

Christian Vegetarian Association UK

Working towards a violence-free world

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WHAT THE CHRISTIAN PAPERS SAY

June 2006 to November 2006

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All members
Please cut and send any items of interest
from any publication,
to Don Gwillim for consideration.

You can now view this document on the Internet , go to:
www.christianvegetarian.co.uk and follow link to Christian Media.

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Vegetarianism Honours God's Creation

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Why concern for the environment is so important to CVAUK's campaigns

As you read this press compilation you will notice that 75% of articles/letters are concerning the environment, CVAUK believe that to have any chance of introducing vegetarianism into the church we need to jump onto this environmental bandwagon, and then show that vegetarianism is a logical Christian response to caring for God's creation.

We should encourage discussions in church/house groups on sustainability and highlight scriptures that confirm;

- (a) God's goodness and mercy embraces all of God's creation,
- (b) that by being made in God's image, we have a responsibility to become good stewards, caring for God's creation as God cares for us,
- (c) that the Gospel is good news for the whole of God's creation, not just mankind.

We should use every opportunity to pray for environmental justice for the poor and the rest of God's creation and submit articles to church newsletters/magazines. 'What the Christian Papers Say' is a fantastic resource which can be used to compose your prayers and support statements in your letters/articles to Christian newspapers and church magazines.

Please see article 'The way ahead - Perceiving the Kingdom' CVAUK Advent 2006 Newsletter No 2

If you do not have the time to read all of this press compilation, you must read the following articles (for your convenience the following titles are highlighted in red):

1. C of E Newspaper - **A Christian looks at Animal Experiments** by Barry Miles (CVAUK member).
2. C of E Newspaper - **Caring for ALL God's animals** by Rt Rev Dominic Walker - Bishop of Monmouth
3. The Tablet - **We have failed the Earth** by Rt Rev Richard Chartres - Bishop of London.
4. The Universe - Five articles by Fr Shay Cullen, especially '**We are at war with ourselves, each other and the planet**'.

Please see back page article '**OUR ANATOMY SAYS: WE ARE VEGETARIAN**'.

Unpublished letters

Many of us spend hours researching and writing unpublished letters to the Christian press. Do not let your efforts go to waste they could help and inspire other CVAUK members.

Please send to CVAUK any unpublished letters, together with a copy of the letter / article that initiated your letter, for possible inclusion in future CVAUK press compilations.

N.B. The CVAUK press compilation also embraces a worldwide audience via our website www.christianvegetarian.co.uk.

When writing letters to the press criticise constructively

There are times when we have to speak out. Issues of injustice and pain and suffering pull on the chords of our heart and we feel we must do something. So we should - righteousness and justice are from the same stable.

However, when we do feel the need to criticise - whether that be our politicians, our society or our church - we should do so with the conviction that we want to see people grow and develop. We should learn to speak the truth in love. It's better to say nothing, than to say something because of hate or prejudice.

Get involved

We cannot criticise our world, our society or our leaders if we are not willing to be part of the solution. Everyone of us is able to be a protester! We know what we do not like. If we feel passionate about politicians losing trust, then maybe we should become an example of a trustworthy politician? If we think our community is losing its identity and its strength, maybe we should help it to find it again.

Of course we need also to pray - to rely on God and his grace working through us. The more we connect with him, the more we will reflect him to the world around us. Here's a challenge we may not like - perhaps we have ended up with the society, government and leaders we deserve? Maybe, just maybe, there is a better, brighter and fairer society round the corner. Maybe it is hidden in the hearts of our neighbours and our friends. Maybe God is challenging us to move from our comfort zones to the place where he always wanted us to be - shaping and changing our world by being in it, but not of it. That would make us read the news differently, wouldn't it?

Rev. Malcolm Duncan

Extract from 'Looking for a leader' Christian Herald 21st May 2005.

The Universe

4th June 2006

It's up to us to change our planet's self-destructive course

by Fr Shay Cullen

I HAVE much sympathy and understanding with people who are illiterate. There are social, economic and personal difficulties that have left them this way. About 40 per cent of the children that the Preda charity rescues from the streets and prison are illiterate.

In developing countries like the Philippines, millions of children are illiterate because they have been driven into poverty because of disastrous climatic change. Typhoons, drought, floods, landslides and volcanic eruptions destroy their lives. Man-made disasters too, such as mining and logging, have a devastating effect. The rich make the distribution of wealth to the poor an empty dream. As many as 1.2 million Filipino children have to work and never go to school. Thus, they cannot read danger signs and many are electrocuted, drowned or die from poison. Those with the power to protect and preserve our planet have no excuse when they fail to act. We have to pressure political and community leaders to act now.

In the Gospel narrative, Jesus of Nazareth challenges the rulers of his day to read the political and economic signs of the times: "When you see the clouds in the East you know one thing when you see them in the West you know another", he said. We western people are living such extravagant lifestyles that we consume three times as much resources as poor people, and burn fossil fuels in ever-increasing amounts. Oil is now close to the point of exhaustion, forests are destroyed to clear the land, rubbish dumps smoulder, the earth is burning and our 'intelligent' species is doing it. The planet cannot sustain our wasteful ways.

We are pouring massive amounts of carbon dioxide, sulphur and other gases into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels and trapping the earth's heat. This is causing the planet to heat up and is melting the ice caps. This melting will cause sea levels to rise dramatically in the coming years. Storm surges will choke estuaries, and flooding of vast areas of farm land will be inevitable.

If you have property in low-lying coastal areas or inland by rivers, say goodbye to it now because your grandchildren will inherit a salty marsh or a sea view. Bangladesh will practically disappear, as will the low-lying islands in the South Pacific. Scientists say a one-metre rise in sea levels is inevitable.

The captains of commerce and their political puppets are either scientifically illiterate or refuse to read the signs of the times. Neo-conservative-led governments refuse to put a cap on the emissions of gases that industry produces as the Kyoto protocol demands. It is up to each of us to recycle and prevent environmental damage. We must pressure politicians to be true stewards of creation and to save our planet.

• Fr Shay Cullen is a Columban missionary: Preda Centre, Kaldkian, Olongapo City, www.preda.org

4th June 2006

'Green' church to tackle problems in Philippines

By Terry Murphy

AN environmentally-friendly church -thought to be a world first - is to be the focal point of new plans to tackle social problems in the Philippines. The ground-breaking new church, which will be built near a notorious rubbish dump close to the capital Manila, is expected to provide key environmental, educational and employment opportunities, said Fr Benigno Beltran, who is overseeing the project.

Fr Benigno told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need the 'green' church will be built on 2,000 square metres of land which has been donated in Tondo, near the vast Smokey Mountain rubbish dump. Scavenging the dump is the main source of income for residents.

Fr Benigno said the church would have solar panels and be made from recycled materials. "We are already making building blocks from treated rubbish," he added. The church will have rain catchers and purifiers, and a generator run on cocoa diesel, which is made from cocoa nut oil and reduces emissions by 80 per cent.

4th June 2006

Respect for God's creatures is vital

GOD created animals to be sentient beings who feel pain and fear. It cannot be acceptable to Christians that hens are 'kept in cages so small that they have no room to turn round or open their wings. This rebounds on humans, because to stop disease spreading in the cramped conditions, factory farm animals are fed antibiotics, which lead to dangerous antibiotic-resistant human superbugs.

Knowledge gained from animal experiments can be unreliable. A recent social audit reported that one in 20 hospital beds are occupied by people damaged by medical drugs, which were all 'safely' tested on animals first! God gave humans dominion over animals, but this should bring a duty of care and compassion. Proverbs says; "A good man is kind to his animals." What if God had created a more intelligent species with power over humans? How would we feel if they kept us in cages and experimented on us?

Ann Mills Ruislip, Middsex

25th June 2006

It is our duty to be stewards of creation

I HAVE been enjoying *The Universe* now for a very long time, and have rarely felt moved to put pen to paper, but a smug remark from Adam Grace (Square Eyes, *The Universe* June 11), has really upset me.

It was hard to watch Sir David Attenborough's programme about the doom and gloom of global warming, but at least we were heartened to find things we could do to slow the process down - and also save money.

Like Sir David, there are many people I know, including myself, who actually like wind turbines, and find them much more attractive than ugly power stations. Also, like Sir David, I love my grandchildren and would want to do all that I could to prevent them inheriting a mess of a world which I helped to create. Have we not also as Christians a duty to be stewards of God's creation?

Margaret Porthouse, Melbourne, York

2nd July 2006

Defend ecology and economy from needless whale hunt

By Fr Shay Cullen

THERE was once a time when the only way beggars in New York could get a handout was to dress up in a whale costume. That's how the joke went anyway. The media exposed the hunting of whales with deadly harpoons and shocked the world. It showed the wholesale bloody slaughter of the magnificent creatures by the whaling nations - Japan, Iceland and Norway.

Now, our TV screens are again showing the cruel and painful death of these great mammals. God gave us custody of the earth, to be protectors of creation and have respect for all living creatures. We have made a terrible mess of it and are destroying not only the creatures but the very oceans, forests and mountains that provide them with their habitat. We are wiping out species by the day.

Humans are the greatest killers since the age of the dinosaurs, when Tyrannosaurus Rex ruled with huge jaws and a voracious appetite. That's us - consuming all before us until we have killed everything and stupidly wiped out our own sources of livelihood.

A ban was imposed by the international whaling commission 20 years ago and has held until now. Japan has been able to get many tiny nations to join the commission, suspiciously increasing aid to these nations in the process, and perhaps increasing it further when they voted with Japan for the statement saying the ban should be lifted.

This alone would not lift the ban -that would take 75 per cent of the vote, but it could be the start down a slippery slope if Japan gets more tiny nations to vote its way. Despite that ban 20 years ago, Japan was able to get a special permit to slaughter hundreds of whales every year for so called 'scientific' research. None of it is truly scientific. The whale meat is sold off in Japanese fish markets.

The awful contradiction is that most Japanese prefer watching whales than eating them. One-third of the whale meat is made into pet food - imagine little household pets feasting on the great giants of the oceans. It is those oceans that we are ravaging. Last June 8 was World Ocean Day, but you would never think we even cared about what is happening in the vast deep, as the relentless pursuit of profit and exotic foods has wiped out 90 per cent of the biggest fish and 70 per cent of the world's coastal fishing stocks.

Philippine and Asian coastal fishermen whose families depend on the daily catch have to venture out to the ocean in flimsy canoes to catch anything. Hundreds of fishing trawlers from as many as 20 nations use huge drag nets to scour the ocean's floors day and night catching everything that swims into their path; dolphins, tortoise even sea birds are caught and die. The nets are destroying everything in their path and lift up five tons of ocean life in each scoop.

These relentless trawlers and ocean, hunters select a few choice specimens and throw back the rest into a now increasingly lifeless void. It has to stop and we must do what we can to help. Marine conservation is a challenge for us all, as defenders of life we have to save the life of the planet - we depend on it to live, how could we forget that. #

16th July 2006

Ethical buying can only help the world's poorest fruit producers

By Fr Shay Cullen

THOUSANDS of jobs are at stake in the banana industry in the developing countries. Big and small-time growers are deeply worried and the industry in the Philippines, Latin America and parts of Africa depends on the variety known as the Cavendish. It is for the most part a variety owned and controlled by wealthy families and multinationals.

I remember visiting a village near Davao, where I met Joanna. She was a frail child suffering from asthma and skin disease. She was a plantation worker and although the law bans child labour, there are nevertheless almost two million of them, hard at work in the sugar cane fields and banana plantations. Joanna and her parents worked long hours and sprayed the tall banana plants with dangerous chemicals. The spray is vital because the deadly fungus known as the Black Sigatoka has developed resistance to toxic sprays, but people have not. The Cavendish itself is the problem because it is a terminator plant, bred by the growers so that it has no seeds, is sterile and cannot reproduce itself. Every plant is a clone of its parent and has no immunity to the fungus. Pesticide, you will be unhappy to know, makes up one-third of the cost of a banana. It takes the goodness out of that long spotted banana and they don't taste like natural bananas of course. The dangers of monoculture are many but extinction is inevitable. Another banana, the Gros Michel, was wiped out in the 1950s when fungus overwhelmed its immune system.

The Cavendish will soon go that way too and the price of bananas will soar and it may be a chance for the small producers to get into the market. Many are fair trade producers and they grow natural organic bananas. If you see these, go for them. The big firms have sent hundreds of scientists looking for the wild variety of banana to harvest their genes and infuse them into the Cavendish to strengthen its resistance, but the destruction of the environment, what with the cutting-down of rainforests and widespread pollution from plantations carried on the wind, has killed off many wild varieties as well.

