good opportunity to serve vegetarian refreshments in the church hall.

**When Christmas Shopping**, Ann Wills further says, "I think we should choose Christmas cards and Advent Calendars with a Christian picture on, such as a Nativity scene. Manufacturers only produce what people buy - so if we don't use our money to purchase Christian products they won't be manufactured any more. Let's put the Christ back into Christmas and include the animals." For those who cannot find Christmas Advent Calendars, cards and Nativity Scenes &c, there are some available by post from [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org), telephone 020-8642 8668 (Aid to the Church in Need). Remember, also, to use Christian Ecology Link's motto when shopping this Christmas, for Jesus was born in Bethlehem (the place of bread) so "Use Your Loaf", for Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly, and Fairly traded. There are also the four 'R's of our Redeemer to Remember: (1) Re-think, (2) Re-use, (3) Re-pair, (4) Re-cycle; that is, only buy what you Really need, which will continue to be useful and not Rejected.

**Making the Most of the Season:** Christmas really begins with the Feast of Christ the King, and ends with the Epiphany. If you like to move your three wise men closer to the crib each Sunday until they reach the manger on the Epiphany and you wish to involve other members of the family, such as children, in the anticipation, why not place a 'gift' at the next 'stopping place' for the children to find and move the Wise Men on to. The gift could be a box containing a quiz game of your own making; why not write down as answers 'all the things that you would like the participants to know but have lacked opportunity to explain to them', and start them wondering with ambiguous questions.

**For Christmas Eve**, gently warmed grape juice without spices is as tasty as mulled wine. If your Christmas would not be the same without mince pies, but they usually make fingers too sticky, just add a little ground almond and ground rice to your stewed apple and favourite dried fruit mixture before spooning it into mini-pie cups and baking. If you have smokers visiting you, don't let them spoil your day; present them with an ashtray-sized bowl of sunflower seeds to satisfy their cravings with genuine nutrients and, complement this with a few twiglets or bread sticks to keep busy their fingers.

**For Christmas Lunch:** make your favourite, most flavoursome, nut/vegetable roast or stuffing mixture, and mould it into raindrop shapes. Then make a wholemeal/organic bread dough (½ spelt and ½ rye flour is ideal), and wrap each nut/vegetable serving in a pizza-like round, shaping and pressing it so that it looks like a wheatgrain. Bake these in the oven on Christmas day, serving them on a large platter in the form of an ear of wheat. The Head of the table ought to carve each portion into slices with a bread knife, and they can be served with traditional vegetables, vegetarian gravy and fruit spreads/sauces. If extra are baked at the same time, they can be served cold the following day with grilled left-over veg and preserves.

***Instead of Christmas Pudding:*** with all of its cooking, steam and suet, have you considered an alternative to the usual? **How about “Essene Bread”** (also known as sprouted wheat bread) with raisins? It is a simple recipe made with just wheat and water, to which sun dried grapes may be added (or any ingredient of your choice). It is thought to have been prepared and eaten in more or less the same way for up to 6,000 years! It is extremely nutritious, and can be eaten without complaint by people whose bodies cannot usually tolerate bread. It can be bought off the shelf in health food stores, Sunnyvale Organics of Aylesbury have a lovely recipe, and have been very helpful in providing information for this Newsletter. Or the whole family can take a hand in its baking as a rediscovered festive tradition. Many recipes are available on websites. Simply sprout spelt or wheat grains in the usual way, soaking for a day then rinsing thrice daily, until the shoots are equal in length to the grain. Then grind the grain (in a food processor for ease) until you have a dough. If the mixture is too wet, some dried fruit can be added to the dough in the mixer. Do not be afraid of over mixing it; it will turn from sprouted grains to a paste and then into a real dough that holds to the sides of the basin. It can then be taken out and kneaded by each member of the family in turn, pressing in the fruit until it is evenly distributed, for up to ten minutes. Then press the dough into loaves of the required shape and size, place on a baking tray upon a grain-sprinkled base to prevent sticking, cover with tins as cloches to prevent the crusts becoming too dry, and bake on a very low temperature in the oven for about 4 hours. Low temperatures allow the enzymes to remain alive, and maintain an increased nutritional value. Once baked, and cooled on a tray, the bread can be wrapped and stored in the fridge until Christmas day. After the main course, slice the bread, toast it or gently warm it in the oven again, spread favourite nut butter and plum jam on top, and serve with a generous helping of hot dairy-free custard or dairy-free cream. #