When it comes to fair trade, dried fruit shoppers look for Freda's dried pineapple and mangos. For 32 years, we worked to bring justice and dignity to the farmers and to end the suffering of child workers like Joanna. The development of the chemical-free Preda fair trade dried mango helped break up a price-fixing cartel in the Philippines. When we offered high prices, we cornered the supply. The other cartel members had to offer similar high prices to get mangos and the prices soared giving the farmers a just price for the first time in many years.

It's not been easy but despite the pressures of a profit-greedy labelling organisation to force us to pay for a fair trade certification, or else face withdrawal from the market, Preda products are thriving. They are being sold in outlets such as Spar and Waitrose - even Tesco has them. Waitrose has given back around £340,000 to the communities from where they get their fruit in the developing world. It is raising almost another million dollars for education projects for the communities in South Africa.

This is one of criteria of fair trade - to help the producers to improve their standard of life. We can all do something to change the unjust system - use purchasing power.

Fr Shay Cullen is a Columban missionary: based at the Preda Centre, Kalaklan, Olongapo City, Philippines www.preda.org

6th August 2006

Extract from: It's vital to handle sensitive issues well

The second item in your paper that upset me very much is the photo you publish on page 14, titled "Bravo, my heroes!" (Spanish nuns talking to bullfighters). There is nothing heroic about a bullfight, the bull is weakened and nearly brought to his knees, amid terror and pain, by the lances stuck into him by the picadors, mounted on horses, before he finally meets the bullfighter who then delivers the "coup de grace".

Is this really what should be shown in a Catholic Sunday newspaper and with a comment approving of such barbaric behaviour? It's very sad that the Spanish people, supposedly good Catholics, and nuns to boot, should approve of this. I would like to remind you of Francis of Assisi who should be the role model for all human beings of how animals should be treated. Please print a retraction and apology - I would have thought better of any British paper and especially a Catholic one!

Irmgard Presland, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex

20th August 2006

We are at war with ourselves, each other and the planet

By Fr Shay Cullen

WHAT could be more important than to protect and nurture our lives and the lives of others? - the protection of the source of life itself. Yet human kind is damaging and destroying so much of the planet at such a phenomenal rate that many species are extinct and others are on the edge of extinction. The health and well being of billions of people are not only under threat but are already deteriorating with such rapidity that whole nations are in crisis. Their people's behaviour, their environment, rivers, seas forests and climate are in the process of change; natural species are being exterminated by the day and humans are in health crises that they have never faced before. We are into a new and dangerous era of mankind.

Is there any one common factor behind all of this doom and gloom, or is it a complex series of events interwoven in history that has caused such catastrophes? The evidence is mounting that contradicts the widely-held belief that we humans are the superior intelligent creatures on the planet. An alien looking at the earth would conclude our primitive intelligence has failed to evolve and

develop. Humankind, they would see, is more driven by animal instinct than intelligent decision-making. Despite enormous brains and a sophisticated technological age that boggles the imagination, two thirds of all humans live in abject poverty and ignorance.

While billions of humans are illiterate, destitute and starving, those with the developed resources, vast knowledge, unsurpassed technological skills, immense possessions and an abundance of food are still killing each other with such sustained and premeditated ferocity that the most savage dinosaurs and beast could never match. That's us, the species with big brains has evolved as killing machines par excellence. We rule with rockets and bombs where Tyrannosaurus Rex once roamed with claw and tooth. Our big brains changed little of the primitive urge to dominate others, eliminate rivals, and kill all intruders on our territory.

The animal instincts that lurk in the base of the brain below the cortex are powerful drives that dominate human behaviour and shape our world. Our instincts propel us to satisfy those primitive drives for food, sleep, sex, territorial control and to send our genes down the river of time to the next generation. It is only the hermits and the monks of all religions that strive to conquer these drives by denying them in order to free their spirit and allow it to evolve to the higher plane and open a new age of spiritual experience for human kind. The drive to have power and security through food dominance has led some nations to take control of vast lands, deprive others, destroy forests and environments and overproduce in a way that causes others to starve.

The animal drive for sex has spawned a worldwide sex tourist industry. It makes reproduction of the species secondary and physical sexual satisfaction an end in itself. The result of this is the exploitation of the hungry, plummeting populations, labour shortages and weak economies. This is then followed by mass migration and even more bloody internal conflict. The drive for territorial control and power can be savage and primitive. The pursuit of power by economic war is now global and results in the subjugation of the weak by the powerful.

This pursuit for economic dominance has a price - the reversible damage to the earth, its systems and climate. We are at war with ourselves, with each other and with the planet. The human species is devolving, heading for extinction and bringing every other species with it.

Fr Shay Cullen is a Columban missionary: based at the Freda Centre, Kalaklan, Olongapo City, Philippines www.preda.org

24th Sept. 2006

Bishops backing green moves by supermarkets

By Lee Siggs

AN ENVIRONMENTAL adviser to bishops in England and Wales has welcomed a move by UK supermarket giant Sainsbury's to introduce new compostable packaging on 500 of its own-brand products.

The announcement coincided with a statement from bishops in New Zealand who highlighted their concerns over the environment. The move by Sainsbury's will see a reduction in its use of plastic by around 3,500 tonnes each year. Almost half of its organic fruit and vegetables are now in compostable packaging, a figure which will rise to 80 per cent by January.

Bishops' adviser Mary Colwell said Sainsbury's had picked up on the fact that people were becoming alarmed about environmental problems, noting that the firm's commercial reason for the move would still result in a positive effect on the environment. "People have a very real and genuine concern at the moment that something is not right with the environment," she said. "If something is labelled as green and organic, everybody jumps up and down and says it's great, and that's how it should be. "Issues about the environment are really about life at ever such a fundamental level."

The New Zealand bishops said the world was facing an ecological crisis, adding that it could equally be called an economic or poverty crisis. "Its public face is the suffering of the poor and the degradation of our environment at a time when accumulation of wealth and material goods has never occupied our attention more. That is why we see it primarily as a spiritual or moral crisis," the bishops said.

"Ultimately, this is a global problem requiring real global solutions. But individual Catholics, parishes, Catholic schools, religious communities and Church organisations can play a big part by making different choices, such as using less energy or buying locally-made goods which require less transportation. "Avoiding water waste and excess packaging are two simple steps which can be acted upon by individuals and households."

#

1st October 2006

Universe Comment - Church can take leadership role on environment

THE environment has recently shot to the top of the political agenda. After ignoring the ongoing destruction of the planet for so long, it seems that every politician now wants to be seen as green. First, there was Conservative Party leader David Cameron making a play for the environmental vote. The image, though, did take a bit of a knock when it was revealed that his televised cycle to work was accompanied by a petrol-guzzling car but the intent to review policy was no less worthy. Then came the Liberal Democrats with their move to tax heavily those activities that cause most damage to the environment. They have now moved from taxing the rich to taxing the polluter. Finally, the Labour Party has made gestures towards renewable energy and road pricing. Unfortunately, some of their more positive moves have been offset by a seeming desire to build a new generation of nuclear power stations to cut global warming.

So there is much beginning to happen on the environmental front and the Church is not being left behind. This week Catholic environmentalists have issued a call for there to be a boycott of Esso petrol stations in protest at the continued funding by parent company ExxonMobil of groups who proclaim the anti-climate change message. The Royal Society has criticised the scientific content of much of this material.

Columban Fr Sean McDonagh was one of the first voices warning of how there had to be dramatic action taken to confront global warming, and the Columbans have generally played a leading role in highlighting worldwide environmental degradation.

There is a real growing movement within the Churches, running across denomination and coalescing around campaigns like Operation Noah and Christian Ecology Link, but still more needs to be done.

There must be significant statements by the hierarchy on the dangers represented by global warming. The link has to be made between ongoing global warming and poverty, particularly in the developing world. The time has come for some real leadership from the Church on the environment. This has to come from the highest level and be reflected right down to the parishes. Our Church must become a beacon of good stewardship of the earth.

8th October 2006

Christians ready to help in farmers' struggle to survive.

By Sally FitzHarris

With suicide rates among farmers twice the national average, one group tries to make a difference to lives beset by financial worries and injustice.



THE condition of labourers in 13th century France shocked a Dominican friar into denouncing those who "lived not from their toil, but from another's, expropriating the works of those who dig the soil". Humbert of Romans might have felt at home in rural Wales today.

In the small village of Nolton, close to the Pembrokeshire coast, Clarence Vaughan struggles to keep a dairy herd of 80 cows on 125 acres. His animals look well but around him are derelict buildings. "My overdraft is at its limit," he said. "The price is mad. We're getting just a little bit over 15 pence per litre and production costs are 20 pence a litre. The monthly milk cheque no longer pays the bills."

"Where the money 's going between producer and consumer amazes me," said John Smith, who has a herd of 200 cattle close to Broad Haven. "The milk company has just taken one-and-a-quarter pence off a litre of milk because of rising fuel costs. We don't ask to make money -just to stay in business." Without profit, dairy farmers cannot afford labour: the work is seven days a week throughout the year. "Slavery," says the Rev Canon Jeremy Martineau.

Mr Martineau is a volunteer for Farm Crisis Network (FCN). The charity was started in 1995, "when we began to understand the gathering process of globalisation and its likely impact on farmers", explained Christopher Jones, National Co-ordinator. The fundamental issue echoes Humbert's observation: "Farmers know that someone powerful is not paying the proper price for the goods they consume," says Mr Jones. Volunteer requirements for FCN are threefold: to have a strong faith, a good knowledge of farming, and time to give.

"We are a lay Christian organisation," explains Jill Gibson, volunteer coordinator for Pembrokeshire. "We walk with people who are bowed down, as Christ walked with his disciples at Emmaus. "But we are 'hands on'. Sometimes we do the work ourselves, sometimes we find people best qualified to help with a particular problem." Debt, isolation and bureaucracy head the list of problems that FCN volunteers work with. There is a telephone help line; last year, nationally, the calls increased by 25 per cent, according to a spokesman for the organisation. In Pembrokeshire, 57 cases, involving 160 people, are being supported.

"It's impossible to know when the phone rings how complex it's going to be," said Mrs Gibson. "But there's hardly a caller who isn't in trouble with his paperwork. I've just been speaking to a guy who has inspectors on his farm for six days, checking he's complied with regulations." Some don't ring. A bitterly angry farmer in Nolton described: "A young lad, 30, immaculate farm, loved his animals but fell behind with the record keeping on his calves. He was so terrified of the authorities he hanged himself." Statistics published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA,) show that from 1997 - 2004 the suicide rate among farmers has been at least twice as high as that for all other workers,

"The seriousness of some of the mental health issues we deal with is quite extraordinary," says Mrs Gibson. "It may be caused by farm problems or come from other stresses and get hidden within the farming context. We work with social workers and mental health professionals" "We are often advocates: talking to people's bank managers, crucially trying to build relationships, which is what makes things happen," she added. 'Relationship' for FCN volunteers is a key word: they believe that, 'man's relationship with the land is an extension of man's relationship with God.' To this end, prayer is a crucial part of their work.

Farming, like the Welsh language, is an important part of their culture. Locals in Pembrokeshire are now describing a 'haemorrhage' of farms. "I've talked with a lot of dairy farmers recently and they are thinking about early retirement. Their children do not want to take the farm on. You are not going to slog yourself 24 hours a day for a price of 16 or 17 pence," says Moira Williams, a dairy farmer and FCN volunteer who leads the prayer group.

It is crunch time; the landscape is being altered as farms sell up. Single Farm Payments came in that transferred subsidies from livestock headage to actual acreage of farms, but you're not bound to keep livestock to have this payment. So farms are turning into holiday properties or caravan parks," she explains. The problem is not confined to rural Wales: "There used to be 11 dairy herds in the parish, now there are only four," says Fr Harry Doyle, of Our Lady and St Michael's Church in Longridge, Lancashire.

"One third of British dairy farmers have left the industry in the last two years and 31 per cent of those remaining are planning to leave in two years' time," said a spokesman for the National Federation of Women's Institutes, which is now running a campaign to heighten awareness of the problem. Those who attempt to keep their herds and way of life find themselves increasingly at the margins of society.

The Dominican Humbert described the marginalised as those who lived: 'apart from the world.....in material possession.....in the esteem of men.' "People used to respect my cattle when they were crossing the road," says Mr. Smith. "Now drivers get angry and shout at me." Global markets may add a complexity not present in the 13th century, but those who 'walk with' farmers, like Humbert, are outspoken: "Supermarkets are destroying UK production in the cause of short term profits for themselves. They damage local economies, they produce very few extra jobs in the locality and they suck all the money out of an area," says Mr Martineau. The band of five volunteers in Pembrokeshire has no answers to this fundamental problem. They are hoping and praying, with incurable Christian optimism, for a miracle.

15th October 2006

We can all play our part in the fight to protect God's earth

By Fr Shay Cullen

THERE are times when we can be overwhelmed by the headlines: "Multinational mining pollutes Philippine rivers"; "Climate change forecasts crop disasters"; "Global warming melts glaciers"; "Soya bean production threatens the Amazon rain forest". It can be so bewildering that many people don't know how to make this a safer and cleaner world. They love God's creation and feel responsible for the planet but they can feel helpless. We are however, not helpless. With faith in ourselves we are the voice of creation that speaks on its behalf, and must act to protect all creation.

You may not be able to join rallies but you can campaign from your own home and use your telephone, pen and purchasing power to make changes too. The power of change they say is in the market, it is the buying power of consumers and customers that can make a difference. The thousands of wise shoppers who ask for Preda Fair Trade dried fruit, or recycled tetra bags are making a big change to the lives of small farmers and their families.

'We are the consumers who can exert our influence on the politicians'

We are the consumers and if only enough of us buy Fair trade, organic foods and recycled products we can exert our influence on the politicians and powers that rule us. Take soya bean production. It is a healthy source of protein and can help do away with the reliance on the greasy, unhealthy and obesity-causing meat steaks and hamburgers. Soya bean is in nearly every food product we buy nowadays and it is becoming increasingly more important as a source of bio-fuel. But there is a down side. The multinational corporations that supply soya promote the growing of soya bean in the region of Brazil where the Amazon rain forest is being cut down for bean production.

In 40 years, the magnificent rain forest will be gone and the ecological problems will be horrendous. We can't let it happen. The rain forests are vital to a healthy planet as they absorb the carbon dioxide that causes the global warming that we humans cause with our irresponsibility. The good news is that last July 24, consumer power had been mobilised by Greenpeace to pressure food manufactures and fast food chains to sign an agreement not to buy soya from the multinationals like Cargill who encourage the cultivation of soya in ways harmful to the rain forest.

'If we are true to Christ, we must take action in a positive way'

In the Philippines, the mining industry is expanding but so too is the environmental damage and the destruction of farm lands, rivers and rainforest. What's left of it that is. The wealthy families have not only cleared the ancient forests for their gain but have bought political power with the proceeds to allow them to continue the destruction with impunity. Now the same families are behind flu invasion of international mining corporations, hungry for the rich minerals beneath mountain forests.

Some powerful government officials are members or fronts for the rich families, and are only too eager to allow this foreign mining corporations in as partners and give them 100 per cent ownership of the operations. Amnesty International, Church leaders, and EU politicians have all decried the execution of community leaders who organise the people to speak out and defend their environment and habitat. Those brave defenders of children human rights and the environment are people we must help. Each of us, if we are to be true to Christ, himself beaten and executed for taking his stand to save us, from such evils, must take action in a positive way. We can lift the phone, write a letter make a donation, and speak out for truth and justice. #

Space Saver Guardian (Beverley)

15th Sept 2006

All species are God's creatures.

ON Saturday August 19, my husband and I attended our first animal rights demonstration in Hull, held to protest against Banton and Kingsman's breeding and supplying of innocent animals for vivisection laboratories.

It was extremely peaceful and spiritual, yet two protestors were still arrested, simply for holding up posters of 'bloodied' laboratory animals. The police gave the reason as 'It could offend families'. I have two points to make:

(a) Vivisection continues because these very people are kept in the dark and the animals, who are shut away in secret laboratories, need these people to be upset for them.

(b) Butchers' shops show extremely upsetting parts of dead animals which offend and upset vegetarians and vegans, so in the interest of discrimination against this said group, why do not the police arrest butchers?

Finally, the answer is because we live in a very prejudiced society and the animal rights people, who are vegans by their very nature, are the group most highly discriminated against. All species are God's creatures and it's time the church spoke up for the laboratory and intensively farmed animals on this earth.

Eileen Girling, Sigston Road, Beverley.

29th Sept 2006

Lack of leadership must be redressed.

I RESPOND to Eileen Girling's letter (BG September 15) and her call for the church to 'speak up' on behalf of animals used in vivisection and intensive farming. She is right to draw attention to the strange double standards in our society. The claimed arrests in Hull for merely holding posters of 'bloodied' animals are frankly barmy, when you can go to the butchers and see the real thing. Is the police role in our society to protect its increasingly fragile sensibilities from anyone with anything to say, or indeed show - and enforce these double standards?

Maybe we do need to be horrified at times and be shown, for example, the day-to-day realities of intensive farming and the slaughtering process if we are to continue our lifestyles with a sense of responsibility. According to the Bible, the human race is the appointed steward and protector of the rest of God's creatures. Our track record is not good. We have a duty of care and respect for our fellow creatures, which surely involves enhancing the quality of their lives rather than inflicting any suffering or eradicating whole species from this planet. Of course we also care deeply for human suffering, often inflicted by humanity itself - but genuine compassion will not be limited to just our own species.

I would agree with Eileen, that the church has provided little leadership on this, and little real acknowledgement that God loves all his creatures - and this must be redressed. With this in mind I draw your attention to a Thanksgiving Service for Creation and Blessing of Animals at St Nicholas Church, Beverley, on Sunday October 1 at 3 pm, to which all are welcome. It is St Francis' Day, patron saint of animals on October 3, unless he's been arrested as well.

Rev Richard Long, St Nicholas Church, Beverley.

The Catholic Herald

19th May 2006

Jesuit proposes green commandments

By Staff Reporter

A CATHOLIC social vision for the environment can be translated into "a short ethical set of 10 commandments," according to an American Jesuit professor of social values.

"Environmental issues — ranging from global warming, species depletion and extinction, deforestation, polluted and diminishing water supplies, a cascading growth of the world's deserts, increasing salination of farm land, a precipitous loss of fish stock around the world — would loom very large, indeed, in any thoughtful scrutiny of contemporary signs of the times which call for a Catholic discernment and response," said Fr John Coleman.

The Casassa Professor of Social Values at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Fr Coleman made his remarks during the annual Koch Lecture in Catholic Thought at St John's University in Collegeville.

The commandments he outlined were:

- All human beings have a right to an environment adequate to their health and well-being.
- The environment is a common concern of all humanity and, primordially, a kind of 'commons'.
He quoted Pope John Paul II that "there is a social mortgage on private property."
- All humans have common but differentiated responsibilities to sustain the environment.
- Humans have a duty not to cause environmental harm."
- The environment must be seen as an integral part of all schemes of economic development.
- All peoples "have a right to economic development."
- Equality is the only rational way to allocate rights to consume and pollute.
- An ecological ethic would subscribe to the principle that the polluter must pay.
Otherwise, distributive justice is violated if the polluter can be a free-rider.
- When we have serious and imminent threats to the environment, we do not need to wait — nor should we — until there is full scientific certainty.
- Environmental ethics will stress forms of deliberative democracy or consultation.

Fr Coleman said that recent Catholic social thought had included strong statements about justice as participation. Therefore, he said, "the many stakeholders who will be affected by decisions should have an active voice and input about them". He added: "An environmental ethic will show a care for future generations."

Fr Coleman also cited examples of "green" living, including the city of Curitiba, Brazil, which has increased the amount of parkland within its borders. Volunteers have planted 1.5 million trees along its streets, and officials have designed 200 kilometres of bicycle paths, he said. Bus-only lanes on the streets serve 2.1 million passengers a day.

"While Curitiba has one of the highest rates of car ownership, an indicator of its comparative wealth," Fr Coleman said, "car usage has actually fallen. Not surprisingly, Curitiba has become the poster child for a green city which is livable, sustainable and, nevertheless, shows robust economic growth."

The priest also cited strategies to achieve greener cities, including land use and "spatial planning", an environmental policy of regulations and incentives, transportation policies which reduce car use, systems which can break down and recycle waste, and "a determined focus" on energy, the effects of carbon dioxide and the reduction of potable water. #



Fr Aidan Nichols with his beloved pet cat, Leo

1st Sept. 2006 Prominent theologian becomes patron of Catholic animal group.

By David Barret

OXFORD SCHOLAR Fr Aidan Nichols has become a patron of the charity Catholic Concern for Animals, the only Catholic organisation in Britain concerned with animal welfare and theology. Its mission is "to influence society worldwide into becoming more compassionate towards the animal creation and more aware of the inter-relatedness of all creatures under God".

A distinguished theologian and author of around 30 books, Fr Nichols is the John Paul II Memorial. Visiting Lecturer at the University of Oxford. "One small plank in the programme for the conversion of England is for the Catholic Church to have a higher doctrine of the animal creation - with all that implies," Fr Nichols said.

Debbie Jones, the general secretary of the group, said she was "naturally delighted" that Fr Nichols should become a patron.

The Tablet

Unpublished

Sir, I feel reluctantly obliged to convey my profound disappointment with the Holy Father's comments -or lack of them- during his recent visit to Spain.

A catalogue of particularly depraved cruelty towards animals has characterised religious festivals throughout most of the Spanish speaking world, for centuries.

My own understanding is that a few simple words from Pope John Paul II, would have the potential to inaugurate immense, radical and lasting humanitarian change. Yet in a country where nuns manufacture implements of torture for the bullring and more amateur use, its youth are admonished to extol "the cultural richness of your history."

A lack of due remembrance for past horrors, from within our own heritage, will do little to restore the credibility of contemporary Catholicism. Too often, our faith and tradition is perceived as an ethical laughing-stock although for good reason.

We often appear unable to associate cruelty, with profanity towards the Creator, or indeed basic criteria for civilisation, in any age. **John Gilheany**

Unpublished

I am unable to trace the theological reasoning process within your culinary article: "Savour the sweet lamb" - (3 April 2004).

We are told of: 'The Christian concept of the Lamb of God; the sacrifice for the sins of man. This and the setting of Eastertide in spring when the new season for plants and animals begins, points to lamb as the natural food for the feast.'

Our cultural observance of the Resurrection - as with the celebration of Christ's birth - has become curiously characterised by the wholesale slaughter of innocent animal life. The contrasting, self-sacrifice of Christ has ramifications beyond human sin, in that countless animals have been spared the woeful bloodletting, of sacrificial worship.

Or could have been.

Whilst we celebrate Christ's presence in our lives through the blessed ritual of the Eucharist, there remain contradictory aspects to other sacred occasions, which are often inclined to be influenced by gastronomic criteria.

In our celebration of life and the all-consuming love which conquered violence and destruction, let us at least consider, real reverence towards fellow beings, otherwise slain on our Holy days.

John M. Gilheany

3rd June 2006

Can you hear Creation groaning?

by Sean McDonagh

Global warming and other forms of biocide are threatening the earth now as never before in 3.7 billion years of life. Catholics have a powerful obligation to act, so why are our bishops still sitting on their hands?

We are living in the middle of a massive ecological crisis, for the life systems of the planet are being eroded. It is *the* most fundamental moral issue of our time. Yet the Catholic Church, in Britain, in Ireland or in Rome, has not given it the attention it deserves. Take global warming. Sir David King, the chief scientific adviser to the British Government, claims that the problems arising from global warming are the biggest challenges facing governments. Meanwhile former Presi-

dent Bill Clinton told this year's World Economic Forum at Davos that global warming is the most pressing threat, with the power to end the march of civilisation as we know it.

A rise of two or three metres in the sea level by 2100 would cause horrendous suffering for millions of people from Bangladesh to Cairo, and even London. We can't defer action. According to Rachel Warren, of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research based at the University of East Anglia, governments have 20 years in which to act.

Given this looming ecological catastrophe, the Church acting locally and globally has a moral obligation to marshal its considerable resources in education, and in moral and religious authority, to help avert it. But there is little sense of this obligation. The recently published *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* devotes only a half a paragraph to this topic. It quotes the late Pope John Paul II's statement that "climate is a good that must be protected and [he] reminds consumers and those engaged in industrial activity to develop a greater sense of responsibility for their behaviour". Hardly a clarion call for urgent and comprehensive global action.

At the local level, a consultation by the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales in October 2004, at which the perils of global warming were clearly spelled out by the renowned climatologist Sir John Houghton, has, to date, produced no tangible result. In contrast the Catholic Church in Australia hosted a major conference on global warming in November 2003.

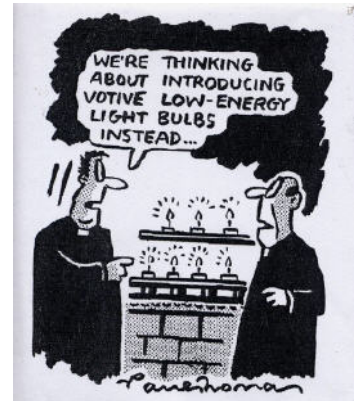
Recently, though, even the Australian Church's commitment to this issue was thrown into doubt by the comments of Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, who described concerns about global warming as "hysterical and extreme", claiming such worries are a symptom of pagan emptiness. He continued that in the past pagans sacrificed animals and even humans in vain attempts to placate the gods but today they demand a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

Yet there are reasons for hope. Already some Catholics in Britain are involved with other Christians tackling global warming through

Operation Noah. The theme of the National Justice and Peace Network's conference in Derbyshire in 2005 was summed up in the words: "We are stewards of creation." More than 300 Justice and Peace activists attended and embraced the message enthusiastically, but the word needs to seep out into the deepest recesses of parish life and grasp the imagination of the bishops. The latter still have the power to allocate the resources that will be necessary to develop sustainable policies and programmes. They will need to listen to people with expertise in a wide range of environmental disciplines: ethics, theology, economics, transport, energy, communications and food policies - to mention just a few.