***Why Not Gather Around the Tree for Epiphany?*** Make a bit more of the old custom of throwing a silver sixpence in the Christmas pudding, and save it with the wise men... A selection of saints medals can be bought from Repository Shops for between £1 to £3 each, and they can be used again and again. Scald them in boiling water to kill any germs, thread them with 100% cotton necklaces, and wrap them carefully in baking paper, and place them in the bottom of small paper cake cups. Then make some muffin mixtures. Perhaps peaches and maple syrup for gold, apple and cinnamon for Frankincense, banana and coco or blueberries and pine nuts for myrrh. Place the muffin mixtures into the cups on top of the medals, and place in the oven to bake. Serve them up around the Christmas Tree with hot soya milk and nutmeg for ‘elevenes’ and everyone can wear their medal until midday. Then, find on the tree an envelope with a picture of each respective saint drawn upon it, each swap their medal for the envelope, and open to find within a part of a domestic ‘para-liturgy’ giving thanks, extending concern to all people, animals and living creatures in the world, and bringing Christmastide to a conclusion. Then, set about cheerfully taking down all of the decorations in the house, ending finally with the tree. #

***Animal Welfare Christmas Carols: Provided by Val Hubert***  
***To be sung to the tune of ‘In the Bleak Midwinter’***

In the cold of winter	No-one to care for them,	Can we sing of good will,
Frost lies on the ground.	As they travel far,	Love and peace to all?
Protestors are watching.	No-one to watch o’er them,	And not let that blessing,
Wait the dreaded sound.	But the silent star.	On all creatures fall?
Hear the cry, they’re coming,	Many miles they’ve travelled,	If through the-ir sad eyes
Transporter appears,	Many miles to go.	The world we could but see,
Animals pass by us,	Biting winds of winter,	How great their pain & suffering
Silent fall our tears.	Through the lorries blow.	How deep our shame would be.

***Abstaining for Advent?...***

Advent is not only the beginning of the New Liturgical Year, it is a primer for Lent. For those who have not yet taken the plunge into the baptismal waters of being ‘vegan’, the Vegan Society have produced a new leaflet outlining the rudiments for doing it well. It is a summary document of Stephen Walsh’s analysis of ethical dietary research ‘Plant Based Nutrition and Health’ which, along with the VEG1 supplement, will help to keep you in good shape even in adverse environmental conditions, and on a bread and water Friday fast. If after reading this leaflet you still have concerns about whether and how children may be raised to be healthy on a Vegan diet, Sandra Hood’s book ‘Raising your Vegan Infant - with Confidence’, is a development of an earlier study with Plamil, with added wisdom/research. A copy of this new leaflet is included with this Newsletter - ***Good Health!***

***The Fellowship of Life....*** Was founded in 1973 by Margaret Lawson (1919 to 2006, may she rest in peace). Her first intention was to establish 'vegetarianism' as a Christian way of life. Her second aim was to unite believers of all religions or none in a way of life which neither hurts nor destroys any part of creation; human, animal or environmental. Her testimony is published on the Fellowship's website <[www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html)>. CVAUK Member, John Gilheany, is the Website Editor, and he is celebrating its launch with a leaflet. Copies of this leaflet have been provided for each CVAUK Member and are enclosed with this Newsletter. The leaflet is designed to be a useful source of information to help campaigners, rather than a campaigning leaflet for general distribution.

The Fellowship of Life had been slipping away quietly into the shadows with the emergence of Veg4Lent and CVAUK, but it has undergone a resurrection since Margaret Lawson's death, having rallied round with her commemoration. There is no subscription for membership of FOL, instead people are invited to contribute whatever help they can give to the organisation and its cause (much like CVAUK at present). There is one Newsletter sent out to members, and this is before Christmas to give extra support during what Margaret considered to be the very worst season.

For the benefit of those who may wonder why CVAUK was founded, given that FOL has existed for more than 30 years, I have attempted to define a distinction between these two allied associations.