Climate change is not the only urgent ecological issue on which the Church is virtually silent. We are now living through the sixth largest extinction of life since it began 3.7 billion years ago. The Harvard biologist Edward Wilson has said that the quenching of life's exuberance will be more consequential to humanity than all of present-day global warming, ozone depletion and pollution combined.

One might expect a pro-life Church to be in the forefront of those trying to protect life on the planet. But once again this crisis merits only a single paragraph in the *Compendium*. Then there are those statements from leading Vatican officials which are exploited



by those with vested commercial interests. In August 2003 Cardinal Renato Martino, the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, wondered whether GM food would solve the problem of world hunger. Biotech corporations used this argument to promote their wares - GM food crops. Although the cardinal later rowed back, the *Compendium* is still ambivalent about genetically modified organisms.

At a seminar in Rome last month Cardinal Martino invited the international community to support nuclear energy for civil use. Unwittingly he has aligned himself with corporate groups such as British Nuclear Fuels, which is using the twin problems of dwindling oil stocks and global warming to promote nuclear power. His endorsement of this technology coincides with the twentieth anniversary of Chernobyl, which, while the World Health Organization claims that only 50 people died, with a possible 9,000 others to follow, a Russian Academy of Medical Science report puts the figure at 212,000.

Nuclear accidents still happen in Britain. A leak in a pipe in 2004 caused 83,000 litres of highly radioactive waste to spill at the Thorp reprocessing plant in Sellafield. The alarming thing is that it was not noticed for eight months. In March 2006 the Sustainable Development Commission made a detailed study on whether Britain should commit itself to a nuclear power programme as a way of solving the current energy crisis. They came down firmly against nuclear energy, instead suggesting an "aggressive" expansion of energy efficiency and green energy. Meanwhile the ecumenical network Christian Ecology Link, in its document *Faith and Power*, endorses a low-consumption, non-nuclear energy strategy. This should surely be what the Church in Britain throws its weight behind.

The current ecological crisis doesn't have to be all about doom and gloom. As Al Gore, a former American vice-president, has recently written, we have a privilege afforded very few generations. We have the option of being part of the most exhilarating moral enterprise ever undertaken, namely confronting the ecological crisis. The shared and unifying nature of this global endeavour could help us to put aside our petty conflicts and focus all our considerable energy in shaping a sustainable and just future for everyone.

Despite the core Catholic beliefs that God became part of the earth in the incarnation, and that we experience God in the most intimate way in the sacraments, sometimes the Catholic faith is presented as if we are not embedded in the physical world and do not need sustainable ecosystems. Pope Benedict's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, for instance, which dealt extensively with social justice, did not refer to the problems associated with global warming. Yet the Catholic Church, with its teaching on justice, sustainability, bio-responsibility, humility, generosity, frugality, solidarity and compassion and its worldwide presence, has a unique opportunity to give leadership for this task. But this will only happen if justice and the environment are placed at the top of the Church's agenda. This surely is the "ecological conversion" which Pope John II called for on 17 January 2001. If the Catholic Church rises to the challenge it will be clear to all that its mission is for the life of the world.

Fr Sean McDonagh SSC is a Columban Missionary and is the author of many books on the environment.

29th July 2006

The Way to a Green Theology

The citizens of Britain, like those of other Western countries, think it normal to fly abroad on holiday, some-times several times a year. They think it normal for families to own several cars. They timetable their lives around rapid travel and high consumption of energy. This week the Anglican Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, asked them to consider what they are doing to the planet. Climate change is accelerating rapidly, and we are putting at risk the future of the earth, he said. The bishop, who is chairman of the environment panel of the Church of England bishops, was also urging his own institution to put its house in order. In launching the Church of England campaign "Shrinking the Footprint", he was recommending energy audits for churches and tips on "green" sermons for vicars.

But the Bishop of London was going much further. He was asking people to expand their notion of sin to encompass actions that might adversely affect the planet. Sin was not just a restricted list of moral mistakes but was concerned with making selfish choices and ignoring the consequences. Those selfish choices, he says, include plane travel and driving large cars.

The difficulties the Bishop of London faces in convincing people of his argument are considerable. Not only does the global tourism industry depend on air travel, but so do many national economies. There are indeed no quick fixes or easy answers to this dilemma. As politicians know, people do not respond well to demands for a change in behaviour, nor to coercion, unless they feel personally committed to the result. In calling for this change of heart, the bishops will need to motivate people with a new sense of responsibility for the environment, a new vision for the future and a desire to do good for future generations.

Bishop Chartres will also need to convince those in the Christian community who have until now feared that a focus on the environment will detract from concern for the developing world. Presenting them with the growing evidence that damage to the environment has a detrimental effect on the poorest areas will go a long way towards achieving this.

If the arguments about sin and the environment are to prove convincing, then Bishop Chartres and his supporters must also help develop a convincing theology of the environment. Until now the Catholic Church has shown little interest in such a theology: the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* devotes just half a paragraph to the topic, quoting John Paul II to the effect that climate is a good that must be protected.

Dr Chartres admonished the Catholic Church for failing to be more outspoken on the environment, while acknowledging that only this week Pope Benedict had spoken of the urgent need for protection for the Amazon region whose ecological balance is under threat. The Pope's views were given in a message to Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople whose Religion, Science and Environment organisation was holding its sixth symposium on the Amazon. The Pope then went on to underline the duty and importance of the two Churches working together to promote a catechism of creation.

Development of such a catechism may well prove to be the theological initiative Bishop Chartres is seeking. It is a pro-life challenge the Catholic Church should embrace.

#

2nd Sept. 2006

We have failed planet Earth

by Richard Chartres

A report from aid agencies this week has highlighted dangers to the environment caused by our exploitation of it. Here the Bishop of London reflects on how today's ecological challenge provides a reason for re-engaging with a richer understanding of sin and salvation.

A nerve has been touched. The word "sin" has been used in relation to our impact on the environment on more than one occasion. Three years ago, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew declared pollution to be a sin. Earlier this year, in St Paul's Cathedral, Sir David Attenborough told his 1,800-strong audience that waste was a sin. But my use of it, elevated to a recent front page of the *Sunday Times*, has provoked a visceral response. Even those who believe that the environment is a matter of moral concern wonder whether using the word "sin" isn't going over the top.

The difficulty arises because sin has come down in the world. The Bible understands sin as a state of alienation in which we are all involved. Now, more commonly, sin is regarded as a term covering a limited range of offences committed by our own free will against conventional morality. This reduced concept of sin is one of the ways in which the Christian faith has been deformed. Sin-talk is not a rhetorical device for indicating extreme wickedness. Still less is it intended to contribute to that language of blame which confines people to a guilty past. Authentic talk about sin acknowledges past damage but the main purpose of understanding sin is faith



The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans last year was dwarfed by hurricanes exacerbated by climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean. Photo: Empics

in God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ and this context is largely missing in contemporary public discourse.

The total picture of damage and liberation, sin and salvation, which is found in the Bible, teaches us that these themes transcend our individual relations with God. Sin is living a life turned in upon itself and alienated from our true nature which relates us to God, to God's creation and other creatures and to our own deepest well-being. God is pictured working through covenants with particular individuals - Abraham and David and their descendants - but there is also a cosmic covenant whose brokenness is vividly described in Isaiah 24:4. "The world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant."

The theme of the everlasting covenant in Scripture and in early Christianity has been explored by Robert Murray SJ in an unjustly neglected book, *The Cosmic Covenant*. More recently the writings of Margaret Barker have illuminated the ways in which the worship of the Temple in Jerusalem (so crucial to the thought world of Jesus and his disciples) related to the structure and harmony of the creation, its fragmentation and restoration.

Salvation, envisioned by St Paul in his Letter to the Romans, entails our re-integration into a vaster order and harmony of a creation "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God", and is made possible through Christ in whom "all things hold together". It is, of course, difficult for a twenty-first-century Western mind to connect with this Biblical world view. But there are aspects of the contemporary ecological challenge which provide a reason for re-engaging with a richer understanding of sin and salvation.

We have a great deal of knowledge about the facts, the causes and effects of environmental degradation, from water shortages to deforestation to melting glaciers and increasing numbers of hurricanes, as highlighted in the aid agencies' report *Up In Smoke*, published this week. But it seems to be hard to translate this knowledge into energy for the profound changes which are needed in the way we live now.

Despite the efforts of Darwin to return human beings to the earth and to the kind of creaturely awareness ascribed in Genesis to "Adam", the creature fashioned from the dust of the ground, we have increasingly come to view ourselves in the words of Rene Descartes as "masters and possessors of the earth". It follows that we consider ourselves fully justified in treating the world as mere matter to be exploited. This kind of awareness leads to lethal consequences when it is accompanied by a largely uncritical acceptance of growth without limit with no end in view beyond the process itself. Understanding the extent to which we are blinkered by this inherited mindset is necessary if we are to change. It is becoming clearer that "creation care", and not simply concern for the environment as a backcloth to human activity, flows from our Christian faith.

But the Biblical tradition goes beyond merely commending care for creation as it is. Human beings are also enrolled as viceroys of the earth and co-creators with God. This is what we assert every time we offer bread as "fruit of the earth and work of human hands". The Bible does not imply a rejection of the idea of development. According to the Book of Genesis we are to "dress and keep" creation. This implies a balance between care and development.

Human beings are hungry and thirsty creatures. In the book of Genesis, God put his breath into the first human being and "man became a living soul". The word for "soul" used in this passage is "nephesh" which also had the ancient meaning of "throat". Human beings are hungry and thirsty not only for the wherewithal to sustain existence but for meaning and joy in life. For many, their search for the wherewithal to satisfy their hunger and thirst is concentrated on acquiring things, but for some, often those who in Luther's words have "sinned boldly", there is a breakthrough to a deeper joy and a thirst which nothing can slake, only immersion in the living God.

St Francis is perhaps the most significant Western guide along this way. I suspect that it is significant that he had bourgeois origins and as a young man enjoyed a very jolly time on his father's money - father being a wealthy wholesale textile merchant. After his conversion, Francis would have been reluctant to join a Make Poverty History campaign because he believed that "our lady poverty" was a companion who can lead us into profound communication with God and other creatures. But there is all the difference in the world between the poverty which comes from renunciation and the grinding poverty which is inflicted on so many people in today's world and which shrivels the brains of children and leaves millions naked to fear. In our circumstances, we are right to be involved in the anti-poverty coalition and not complacent about the suffering that *so* many of our contemporaries endure. Spirituality, like civilisation, develops when you don't have to worry too much about where lunch is coming from.

Francis surprised within himself a longing, a hunger and thirst for joy, for truth, for a depth of compassion which could not be satisfied by having things but which could only be tasted by an immersion in the reality of the living God.

As we saw in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, the Christian community with allies from other faiths and people of simple goodwill can make a difference by demonstrating that there is a constituency for change in matter like energy consumption and our responsibilities to the poor of the world. In this way we can enlarge the room for manoeuvre so that sympathetic politicians can be emboldened to act without placing themselves too far distant from public opinion. I studied the party manifestos at the last election and the sections on climate change were very disappointing. One manifesto, after talking in semi-mystical terms about the party's kinship with nature, promised as a commitment to "end the war with the motorist". But I expect that action on climate change did not feature very much in the focus groups and other measurements of what we want from our governments. We and our neighbours can change this situation.

Like many other Churches, the Church of England is seeking to put its own house in order and recently we launched our latest campaign, "Shrinking the Footprint", designed to ensure that we shall in future tread less heavily on the earth. This is an area where ecumenical action is vital.

But practical changes based on good scientific analysis are not, of course, the extent or even the main area of the Church's responsibility. One person of genuine faith has more impact than a hundred people who merely have interests. There is an evident spiritual dimension of the conversion that is necessary which can reveal fresh energies in our traditional Christian practice.

The Church is sustained by the Eucharist in which we are taught by Christ to take life with thanksgiving and not for granted. We may enter believing that we are the masters of the feast but holding up the gifts of creation and receiving them back as gifts of divine love converts us into guests and friends of the bridegroom.

We worship as a community not as individuals, so a Eucharistic ethos is one which initiates us into the mystery that I am well only if my neighbour is well. We receive the gifts of God in common. We are members one of another. The ecological movement has given

us a new sense of what this entails. Who is my neighbour? In today's wired-up and financially interconnected globe we have new opportunities for assessing the impact of our actions on millions of unseen neighbours.

One other obvious example is the urgent need for a Christian rediscovery of the Sabbath as the crown of creation and a festival of equilibrium and enoughness.

The Genesis narrative asserts that creation reaches its consummation not in the creation of human beings on the sixth day but in the peace of the Sabbath on the seventh. At the same time the Sabbath concept when related to the fallow season for the earth points to the need for respect for our common home and restraint on human intervention and exploitation of the natural order.

Rather than being a mere pause between bouts of activity, the Sabbath was to be a feast of contentment. The rhythm of Sabbath days and Sabbath years reclaims time itself from being a mere succession of passing moments. It gives life a shape which flows from the recognition that creation was brought into being not to serve any transient human purpose but to be material for the praise and glory of the Creator.

Creation "wears man's smudge and shares man's smell" knowing no respite from our demands for "more". The Sabbath must be re-invigorated, not as a nostalgic symbol of the religious past but as an anticipation of the harmony and sustainable equilibrium of the Kingdom. Needless to say, our Jewish relatives have much to teach us in this respect.

We have been called to live at a time of huge promise and peril. We shall only convince and help our neighbours if the Church is seen to be living with the quality of awareness which shines through the writings of St Isaac of Nineveh. Born in Qatar, a bishop in northern Iraq, St Isaac wrote:

'An elder was once asked, 'What is a compassionate heart?' He replied, 'It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons and all that exists. At the recollection and at the sight of them such a person's eyes overflow with tears owing to the vehemence of the compassion which grips his heart; as a result of his deep mercy his heart shrinks and cannot bear to hear or look on any injury or the slightest suffering of anything in creation.' "

The Rt Revd Richard Chartres is Bishop of London.

9th Sept. 2006

Meat-free crusaders

New book: *The Bloodless Revolution*: radical vegetarians and the discovery of India

by Tristram Stuart - HarperCollins, £25

The Bloodless Revolution is an inspired and well-researched account of Western radical vegetarianism from the early Hinduphiles to Hitler via the French Revolution and the English Civil War. Interweaving the lives and works of philosophers such as Pythagoras, Romantics like Shelley and spiritual and political thinkers like Gandhi, Stuart also demonstrates India's enduring influence and impact upon Western vegetarianism.

Using diverse materials from travel writing to political, philosophical and literary works, he shows that the seventeenth-century arguments against eating meat grew out of a Christian fervour for the love of all God's creatures. Though these early Western travellers were impressed by the Indian attitude of nonviolence to animals, they adhered to the biblical conviction of human superiority. This made the Hindu disposition to cow worship obviously problematical. Hence they chose to interpret the Hindu approach as a natural consequence of their belief in the transmigration of souls - according to which, the Indians viewed animals as trapped human souls in the wheels of rebirth. This explanation kept the Christian world view safe and sound. However the Indian compassion for animals was later embraced by activists like Thomas Tryon, who lobbied Parliament in defence of animal rights and whose ethical beliefs were much shaped by his study of Hinduism.

The ravages of the civil war in 1642 prompted some Western intellectuals to look at the Indian examples. Voltaire armed himself with the Hindu principle *ofahimsa* - non-violence to fellow beings - in his crusade against Christianity. Several French radical vegetarians, like the Marquis de Valady, who viewed meat-eating as a rich man's wicked luxury, also supported the human bloodbath of the Revolution.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, vegetarianism emerged vigorously in France and in other Catholic countries. Catholics deemed it as a virtue because they believed that the eating of flesh induced passion and abstinence from it was a moral discipline. Rousseau's cult of back to nature provided further support to these herbivorous communities. In all these movements, the Indian idea of non-violence received a good deal of attention.

In Protestant England, vegetarianism was an offshoot of a renewed interest in physical well-being. When Dr George Cheyne, a renowned, and obese, alcoholic, claimed to have been wired of his maladies

by a meat-free diet, he became a vegetarian champion, writing a book on the merits of a diet of seeds, roots and fruit that became a lifestyle best-seller of the day and made him a founding father of the health industry. Cheyne opened his own brand of dietary shop in Bath supplying spa water and therapeutic remedies to fashionable society. Once more the Hindu diet of fruit and vegetables was perceived to hold the secret of the apparent tranquillity and longevity of the Indian race.

Whatever moral or medical ideas may have motivated eighteenth-century Western vegetarianism, its exponents, supported by the aesthetics and philosophy of the Romantics, were preoccupied with the relationship between mankind and the rest of the natural world.

The nineteenth-century vegetarians took such ideas further by addressing the scientific link between animal and man. The debate then raged over the anthropological and economical impact of refraining from eating meat. Darwinian ideas of natural selection and Malthusian hypothesis on population fuelled serious polemical discourse. Stuart makes the point that modern attitudes to food should be seen as one way of understanding the nature of the relationship between society and environmental ecosystems.

Coined in 1840, the word "vegetarian" led to the formation of the Vegetarian Society in 1847. George Bernard Shaw became a member in 1881 after his conversion to vegetarianism. Soon Mahatma Gandhi too, rediscovering the power of the vegetarian mantra in England, would approve the society. Later he incorporated vegetarianism in to his political principles, viewing it as a fusion of the philosophies of East and West. It was not always benign: Hitler, a vegetarian, perceived it as a part of the Fascist ideology of purification.

Tristram Stuart has written a stimulating intellectual history with extensive bibliography and precise notes. There are also some intriguing illustrations. **Krishna Dutta**

16th Sept. 2006

Down to earth truths

I am very grateful to the Rt Revd Richard Chartres for his splendid article ("We have failed planet earth", 2 September). How I wish we could see an equally emphatic message from more of our Catholic leaders - from the Pope down.

Margaret J. Parsons Hollingbourne, Maidstone, Kent

16th Sept. 2006

Food self-sufficiency is unrealistic

Having noted that imported food carries with it a cost to the environment in terms of the air pollution caused by the transportation of that food, Edward Echlin (Letters, 2 September) leaps to the "conclusion" that every region of the world ought to become self-sufficient in food. This is a non sequitur. All that truly follows is that some imported foods maybe underpriced, because their prices do not fully reflect the true costs of delivering them to the market. This may of course encourage greater consumption than is desirable. But it by no means follows that the best level of imports would be zero. Echlin fails to point out that his argument applies equally to all traded commodities, not just food. Would he therefore advocate complete self-sufficiency in all commodities? Nor does he note that what he advocates runs counter to the demands that rich countries should open up their markets to poor country exports and stop protecting their own farmers. A successful "Eat British" campaign could be even more damaging to poor country exports than is the notorious Common Agricultural Policy.

Ian Steedman *Manchester Metropolitan University I. Steedman@mmu.ac.uk*

16th Sept. 2006

Green witness by Mary Colwell

Today's hunger for organic food also demonstrates a spiritual thirst to act with goodwill. But people are being failed by producers, creating an ideal chance for the Church to proclaim its message of healthy, responsible and respectful living

At the beginning of this month Bristol hosted its annual Organic Food Festival, a weekend event held around the docks. I trooped along in the rain on Saturday morning, paid £3.50 per adult to get through the closely guarded gate and spent a few hours browsing the myriad stalls selling everything from organic breakfast cereals to cotton sheets.

While it was easy to be distracted by the two uninterested children with me ("I don't want to spend hours looking at bendy carrots!"), I came away with two concrete results: the first was a lighter purse and the second a determination to take a bishop or cardinal with me next time. Why? Because there is real food for thought at the event, and not just on the price of organic chickens.

If I had done a survey of the reasons why the thousands of people there were prepared to pay the entrance fee and then buy very expensive food, I feel sure I would have found three motives. Organic food is worth it because it is good for you, it tastes better than non-organic and is, by definition, good for the environment. These do seem to be the main drivers behind the burgeoning organic industry; it is seen as an industry that is doing the right thing. But the fact is that none of these things is necessarily true.

It depends on what the product is and where it comes from. An organic apple doesn't necessarily have more vitamins than a non-organic one and, if a non-organic one is washed properly, the pesticides can be removed. An organic apple doesn't necessarily taste better, for as with most foods it is the variety that dictates taste. An organic apple doesn't mean a healthier environment if it was flown into the country or traveled miles in a truck.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-organic in any way; I am very much for organic, local food. But what the festival highlighted was the jumbled-up thinking that typifies the movement at the moment. Take one stall as an example. A pleasant man was selling organic fruit smoothies in individual sachets. They were designed to be bought in bulk - 12 sachets per box - and were marketed as healthy snacks that were ideal for children's lunch boxes. Apart from the fact that each small sachet cost 60p, the packages themselves were incredibly environmentally unfriendly. They couldn't be recycled because of the mixture of plastics in them and they couldn't be reused either as they were impossible to wash inside.

So what was the thinking behind this product? When I questioned him about the packaging he told me that his concern was for the health of children and his prime motive was to encourage them to eat more fruit. Sure, the smoothie was delicious and no doubt is good food, but what is the point in having children glowing with health when they are tiny, only to face a polluted world as they grow older? What is the point of eating an organic mango flown in from India? What normal family can afford to buy an organic chicken costing £13? Why is a bag of organic soya beans worth buying when the soya field was created by clear-felling rainforest?

It seems to me, and this is where the Catholic Church needs to take note, that the Organic Food Festival survives and thrives on the powerful desire of people to do the right thing. People want to act responsibly and are prepared to make sacrifices to do it. But marketing is everything. Get across a message that encapsulates the concerns of our age and people will flock to support it. The organic movement has been so successful that a manufacturer needs only to put organic on its label and people are keen to buy. By way of contrast, no religion has managed to connect with people's concerns for the earth in this way. Yet if the Catholic Church could realise its potential and speak to people about how a Christian life embodies naturally all that is needed for responsible, healthy, respectful living on this earth, it would make enormous strides in engaging with people. Instead the Catholic Church appears to too many people to be old-fashioned, unhealthy and irrelevant to modern life.

The Catholic Church is fundamentally failing to understand that it already possesses a message so powerful, so contemporary, that it could galvanise the world into action and that within a very short space of time could make a huge difference. There are so many people who want crystal-clear leadership on the environment. They want to act in the right way, for the right motives; for themselves, for their families and for the world. The marketers of the organic food movement have spotted this appetite, but they cannot wholly satisfy it. Instead the people of goodwill are swamped by too much information that is impossible to sort out.

Nothing I have read so far grounds the organic movement in a morally sound, spiritual bedrock that addresses all needs and desires. In contrast, the Christian message can satisfy those desires. The Church knows that it is wrong to be wasteful, knows that mistreating animals, plants and the wider environment is a sin, knows that it is our duty to care for the planet and that food should be grown with respect for the earth. Waste and mistreating the environment are wrong not only because they diminish the earth but because they diminish us as spiritual beings.

Here in Europe the Church says little above a whisper about this. In New Zealand, though, there are hopeful signs that the Church is changing and is waking up to the challenge facing all of us. The country's bishops have urged Catholics to change their lifestyles to simpler ones, asking them to use less energy, buy locally produced goods, limit car use in an attempt to reduce carbon emissions and avoid excess packaging. "Protecting the environment involves moderating our desires to consume and own more," the bishops said. And as well as warning that individual and collective acts of selflessness are needed, it was clear that the bishops were convinced that Christianity has much to offer those who concerned with the planet, including the importance of simplicity. Will our own bishops heed the message?

• Mary Colwell is a producer with the BBC Natural History Unit.



The hungry not saved by organic

Mary Colwell correctly points out ("Green witness", 16 September) that organic food is neither inherently better tasting nor safer than that produced by modern farming. All the scientific evidence supports this. While we face a small risk of cancer and other illness due to the food we eat, the overwhelming culprits are the chemical compounds naturally present in the crop and not, for example, pesticide residues.

The higher prices for organic products reflect not better quality but, rather, the much lower crop yields from the organic farm, often less than half of that from other current methods. The surge in crop yields brought about by the green revolution in the latter part of the twentieth century enabled us almost to cover the coincident doubling of human numbers. But we cannot stand still. In addition to providing food for a further three billion people by 2050, there is a strong push for biofuels to minimise carbon dioxide emissions. Some estimates suggest that up to 10 per cent of agricultural land will be needed for such biofuels. From this perspective, the organic route seems wasteful of a most precious resource, namely land. While there are issues for modern farming, we can further improve the application of fertilisers, the crop protection chemicals, irrigation and our impact on other species. We have to trust in the goodness of God, and see the feeding of the five thousand as an example of what is intended, namely generous provision and not mean-minded sufficiency.

(Dr) **Michael Hughes** *Newbury, Berks gillandme@yahoo.co.uk*

Space Filler The Independent

9th October 2006

The human race is living beyond its mean By Andrew Simms

In a market economy, the only constraints on what we consume are what we may legally buy and what we can afford. The result is, as the great environmental economist Herman Daly warned, that we end up treating the planet as if it were a business in liquidation. If you were managing a business, you would be considered grossly negligent if you had no idea of your assets or cash flow. Yet this is how we manage our environmental resources.