The Fellowship of Life is really an association of 'friends of Margaret Lawson'; people who share her vision and are happy to share her way of life. Although she was a fully-committed Christian herself, Margaret's friendship extended to all who shared her assessment of God. She did not consider it necessary to believe that Jesus is God to be a believer in God's all encompassing love. This is not the case with CVAUK; our membership is restricted to practising Christians;. Although we are a non-denominational organisation, all CVAUK members belong to one of the different recognized denominations or communities that hold that Jesus is God, and that He is humanity's only means of knowing God. Despite the differences between our denominations, CVAUK members are bound together by holding in common the desire to promote a 'vegetarian' way of life within the Church as an authentic and integral practise and witness. The contemporary word 'vegetarian' is used because it is more easily understood than the traditional word 'abstinence' which can be a non-committal, practise. Legitimate Abstainers' might only abstain two days a year, or one day a week, not necessarily every day for the rest of their lives. If the word 'vegetarian' is used simply in a general sense, it encompasses vegans, fruitarians, and a complete plant-based way of life.

Unlike FOL, members of CVAUK cannot be followers of other faiths. However, through living our witness as vegetarian Christians, CVAUK wishes to open the door of the Church to compassionate people of different faiths and none, so that they may too recognize the call to belief in Jesus Christ '*who is our mutual Saviour*' as well. Thank you to Mr and Mrs Harrall, FOL Honorary Secretaries, for confirming that this distinction is fair and true in their view as well. #

***Animal Welfare Christmas Carols: Provided by Val Hubert  
To be sung to the tune of 'It Came Upon A Midnight'***

The world is full of pain and fear,  
And people make it so.  
For all the creatures we mistreat,  
And no compassion show.  
It's time to end their pain, their fears,  
They've waited for too long,  
The animals who down the years,  
Have suffered grievous wrong.

The birds that fly across the sky,  
The creatures of the sea.  
And they who move upon the earth,  
Abused they should not be.  
They have a natural span of life,  
The same as you and me.  
And as with us they have the right,  
The span of life to see.

***The Wisdom Trust....***

You may remember the Stop Press item in the last Newsletter. The Wisdom Trust is a Christian organisation and its website <[www.wisdom4all.co.uk](http://www.wisdom4all.co.uk)> has been developed to raise awareness of global poverty, environmental matters, and health issues. It is a limited company seeking Registered Charity status. Through its other website, <<http://www.wisdomtrust.org>> it raises money for its own enterprise, as well as other charities of members' choice. It achieves this through web searches, price comparisons, and shopping. CVAUK is one charity benefiting. CVAUK members can earn fundraising credits for CVAUK by registering and voting for us, at no cost, and may even benefit from their commercial, and awareness raising educational services. #

## Fledgling Flight...

### Formed or Founded? - A Few Thoughts On The Origins of CVAUK from John Gilheany

It may have been a moot and minor point which Don posited in our first Newsletter but one which raises an interesting aspect of the position of CVAUK within vegetarian-Christian campaigns of recent years.

Hopefully there is not a CVAUK member in any doubt as to the endless efforts of Don Gwillim throughout his 'retirement' which have facilitated a structure for the energies of most active vegetarian Christian campaigners in Britain. I would hope equally that such an acknowledgement of Don's role within Veg4Lent and CVAUK will not be perceived as 'back-slapping amongst cronies' but rather a timely statement of the obvious. Initiative needs organisation at a certain point for real influence to take place and campaigners have been blessed with Don's dedication and skills for several years.

Yet, we are all 'founders' of a formative association which has emerged as an inevitable result of recent decades which have seen efforts by Christian vegetarian campaigners peak through the 'vanguard' of Veg4Lent. The North American CVA had also begun to attract campaigners in Britain towards 2002 and an independent but related Christian Vegetarian Association of the UK was the obvious outcome within a couple of years.

CVAUK was described by a nun who read of us in 'The Church Times' as "long overdue" and it has taken years (which have included a somewhat arbitrary 'launch' in September 2004) to approach the stage where we can really take our values to the Church. The process of putting together ideas, materials and a strategy within a functioning framework is ongoing and due to the input of many activists - new and experienced- to this day.

Let us hope that an 'official' approach to vegetarian-Christian campaigning may ensue without the type of 'pecking-order' which has afflicted so many of the national animal rights/welfare societies in the past.

### New CVAUK "Chat-Site" for Internet Users..

CVAUK Member Jerry Howse has started a Yahoo chat group so that CVAUK members all over the country can keep in touch, share views and generally encourage one another. The group's homepage is given on the front of this newsletter (<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/christveg>). Emails can be sent to: [chistveg@yahooogroups.co.uk](mailto:chistveg@yahooogroups.co.uk). Jerry, the CVAUK Chat-Site Moderator, is a Vegan, and is responsible for initiating fundraising with the Wisdom Trust for CVAUK. We will be hearing more about Jerry Howse, in the Lenten newsletter.