When we deplete oil in the North Sea and push fish stocks to the edge of collapse, it is treated as free income to the economy. It is shockingly easy for politicians, economists and planners to forget that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. And, on our island planet, that Earth itself is subject to fuzzy but very real limits. One of the defining features of life in the UK, the world's fourth-largest economy, is the sheer scale of our material consumption, and the ease with which we ignore the burden that it exports around the globe.

Our high-consuming lifestyle is only possible because the rest of the world supports us with large supplies of their own natural resources. No individual country has to be self-reliant. We trade what we can't produce locally, and positively enjoy exotic goods that come from all around the globe.

The world as a whole is living beyond its ecosystems' capacity to regenerate, and, looked at in terms of a calendar year, starts living beyond its environmental means on 9 October. Looking back, if the whole world had wanted to share UK lifestyles in 1961, the Earth would just have managed with its available resources - one planet would have been enough. Today we would need 3.1 planets to support them. To live within our overall environmental budget, the UK will have to reduce the burden its lifestyles create; such as the massive growth of leisure flights and CO2 emissions.

And while our consumption grows, with everything from 4x4s to energy hungry wide-screen televisions, all the academic research shows that consuming more will not make us happier. The same research shows that getting off the consumption treadmill, finding more time for friends and family, reflection and creative pastimes, can. Mainstream economics says that nothing must get in the way of economic growth and competitiveness. But in doing so we are inadvertently waging war on the environment, forgetting that, if we win, we will find ourselves on the losing side.

Andrew Simms is policy director at the new economics foundation

The Guardian

8th Sept 2006

Turkey plant workers filmed playing baseball with live birds by Jeevan Vasagar

Turkeys at a Bernard Matthews plant in Norfolk lived a life that was less than "bootiful", it emerged yesterday, as magistrates sentenced two farm workers to community service for playing a game of baseball with live birds.

Daniel Palmer, 27, and Neil Alien, 30, both of Dereham in Norfolk, were secretly filmed hitting turkeys with a pole at the shed in Haverlingland while rounding them up to be delivered to other plants.

Both admitted ill-treatment and were ordered to carry out 200 hours of community service. Their lawyer told magistrates in Norwich that Palmer and Alien, who no longer work for Bernard Matthews, had been influenced by peer pressure and the "culture" at the plant.

RSPCA inspector Rob Melloy said it was the worst case of cruelty to farm animals he had seen. "They were clearly treated in a brutal, inhuman way," he said, adding that welfare standards in the poultry industry were a general concern.

Jonathan Eales, prosecuting, said Palmer and Alien had been filmed by an investigator from an animal sanctuary. "He heard Alien say, 'You throw them and I'll hit them'," said Mr Eales.

"They were using poles which they had been using to help them round up the turkeys, and they were using them like a baseball bat." He said at least three turkeys had been abused. Their carcasses had not been recovered.

A vet who had seen the footage said it was the "most hideous and blatant" abuse he had seen in 25 years, said Mr Eales.

Simon Nicholls, defending Palmer and Alien, said both men were of previous good character and full of remorse. "In this type of environment the one thing you cannot do is step outside what everyone else is doing," he said. "It was a culture these two became involved in."

Mr Nicholls said the footage, which was shown in court, revealed the appalling conditions at the plant. "You can see why people move to an organic, more open type of farming rather than this appalling type of environment," he said.

Wendy Valentine, the founder of a nearby animal sanctuary, said the public would be horrified if they could see the conditions at factory farms. "You cannot describe it," she said. "We don't tell people not to eat meat or to boycott Bernard Matthews. But they should think about the conditions these animals live in."

Bernard Matthews said later that the two men had been dismissed after the incident came to light. "We welcome the decision of the court today. The welfare of our birds is of paramount importance to us," said a spokesman.

Church of England Newspaper

16th June 2006

A Christian looks at Animal Experiments

By Barry Miles

The debate about animal experiments has been particularly prominent in the media recently and has tended to focus on whether animal experiments are useful. Along with this has gone very often an assumption that human beings are more important than animals, so that if we benefit from such experiments then they are justified. These, however, are utilitarian arguments, not Christian ones and it was refreshing to hear recently, on The Heaven and Earth Show (BBC1), the Revd. James Thompson arguing on this issue that if we pursue God-honouring practices, then God will honour our endeavours. The question for Christians is not "Does it work?" but "Is it right?"

The reason experiments on animals are wrong is that the Bible teaches that humans are worth more than animals! You may now be wondering whether the last sentence was a misprint, but it wasn't. We need to unpack from Scripture what it means to be "worth more". We are made in the image of God (Genesis 1,26), which means we have a spiritual and moral capacity and responsibility which, as far as we know, animals do not have: recent research indicates that animals have more intelligence and even moral capacity than we ever imagined, but it would not seem to be on the same plane as humans'. Human actions are very significant because we should be salt and light: when Humankind sinned the whole earth was cursed (Genesis 3,17) and all nature was plunged into decay. As Christians, followers of the Second Adam, we should be working to redeem this situation and not to perpetuate it. C.S. Lewis hit the nail on the head when he wrote "[our] superiority ought to partly consist in not behaving like a vivisector".

We are called to be Christlike in our behaviour, and even have a redemptive role as far as animals and the rest of Creation are concerned: Romans 8,19-21 is primarily about the end times, but one might ask whether our treatment of animals might lead them to see Christians as harbingers of the great redemption or, as a Bishop of Manchester once commented, as the Devil. Jesus' high worth lay in his sacrificial role: he emptied himself of his power to take the role of a servant (Philippians 2,7), washed the disciples' feet (John 13) and hung on the cross to show that the true nature of greatness is service and self-sacrifice. One theologian has used the phrase "the servant species" to describe human beings' true Christlike role in relation to animals. We need to ask ourselves "Is it Christlike to use our power to inflict suffering on a defenceless, powerless and voiceless creature which has done us no harm simply for our own perceived benefit?"

If it is possible at all to say that there is a hierarchy of sins, pride was one Jesus singled out as a great problem, and not surprisingly, for out of pride springs self-importance and a lack of concern for the lesser, the weaker and the most vulnerable. As far as animals are concerned, a lesson can be drawn: human pride relegates their status and welfare, while a bit of paw- or hoof-washing might not be a bad thing for us humans to try!

But what about the Gadarene swine (Matthew 8, Luke 8)? This has been quoted to justify experiments on animals, but such a conclusion is superficial. First, the animals did not die to cure the sufferers, because they were already exorcised simply by Jesus' own power. Second, it was the demons' idea to go into the pigs and it was they who destroyed them: the harming of animals is, therefore, shown as a demonic activity. It is true that Jesus, at the demons' own request, gave them permission to enter the pigs: but this is part of the wider mystery of why, for the moment, God allows any evil at all to man or beast (in Job 1 and 2 Satan is allowed to afflict humans) and not a justification for discrimination against animals leading to cruel behaviour for our own benefit. On the issue of permitted evil and affliction we have to trust that God knows what He is doing and all will be well in the end.

Experiments on animals vary in severity, but they all cause a degree of deprivation or suffering, which is classified by the Home Office as mild, moderate or substantial. Access to details of experiments is restricted, but it is known that many involve painful sores, burns, internal bleeding, organ damage, cancerous tumours, muscle spasms, nausea, collapse and coma, and experimental animals are normally killed at the end of experiments.

When in the late 18th century the Rev. James Granger preached a sermon against cruelty to animals, using Proverbs 12,10 as his text, he commented that this gave almost universal offence to two large congregations and[was regarded as] proof of his insanity. Why the hostility? Because, when taken seriously, this little known verse might upset our whole view of what we can legitimately do to animals. It teaches that the righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the wicked are cruel to theirs. The use of the word "righteous" is significant. In the Old Testament it means more than just doing the right thing: it is much stronger and perhaps the meaning is best expressed by "after God's heart". Any reasonable person might agree that the needs of an animal are food, water, rest, shelter, freedom to socialize and exercise other natural instincts, and freedom from discomfort and pain. In laboratories social animals, such as dogs and monkeys, are often kept isolated in barren cages; and the vast majority of experiments, if not all, by their nature deprive animals of their needs.

Jesus had a great healing mission and his followers are called to do the same, but we must not attempt to achieve one biblical principle by denying another. Hilary McDowell, in an article in The Christian Herald (September 2005), showed how, when tempted in the wilderness, Jesus refused to let ends justify means. As far as animal experiments go, this applies both to those who believe that animal experiments will enable them to heal and to those who protest against the practice. Violence is violence, whether the victim is a person or an animal: Jesus' death has made possible the peaceable kingdom of Isaiah 11,6-9, where no person or animal is harmed because "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord". As Christians that is our destination and we should already be marching in its direction.

Although open debate is often called for, a problem is that access to details of animal experiments is restricted: a summary by the researcher can be accessed, but this will not show the extent of animal suffering. Animal experiments are excluded from the Freedom of Information Act, even if the researcher and institution are not identified. RSPCA inspectors have no access to experimental animals. On one occasion some researchers' notes were leaked to Uncaged, a legal and peaceful anti-vivisection group, and after a long court battle a judge declared them to be in the public interest: they can be found on www.xenodiaries.org and give an idea as to what is classed as "moderate" severity by the Home Office. Another problem is that, although there is increased debate in the scientific press, no independent scientific evaluation of the value of animal experiments has been done and the Government refuses this. However, 238 MPs so far have signed EDM 92 to request it.

Christians will want to emulate Christ's commitment to healing, but also avoid unrighteous behaviour to animals, so how can we proceed? First, in the political arena we can facilitate informed debate by asking our MPs to sign EDM 92 and to lobby the Government for full access to experimental details (but with no identification of researcher or institution). Second, there are many small medical research charities which do not use animals. Interestingly, there seems to be a correlation between those who refuse to use animals and those who refuse to use material from embryos and deliberately aborted foetuses, whereas those (often the household names) who use

animals will usually support use of embryonic or foetal material. Charities which use neither animals nor embryonic/foetal material are small and need support: they include the Dr. Walter Hadwen Trust, Quest Cancer Research and the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation. My hope is that this article will have been of assistance in enabling us to think through our duty to pursue both healing and righteous behaviour to animals.

Barry Miles is a semi-retired History teacher and a member of the committee of the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals. He is willing to be contacted for further information.

23rd June 2006

Animal rights

Sir, It was heartening to read Barry Miles' thoughtful article on our treatment of animals, a so often ignored issue within the Church. On the subject of animal experimentation there are a number of medical societies opposing this on both scientific and medical grounds, including the excellent 'Europeans for Medical Progress' (BMP).

Loving God surely means loving and respecting his sentient creation. Condoning the daily slaughter of God's animal kingdom to eat, experimenting on and even wearing is to abuse their Creator. We can stop this suffering by not eating them and by purchasing cruelty-free products. God gave animals the gift of life; it is not for us to take it away.

C Hayman London, N8

23rd June 2006

Web resource

Sir, In my article on animal experiments (June 17) a website address was inadvertently omitted. This contains extracts from researchers' own notes which a judge declared to be in the public interest and I quoted it so that readers could see for themselves what is graded as "moderate severity" by the Home Office regulators. The address is www.xenodiaries.org

Barry Miles

23rd June 2006

Unreliable tests

Sir, Barry Miles wrote an excellent article about animal experimentation (June 16). Tens of millions of animals are used in experiments each year involving not only cats and dogs, but also primates. About two-thirds are carried out without anaesthetic. Animal tests are not reliable. Thalidomide, which tested safely in rats, resulted in children with deformed limbs when taken by pregnant women for morning sickness.

As Christians our fundamental responsibility under God should not be to seek our welfare at the expense of animals but to further their wellbeing as well as ours. Alternative techniques are now available, including tests with cell and tissue cultures in vitro.

Marcelle Williams Wokingham, Berks

7th July 2006

Convincing case

Sir, I refer to the article 'The rights and wrongs of animal experimentation' by Barry Miles, in your edition of June 16. I thought his article was excellent. Mr Miles put forward a very strong and convincing case against animal experimentation and I am sure anybody who read the article would reconsider their support for such cruel practices.

Vivisection is a total abuse of life. It is also cowardly and very cruel. There are alternatives and funding should be given to develop these. Drugs tested on animals are far from fool-proof and as a result there have been many dangerous drugs used with tragic consequences.

One would ask the question: What real benefit is there in testing drugs on animals when so much pain and suffering is caused to another sentient creature? **Jean Crossman Gloucester**

7th July 2006

A Christian response

Sir, I would very much like to thank Barry Miles for his excellent article (June 16), and you for printing it in The Church of England Newspaper. Many of us Christians need to have the Christian arguments spelled out to us; then we can respond in a true Christian manner.