### CVAUK Formation...

As we begin to look ahead to our first AGM, and the formal agreement of CVAUK aims, missions, codes of conduct and articles of association, statements, and election of officers, would CVAUK members agree that there is a need to form denominational groups within CVAUK, each to be represented on any official, policy-forming Board, working groups or committees?

**Funding:** Would CVAUK members like there to be a section in this Newsletter where advertising space may be purchased to raise funds for CVAUK? All adverts would, of course, need to be for purposes in agreement with the CVAUK Mission, Ministry and Code of Conduct. Or would members prefer to raise money to cover production costs through subscription?

**Purposes:** We may all see the future of the Church as that of a 'vegetarian people of God', journeying towards a 'fruitarian' way of life, but not everyone in the Church does. Similarly, there are ways of looking at the future which we busy campaigners are inclined to overlook or forget because their imperatives do not seem so central to our belief. All of the currently established Institutions of the Church serve theologically-based teaching purposes, whether they be for the promotion of the teachings and practices of a particular denomination, for prayer, for forgiveness of sins, for marriage and raising of children, bereavement support, social justice or whatever. Therefore, whilst members take all sensible steps to form a CVAUK community of support to one another, this Newsletter Editor would like to suggest that the Newsletter be an initial facility for what is essentially a new 'School of Thought' within the Church/es, and that CVAUK members may view it as an embryonic Faculty document for a curriculum and college which we are collectively designing. Comments please. #

### Getting the Message Across...

Helena Youle is not a political animal, and wondered how Shaun Rutherford of the One Voice Party managed to obtain space in our Harvest Newsletter for his all-Vegan (with some practising Christian members) party running for the Welsh Assembly early next year. This Newsletter Editor would like to emphasise that this item was a last minute Stop Press inclusion, accompanied with a caution. When Helena first heard that the Green Party had promised to ban all legalized forms of animal abuse if elected, she joined the Green Party. She therefore wondered why the One Voice Party do not run for election and conduct their educational campaign under the umbrella-organisation of the Green Party. It is not just Shaun Rutherford and the OneVoiceParty in Wales, Helena fires on all cylinders for the animals too, but in the Anglican Church, by supporting Peta, Uncaged Animals, CIWF, an Animal Sanctuary, and she does lots of street collections and attends protests.

Helena writes regular articles for her Church magazine to encourage people to become vegetarian/vegan but, she says: "one never gets any feedback, of course. I am very disappointed that the Anglican Church as a whole does not get more involved in denouncing such widescale legalized abuse of animals, and it seems to me that the majority of churchgoers in my Church are very unaware of what is going on, and don't 'relate to what's on their plate'." Helena also has other interesting ways of helping animals which other CVAUK members may like to know about, she raises money for them by letting her holiday home in Tuscany - Christian Vegetarians and Vegans most welcome. If you can afford to take a holiday for the animals, you can find out more from Helena on <[www.viadelborgo9.com](http://www.viadelborgo9.com)>. #

## Perceiving the Kingdom - The role of the Christian in relation to the rest of God's Creation...

A New CVAUK Campaign - from Don Gwillim

To even suggest that your Church promote a meeting to discuss the blessings of a vegetarian diet would probably be met with either indifference or outright hostility. We are consistently ignored or opposed by a Church that, by its silence, encourages an overindulgent lifestyle; a lifestyle that will bring ever-increasing suffering to the poor, future generations, other creatures and ourselves. A lifestyle that will, if not controlled, ultimately destroy the Earth. I believe that as Christians and stewards of God's creation it is our duty to proclaim this inconvenient truth.

My past endeavours to introduce a compassionate vegetarian diet into my own church were doomed to failure, as most Christians do not realise that there is a problem with meat eating. Vested interests within government communities, universities and industry have 'muddied the waters' to ensure that nobody can decide for themselves the perfect diet. So to ensure that our concerns for God's creation are heard and respected, we must be prepared to address the overall problem: world sustainability.

It may sound ridiculous but our first job is to convince Christians that caring for God's creation is biblical. We must also show that by being obedient to the self-sacrificial teachings of Jesus, the church will be in a unique position to witness to, and then lead, the secular world towards a sustainable future. We must also be prepared to explain the problems associated with sustainability and provide some of the answers which, along with other solutions, would include the immense benefits of a vegetarian diet to all of God's creatures (including humans) and the environment.