Sarah Dunning Watford

14th July 2006

Ethical direction

Sir, I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating and thanking you on printing 'The rights and wrongs of animal experimentation' (June 16).

Our treatment and, all too often, exploitation of the animal kingdom is not in keeping with our designated role as custodians of the earth. Ideally we should strive to be to the animal kingdom what the angels are to us...

As a veterinary student 30 years ago, I was exposed to vivisection. My gut feeling told me that this was not right. Surely, I asked myself, the Good Lord would not make animal torment the only path to medical progress?

Today, after 30 years of critical thinking and questioning, I am more convinced than ever that animal experimentation is bad science. Animals can never replace humans in medical research by virtue of the fact that our genetic codes are so different. When studying human disease, it makes sense to study human cells, not dog cells. Plundering animal bodies in order to try to discover Nature's secrets has only served to confuse and mislead scientists. This could explain why adverse drug reactions are the fourth leading cause of death in this country, despite animal testing.

To paraphrase the words of Andre Mal-raux, 'the 21st century will be one of ethics [and raised spiritual consciousness], or it will not be at all...'

Andre Menache MRCVS Scientific Consultant to Animal Aid Tonbridge

22nd Sept. 2006

Caring for ALL God's animals **By Rt Rev Dominic Walker - Bishop of Monmouth**

This Church of St Bartholomew here in Brighton is the highest parish church in Britain – both structurally and maybe liturgically! Tradition claims that it was built according to the measurements of Noah's Ark. Whether that is factually true or not, it is a wonderful idea to think that a church might represent Noah's Ark, a place of safety and salvation for all God's creatures. St Bartholomew's Church is therefore an appropriate venue for this year's service arranged by the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals and with our sister organisation Catholic Concern for Animals and with the support of Church in Society which is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The theme is appropriately, 'The Ark and the Rainbow'.

When we read the Hebrew scriptures, we find something of a mixed bag as far as animals are concerned – there is both kindness towards animals, as well as their killing for sacrifice. As the Genesis account unfolds, we find that God delights in his myriad creation and all the living creatures, and he blesses them. Then God creates us in his image and likeness, that is, with rational thought, and with the moral sense of knowing right from wrong. Then we are given dominion over animals, although we are not given animals, but plants to eat. When the task was completed, the following day God rested and there was the Sabbath – the day that was marked by peace and harmony with humans and animals living together.

In the second account of creation, Adam is called to name the animals. It is part of God's way of operating – God calls us to work with him as stewards of his creation and for us to have dominion (but not domination, and still less exploitation) over creation. This is the true Sabbath, for as Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok reminds us, it is the Sabbath – not the creation of humankind, that is the goal of creation.

The Old Testament story moves on to show how humans moved away from God but God seeks to bring the world back to himself, but in this fallen world God makes provision for humans to eat flesh. He calls Noah and commands him to build the ark and to take into the ark every living creature. Then after the flood, God makes a covenant with Noah, his descendants and every living creature. God shows them a rainbow and tells that that every time they see the rainbow they should remember the covenant that he has made with them and with every living creature. He says, *'I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.'*

After Noah, we see the development of the Mosaic law with regard to the treatment of animals. Whilst there are verses regarding their slaughter and sacrifice, there are many verses concerning their welfare and how they should be treated. Concepts of justice, compassion and mercy came to be applied to animal husbandry. Jesus himself refers to this when he was attacked by the leader of a synagogue for curing a woman on the Sabbath. Jesus said, *'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman...be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?'* For Jesus, the care of animals took priority over the strict observance of the Sabbath. Indeed, in the New Testament there are seven accounts of Jesus healing on the Sabbath day, because it is the ultimate day of creation when there should be goodness, kindness and harmony in the world, for no human being, no creature, not even a sparrow dies without God knowing and caring.

Eleven years ago I joined the protesters at Shoreham, just along the coast from Brighton. I had not taken part in a public protest since I was a student demonstrating against apartheid and the National Front. At Shoreham I found myself not with the violent animal right protesters (although the television kept showing an isolated act of violence by one of these infiltrators), but with ordinary people, men and women, young and old, many of whom had never protested before, but felt so enraged by live animal exports that they wanted to express their disgust at this cruel trade. Unwanted male calves, taken from their mothers soon after birth, are exported to be reared in veal crates, kept isolated in a cramped space in semi-darkness on bare wooden slats with no straw or bedding and fed an inadequate liquid diet until they are slaughtered at six months to provide unnatural white meat. It was a practice outlawed in Britain 15 years ago because of its cruelty and the export of live veal calves was suspended because of BSE, but sadly, this cruel trade was resumed on 5th May this year and we may return to the days before BSE when half a million calves were exported each year, mainly through France to Belgium and Holland.

Millions of live animals are exported annually – sheep, cattle, pigs, horses and calves. Some are transported across Europe on journeys that can last up to 90 hours. Cattle exported to the Middle East from the EU journey for up to 10 days, and Australia and Brazil both send large numbers of cattle and sheep on long sea journeys to the Middle East. This can take up to three weeks at sea. An organisation called 'Animals Australia' claims that ten of thousands of animals die on these long haul journeys, and those that do not, are often slaughtered in appalling conditions.

The EU has regulations about live transport and has attempted to tighten up on animal welfare, but not all countries are good at following regulations and there are few inspectors so enforcement is a major problem. The European Commission itself has recognised that the longer the journey, the more the animals suffer. Animals are often ill treated as they are herded together and on and off the transporters. They can be injured and even killed by the movement of the lorries and by being trampled on. Disease can spread and they are often given insufficient ventilation, rest, food or water and can suffer from exhaustion, dehydration and heat stress.

The reason for this trade is money and madness. Profit is often placed above animal welfare. We import frozen lamb from New Zealand and export live lambs to be slaughtered in France so that it can be described as French lamb! It would make a lot more sense to slaughter animals here for the home market or export their carcasses.

So what, as Christians can we do? I would suggest five things. Firstly, we need to hear what the scriptures are saying to us about God's love and concern for animals. Secondly, we need to recognise that we make ethical decisions whenever we go shopping – the choices that we make may be colluding with the exploitation of poor people and animals. Fairtrade products, organic meat, dairy produce and eggs should guarantee a higher standard of human and animal welfare. Thirdly, we can support organisations like the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals, Compassion in World Farming that are working with others for peaceful, legal and effective campaigns to end unnecessary live transportation. Fourthly, consider taking part in Veg4Lent which encourages Christians to go veggie during Lent as a practical and spiritual discipline and, last but not least, pray for the animals. Whenever I visit schools, children pray and sing about all God's creatures, but I can't remember when I last heard prayers for animals on a Sunday morning in church!

The Bible opens with the story of creation and how God has entrusted us with stewardship of the earth and all that lives on it. We recognise that we have been exploiting creation rather than caring for it. We are waking up to the need to go 'green' and conserve the world's resources but largely out of self, that is human interest. We also need to wake up to the need to care for animals, but not just because it is in our human self-interest but because we are moral beings who are called to care for creation, to defend the defenceless, to speak out for the voiceless and to protect the vulnerable and weak.

Cardinal John Newman said in a sermon over 100 years ago:

'Now what is it that moves our very hearts and sickens us so much as cruelty shown to poor animals? They are innocent and powerless, the victims of cowardice and tyranny. There is something so very dreadful, so Satanic in tormenting those who have never harmed us, and who cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power.'

So may God bless all who seek to show compassion and kindness to animals, and all God's creatures. Amen.

The Rt Rev Dominic Walker OGS - Bishop of Monmouth

29th Sept. 2006**Taking care of God's dominion**

Sir, The Bishop of Monmouth Dominic Walker makes it clear that God provided plant protein for people to eat, so brutally ending the lives of our fellow animals was never necessary at all.

Genesis 9:4 is the original teaching in this matter, ignored with spectacular cowardly casualness by almost all sections of mankind ever since. Need it really have been so? Perhaps it is associated with man's descent into the habit of war, treating other humans as aliens.

So many unaccountable billions of animals, all individuals to God, have suffered their sacrifice through history for the sake of humans. In Isaiah 66 animals are in harmony with each other, but how many people will be morally fit for the future after they have neglected the meaning of dominion in favour of taking part in domination?

Mr Chris Steel *Leicester*

29th Sept. 2006**Animal welfare is a matter for every Sunday**

Sir, Thank you for printing the excellent article by Bishop Dominic Walker: 'Caring for God's Animals' (September 22). He gives examples from Scripture of our responsibility to show justice, compassion and mercy to all creatures. We are reminded that for Jesus the care of animals took priority over the strict observance of the Sabbath.

The cruel practice of live exports has started again because profit is placed above animal welfare. As Christians we believe in reverence for life and so have a moral obligation to care about animals and to be concerned about the many different ways they are abused. We should have regular prayers for animals in Church - not just on Animal Welfare Sunday.

Marcelle Williams *Wokingham, Berks*

27th October 2006**What Would Jesus Eat - a serious question for the USA**

Gordon Fyles reports on American spiritual attitudes to the growing problem of obesity



I couldn't preach directly on obesity in this church. You saw them today, over half of them have a weight problem," said the rector of a parish that is considering leaving the Episcopal Church because of the gay crisis. No sermons on gluttony, then, but he's just finished a series on human sexuality. The discussion arose as we watched an interview on an Oklahoma City TV station with Jordan S Rubin who was not breaking new ground in claiming that Jesus and his contemporaries were unlikely to have eaten today's popular foods.

"Jesus ate a diet that was high on natural foods — meat, grains, fruit and vegetables. They had seeds, nuts and legumes. My goal is to urge us back to that, a diet of nutritional righteousness," explained Rubin who said his plan, *The Maker's Diet*, had been a decade in gestation since he was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. His faith-based diet runs to a 40-day schedule. It is packed with organic recipes and includes a prayer to get dieters through the plan, driven by the goal of losing 8-15 lbs in the first two weeks.

Giving an idea of what one might eat on the Maker's Diet, Rubin said breakfast could be a goat-cheese omelette with onion, pepper and avocado slices.

Lunch would consist of an oriental red meat salad to include steak or lamb. For dinner, there could be coconut-milk soup, broiled halibut and a side salad. Later in the evening, a snack of goat's milk yogurt with honey and blue-berries would not drive the day's calorie quotient too high. "You'll be adding years to your life and life to your years," Rubin told us and he probably felt destiny was on his side when the station's newscaster I referred to what was happening down in Austin, Texas.

The city council is considering offering bariatric surgery on request to its 4,100 employees of whom it said over 400 would be eligible. Each operation to trim the digestive tract will cost up to \$25,000 and be permitted subject to a medical diagnosis of morbid obesity along with a record of unsuccessful dieting. The council chairman said while some people would be shocked at the proposal, Austin would save financially by going down the surgical route if those treated stick to a health plan. Being something of a diet aficionado myself in the wake of a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes and losing over a stone in weight during the past year, my eye also caught the story of Dr Don Colbert who claims many of the fattest Americans are "dedicated Christian fundamentalists."

Dr Colbert believes obese Americans might listen to Jesus even if they fail to heed the advice of their doctors. He, too, has rushed into print behind Jordan S Rubin with his *What Would Jesus Eat?* self-help manual and its companion cook book. With 22,000 patients at his diet clinic in Orlando, Florida, Dr Colbert says — unsurprisingly — gluttony is the one sin his Bible-believing fatties will not take seriously.

A fortnight's visit to the land of the super-sized was followed by days of headlines back home about an epidemic of obese children and warnings of NHS overload in coping with the multiplicity of conditions brought on by obesity. Here, the population is beginning to realise something immensely grave is happening and faddish diets, even those with Jesus to help out, are not the universal answer. Rather, weight control as an element of public policy backed by politicians, the medical profession and investors is set to harden dramatically. Whichever party is in power in Westminster, the cost to the NHS of obesity-related diseases is about to change the shape of the country. Weight control is the next step after smoking control. Pharmacology, not the biblically-aligned diets of Jordan S Rubin and Don Colvin, will be drafted in to change the way Britain thinks about diet and obesity. Fat and flab will become a ticket to social exclusion as the programmes begin to bite nationwide.

Meanwhile, the Church here faces the same dilemma my friend wrestles with. Hard line on moral issues "because the Bible says so," it has said almost nothing about obesity. The trim and agile Archbishop of Canterbury's pronouncements on this matter are conspicuous by their absence. The Bible is severe on gluttony and says plenty about good parenting — the absence of which simply has to be a major cause of childhood obesity. In adults, obesity is not always the result of gluttony but it often is. Just a thought: are there any church-based youth workers pioneering teaching and pastoral programmes to help their kids resist the demon junk food and grow up godly eaters?

Let's not mock Messrs Rubin and Colvin until we in the UK have a widely-agreed theology of gluttony and can flesh-out our theology and ethics in relation to obesity. Pastoral care for those struggling with weight or sensing their alienation because of it, which is going to be a growing problem as government imposes weight control, can then begin to take shape and make sense.