With the above problems in mind, the CVAUK campaign 'Perceiving the Kingdom' (God's sustainable Kingdom) is designed to help CVAUK introduce a vegetarian consciousness into the Church at Christian Ecological meetings. Fr John Ryder, CVAUK Spokesperson, and myself have already achieved some success by using this approach in the Portsmouth area.

On the 7th October 2006, an ecological conference 'Caring for God's Creation' was organised by the 'Petersfield Christian Ecology Group'. The Guest Speakers were Fr John Ryder (who spoke about a Christian's responsibility towards God's creation) and Andrew Lee (Director of the Sustainable Development Council), who outlined his Council's endeavours to steer government initiatives on sustainability in the right direction. The last five minutes of Fr John's address was devoted to a biblical exegesis on vegetarianism and he closed his address with the following statement: *"The environmental crisis has got to the stage where we must pursue every avenue to slow down, and hopefully reverse environmental degradation. One of the uncomfortable truths which is generally ignored is that what you eat makes more difference to the environment than what you drive, and vastly more difference than the type of light-bulbs you use. "And another uncomfortable truth which many on the secular stage will try to deny is that the warnings about all this, and the necessary guidance for its solution are all contained in a collection of books that was last added to about 1900 years ago, long before the problem of environmental degradation was known to exist."* To our surprise and delight, Andrew Lee agreed that a great reduction in animal agriculture must be part of the solution.

On the 17th October 2006, Fr John addressed a Ladies' Group at St John's Church, Gosport. Fr John's address centred on perceiving God's kingdom and how *"we don't want to see about the way we are hurting God's creation, we try not to see, or even deliberately do not see, and when we are forced to, we do not respond. And a lot of the pain we don't even notice when it is staring us in the face."* Fr John finished the address by asking what Jesus would do: *"There are those, with far better knowledge of Greek and Aramaic than myself that insist the New Testament is perfectly consistent with Jesus following a vegan diet. But it doesn't too much worry me if it isn't. Because I know that following the Law, He would first refuse to eat that which was produced in a way that damaged creation, or which showed any form of cruelty whatsoever, if for no other reason than that He would not break any of His Father's covenants with Man. He would know that a diet of predominantly animal protein is not sustainable for all, and He would not put Himself above others; He never did. And like in the matter of divorce, He would want to go beyond the Law, back to the way things were in the beginning, and so that when a vegetarian, then a vegan, then a fruitarian diet became available, that is what He would eat. And, as always, He would remain a step or three ahead of us. In obedience, in self-sacrifice, and in love. No matter what it cost."*

**The New Campaign:** I act as Fr John's secretary and accompany him to all the meetings. At both the above venues I organized a stand displaying 'CVAUK', 'A-Rocha', 'Christian Ecology Link', 'Catholic Concern for Animals' and 'The Anglican Society for Animal Welfare' introductory literature and leaflets. How did we manage to arrange these meetings? I became a Petersfield Christian Ecology Group' committee member and the Gosport meeting was arranged through an advert in the Portsmouth Diocese newspaper. A Christian who attended the Gosport meeting phoned to say that he wanted to approach Chichester Cathedral to propose a similar meeting with Fr John in Chichester, perhaps our 'Perceiving God's Kingdom' endeavours will have a knock-on effect.

Each 'Perceiving the Kingdom' team requires a 'Priest (vegetarian)' who is prepared to address ecological meetings and an 'Area Secretary' to promote and organise the meetings. The CVAUK team will be pleased to help any priest/member who would like to start a 'Perceiving God's Kingdom' (PTK) campaign in their area. Our patron, Pastor James Thompson, has volunteered his services in the North Wales/Cheshire area, so would any interested member in that area, who is prepared to become his PTK secretary, contact Pastor James or myself. **Don Gwillim**

**Campaign Research...** As we wait for our Religious Leaders to lead us in these matters, perhaps those of us who are not able to participate in the PTK campaign would like to investigate more thoroughly whether there are any/many vegetarian chaplains, RE teachers (especially in Church schools), or to what extent it is possible to be a healthy vegetarian, vegan or fruitarian in the monastic life or active religious orders and institutes of consecrated life. How can vegetarians provide catering for parishes, or advise non-vegetarians to cater with vegetarian food? Apart from the religious significance of sharing a meal, there are economic and ecological reasons which we may use in these specific cases. Please share what you know.

## Joined up Thinking...



**Christ in Heaven with the Animals  
Early 14th Century Cluniac Breviary  
Illumination**

Contrary to popular belief, there have not been many Fra. Angelico's in the monastic tradition of the Church. The Cluniac Benedictines are renowned for their patronage of the Arts, but with a few rare exceptions such as the Architect William of Volpiano, the artisans were employed and nurtured in private or dependent workshops of lay people.

This illumination, taken from a Breviary of a Cluniac Abbot in East Anglia (either Castle Acre or Thetford), was hand-painted around 1325, possibly in Norwich.

Its subject is of great interest to us, for Christ is seen standing in heaven above the firmament at the time of the final trumpet blast, with a proportional divider measuring the ground between the birds and the beasts. The temporal king, and the monks praying for him, are down below in the vaults! Its substance will disappoint, being painted on 'parchment', the skin of a (porcus) pig.

The English Church does not seem to have had a very good reputation for upholding the Benedictine Rule concerning abstinence from eating flesh, even from these early times, ever-expanding their circle of creatures fit to eat. The manuscript, having journeyed through the centuries to Australia, was bought by Yale University's Beinecke Library, where it is now kept, and may be viewed over the website.

Thanks are due to the Beinecke Library, New York, for granting permission to publish the illumination in this Newsletter, and for providing information about the manuscript. Thanks similarly due to Dr Graham Mayhew, of Lewes. #

## Birds of a Feather...

Roman Catholic CVAUK members will be interested in CAFOD's 'Live Simply' campaign, which was launched with Youth Sunday. Whilst there is no explicit recommendation of a veggie diet in the Adult information pack intended for Advent, nor the further pack intended for Lent, intelligence does lead in that direction, and RC CVAUK members might like to pay the £50 to add CVAUK to the list of supporting organisations (despite CAFOD's on-going commitment to livestock gifts &c) to help fellow Catholics make the right decision. More information may be found on [www.livesimply.org](http://www.livesimply.org), or telephone Mark Woods at the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton CAFOD Office, on 01293 - 541334. CVAUK Members of other denominations may be interested to read the literature, but this programme is intended specifically for Catholics. #

## In Formation...

**Recommended Reading:** "Empty Cages - Facing the Challenge of Animal Rights", Tom Regan, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at North Carolina State University - on strength of interview in The Vegan magazine, Winter 2006.

"The Holy Temple Revisited", Rabbi Leibel Reznick, Jason Aronson Publishers, 1990, ISBN 1-56821-067-1, for information about the Temple in Jerusalem, and the practises within it. #

## Useful Websites:

[www.all-creatures.org/fol](http://www.all-creatures.org/fol)  
[www.christianveg.com](http://www.christianveg.com)  
[www.christianvegetarian.co.uk](http://www.christianvegetarian.co.uk)  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/christveg>  
[www.ivu.org](http://www.ivu.org)  
[www.ordergoldenage.co.uk](http://www.ordergoldenage.co.uk)  
[www.parrotpets.co.uk](http://www.parrotpets.co.uk)  
[www.pcrm.org](http://www.pcrm.org)  
[www.veg4lent.org](http://www.veg4lent.org)  
[www.wisdom4all.co.uk](http://www.wisdom4all.co.uk)  
[www.wisdomtrust.org](http://www.wisdomtrust.org)

Fellowship of Life  
 CVA/USA/International  
 CVA UK  
 CVA UK Chat-Site  
 International Vegetarian Union  
 Order of the Golden Age  
 Don Gwillim's Family  
 Physicians for Responsible Medicine  
 Veg4Lent  
 Wisdom Trust Awareness Raising  
 Wisdom Trust

**Front Cover Picture:** The fluffy white bearded 4th century saint, Nicholas of Myra in Turkey, whose legend gave rise to Father Christmas, was apparently able to bi locate to assist mariners in distress. Flying reindeer pulling a sleigh was an imaginative explanation of his abilities dreamed up for a Coca Cola advertising campaign in the last century, perhaps inspiring the Walt Disney animation 'Bambi', a story written by an exiled Jewish human and animal rights advocate who used deer in a new way to arouse sympathies at the time of the Nazi uprising. The stag has long featured in the conversion stories of hunters of all faiths, not only those hunting for Christmas presents, St Hubert being just one example. These beautiful, playful vegetarian creatures would not look out of place in any UK Nativity scene."