Meanwhile, let that icon of transatlantic rotundity via excess, actor Orson Welles, have the last prophetic word before we say Grace for our next meal: "My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four... unless there were three other people present." **Gordon Fyles** is a retired cleric, now clear of his addiction to fruit-and-nut chocolate and his partiality to bread-and-butter pudding under control

17th November 2006

What would Jesus eat?

Sir, I should like to thank Harriet Wynne-Jones for recently providing several tempting recipes suitable for vegetarians (eg pumpkin scones, October 27). In the same issue was Gordon Fyles interesting piece "What would Jesus Eat". The same question has been asked in response to concern for our planet and third world neighbours, and the answer is surely that Jesus would (in 2006) eat a vegetarian diet!

Gluttony is certainly a vice, and increasing levels of obesity are the result of over-indulgence. It is also a sin that vast areas of land are cleared for crops which are fed to millions of animals destined to provide food for the Western world's carnivorous appetite while the Third World (whose land has been stolen) goes hungry. While Jesus enjoyed the pleasures of eating in company, he also taught us to show care for creation, compassion for all created things and to "feed the hungry".

Margaret A Turner *Chesham*

1st December 2006

Would Jesus really be a vegetarian?

Sir, The assertion from Margaret Turner (letters, November 17) "that surely Jesus would (in 2006) eat a vegetarian diet!" shows a lack of understanding of the complexity of issues around food that I doubt that Jesus would show in 2006 or at any time.

What is to be done with land that is too steep or soil too poor to make vegetable production realistic at a price people can afford? Dairy production means that to produce milk, cows have to give birth pretty well annually. What is to happen to those calves if they are not reared for meat?

There are questions that need to be asked about the Western/American diet and the amount of meat it contains and the amount of land it demands. It is also true that there are some people who, for conscience sake, choose to adopt a vegetarian diet. However it cannot be argued that being a vegetarian is somehow more Christlike than those who, having looked at the issues, come to a different conclusion. Perhaps Paul's arguments in Romans 14 are relevant here.

Robert Barlow *Worcester Agricultural & Rural Chaplain Knightwick, Worcester*

Email sent 4th December 2006.

May not be published

Sir, Robert Barlow (letters December 1) accused Margaret Turner (letters November 17) of a 'lack of understanding of the complexity of issues around food' when she wrote 'that surely Jesus would (in 2006) eat a vegetarian diet!', and stated that Jesus would not make the same mistake 'in 2006 or at any time', implying that Jesus would not consider a vegetarian diet now or at any time in the future.

Does Robert Barlow really believe that Jesus would not have any compassion for factory farmed animals of today, and that in the future, God's 'Peaceable Kingdom' would still be as cruel, violent and blood thirsty as this present age?

He then argues that it is unrealistic to vegetable farm 'steep or poor soil' ignoring the fact that in this energy conscious age 'Bio fuel' crops can be economically grown on this type of soil, thus protecting and preserving good lowland soil for growing much needed food.

With reference to Dairy production and the unwanted by-product; male calves, he writes 'What will happen to those calves if they are not reared for meat?'. Does he really believe that taking away a new born calf from its mother when only a few days old, placed in a veal crate for 6 months and then slaughtered and sold as a luxury food, would be acceptable to a loving, just and merciful God?

Finally, Robert Barlow refers us to Romans 14. We can all quote isolated passages out of the Bible to prove a point rather than rely on our faith in a perfect God. When we do however, we are all in danger of condemning God in order to justify ourselves. In Robert Barlow's response there was not an ounce of care or compassion for the rest of God's creation, surely as Christians we should be proclaiming to all the world our faith in a loving, just and perfect God and our hope for His peaceable Kingdom. I could not worship a God who only cares for one species; the most violent and destructive species on Earth.

Don Gwillim *Foresta, Pines Road, Liphook, GU30 7PL*

Christianity Magazine

Unpublished

A Vegetarian diet for Lent

I read with interest Rob Parson's article "Bringing home the Prodigals". There are of course any number of factors which have led to a wide spread abandonment of church participation. Often disillusionment stems from unworthy motives, although it is important to acknowledge that the opposite situation can occur.

There are for example many humanitarians who through compassion and an inspired sense of love, mercy and justice, embrace vegetarianism. Let us make no mistake about the fact that most will have had encounters with "hostile" Christians, who are often quick to pour theological scorn, on an essentially benign movement.

The general impression given by Christian antipathy towards the meat-free lifestyle, is one of dogma

being brandished at the expense of genuine spirituality. Indeed, illusion to the nineteenth century "Christian" case for human slavery, have been made on more than one occasion.

And it need not be so.

There are an increasing number of Christians who have chosen the vegetarian response to today's injured world. To many, it is an entirely personal matter, quite separate from faith. To others, it has been a source of stigma within their churches. To other still, it is an opportunity to embrace the theological imperative of the coming kingdom, for which we pray daily.

Is it not indeed, rather difficult to reconcile grace with bloodletting and the harrowing violence of the abattoir? Surely if Christians are to herald a more peaceable era, we should develop a greater affinity, with achievable aspirations which stem from mercy and love.

May I accordingly draw the attention of your readers towards this year's "Vegetarian diet for Lent" initiative. For further information please visit www.veg4lent.org or write to:

"Christian Vegetarian Association UK", Foresta, Pines Road, Liphook, GU30 7PL.

John M. Gilheany

Space Saver The Independent

15th May 2006

Animal Experiments

Sir, I learnt this week that a survey of the public showed 75 per cent in favour of animal experiments for medical purposes, but I missed the result of the survey of laboratory animals. Does anyone know the percentage in favour?

Barry Miles

Sir, Could I just, briefly, register my thanks to Tony Blair for his latest public endorsement of the practice of vivisection. The anti - vivisection movement is grateful for all the help that it receives.

Pat Rattigan, Director, British Anti-vivisection Association, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

Important Announcement

The Ferrater Mora Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics

100 Academics Support New Animal Ethics Centre at Oxford

More than 100 academics from 10 countries have agreed to become Advisers to the new Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics – launched online on Monday 27 November at www.oxfordanimaethics.com - which aims to put animals on the intellectual agenda.

The Centre is the world's first academy dedicated to the enhancement of the ethical status of animals through academic publication, teaching and research. Academics world-wide from both the sciences and the humanities will be eligible to become Fellows of the Centre. It will act as an international, independent think tank for the advancement of progressive thought about animals.

One of the areas of research will be the relationship between animal abuse and violence to human beings. One of the world's major writers, who has explored this link - Nobel Laureate in Literature, Professor J. M. Coetzee – has honoured the Centre by agreeing to become its first Honorary Fellow. Other projects being pursued include an online course in animal ethics, a new monograph series, and a new Journal of Animal Ethics.

The Centre's first director, Oxford theologian, the Revd Professor Andrew Linzey, said today: 'The support of such a large number of internationally recognised academics underlines just how important animals are as a moral issue'.

'There is a strong rational case for animals, which has been recognised over the centuries by academics and philosophers. What is needed is for this rational case to be much better known and there are now signs that progressive thinking is becoming mainstream. Importantly, animals are now recognized as sentient beings in European law; and, in the UK, the most comprehensive - and long overdue - overhaul of animal welfare legislation for almost a century has recently passed into law.

'We must strive to ensure animal issues are highlighted and rationally discussed throughout society - we cannot change the world for animals without changing our ideas about them. The Centre will promote ethical attitudes and contribute to informed public debate.'

Professor Priscilla Cohn, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Penn State University, who is the Associate Director of the Centre, added: 'It seems to us that academics should take the lead in helping to foster a new kind of debate about animals – one that goes beyond slogans and stereotypes'.

The Advisers and the first six Fellows are listed on the Centre's website: www.oxfordanimaethics.com. The Centre is named after the distinguished Spanish Philosopher, José Ferrater Mora, who courageously spoke out against bull-fighting in Spain.

For more information please contact:

Professor Andrew Linzey, (+44) (0)1865 201565; director@oxfordanimaethics.com.

or

Professor Priscilla Cohn, (001) 610 525 2957 or 610 525 5089

Church Times

19th May 2006

Cut flying and help the poor, says Christian Aid by Bill Bowder



Pace of change: Pancha Bala, 45, walks where her home used to be until 2005 on Kutubdia, an island south of Bangladesh which has shrunk by almost half in the past 50 years, owing to coastal erosion.

MASS MIGRATION to Europe of Africans is predicted, as global warming threatens hopes of making poverty history, and of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, says the latest Christian Aid report. The report, *The Climate of Poverty*, warns that global warming will cause poverty, famine, and disease. "There will be mass migrations of people from Africa in search of food. Europe should be prepared. We are going either to prosper together or perish together when climate change comes," says Professor Eric Odada in the report. Professor Odada is regional director for climate-change research in Africa at the International Council for Science, based in Paris.

To reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, Christian Aid was relocating staff to the countries where it was working. The charity's flights accounted for 797 tonnes of carbon dioxide two years ago, and 686 tonnes last year. Over the three years, it wanted to cut emissions from flying by one third. It called on the Government to achieve a cut of three per cent a year each year, Mr Pendleton said.

The report says that switching to renewable sources of energy will help to reduce the rate of global warming and increase wealth for poor people at home. "Renewables do not contribute to greenhouse-gas emissions: they are cheaper than oil will become, and they literally empower people to climb out of poverty and reach the MDGs. For these reasons, renewables are simply the only option that makes sense for poor people," the report argues.

"Christian Aid believes that tapping non-carbon sources of power like solar, wind, hydro-, biofuels, and geothermal, as well as using existing energy more efficiently, is essential if developing countries are to escape the twin dangers of climate change and poverty."

National grids waste huge amounts of energy, says the report: the UK loses 65 per cent of the power it generates. But one third of the world's population is "off grid", and local use of renewables, as in the Solar Electric Light Fund and the Jigawa Alternative Energy Fund in northern Nigeria, delivers power to help rejuvenate village economies.

The World Bank could fund small-scale solar installations for 20 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. A large-scale solar thermal power station could produce the energy of five million barrels of oil over its lifetime, says the report.

The Climate of Poverty: Facts, fears and hope is available at www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth/605caweek/index.htm

8th Sept. 2006

The sacrifice of animals to save human lives

From Dr Martin Henig Sir, — The big debate in Oxford University over the past year has been concerned not with church matters, but with the building of an "Animal House", to house and breed animals for medical research.

While, no doubt, many Christians will have personal views concerning the subject, it is unfortunate that the Church has not so far placed itself where it should be: in the very centre of a debate throughout the nation on what should be a pressing moral issue.

To assume automatically that because it is possible to experiment on animals, and because notional benefits may be obtained from such research (and profits for drug companies), it is therefore right to kill or cause excruciating pain to our fellow creatures, leads us into dangerous territory indeed.

Apart from the effect on animals, what harm does such research do to those who take part in, or sanction, such cruelty? As Christians, we have priorities in saving life, and yet we see human lives wasted by lack of food, lack of safe drinking-water, lack of hygiene, and by war and terrorism throughout the world. We can save many human lives without a single new drug.

Moreover, in advancing medicine, there is much that can be done without causing suffering, and in the right of good Franciscan principles of reverence before the creation and the God who brought it into being. So often in our prayers of intercession, daily and on Sundays, I have the uneasy feeling that we do not see the world in its complexity. Let us, indeed, pray for ourselves and our fellow man, but let us pray also, as I try to do, for the creation that God saw as very good, and resolve to be good stewards of animals and plants in future.

If this leaves us far beyond debating the morality of putting electrodes into the brains of kittens and monkeys, and into worrying about the slaughter of animals to indulge our appetites, then so it should.

MARTIN HENIG (founder member of VERO, Voice for Ethical Research in Oxford) 16 Alexandra Road Oxford OX2 0DB

Not Published

The Sacrifice of Animals

I read Martin Henig's letter "Sacrifice of animals to save human lives" on 8 Sept. and agree with him that there are serious ethical questions, especially for Christians, when we cause pain to living, sentient beings.

Animal testing does not necessarily benefit humans in any case, as animal testing can be inaccurate because animals react differently to animals to drugs. Several commonly prescribed medical drugs for arthritis & depression have had to be withdrawn in the last couple of years because their side-effects did not show up on animals.

Computer modelling & human cell cultures are more reliable indicators. One charity (Animal Aid) runs a scheme whereby people volunteer to donate left-over tissue for research after an operation. Stem cells from umbilical cords can be grown into over 200 different types of human body cells for research. This is ethical as the cords are usually just thrown away after birth. www.cordblood4life.org If penicillin had been used on guinea pigs first, we may never have had its benefits because penicillin kills guinea pigs. Social Audit report that one in 20 hospital beds is occupied by people damaged by prescribed medical drugs - yet they were all animal-tested.

If another species were more powerful than humans, we would not consider it ethical for them to drop acid into our eyes, burn us or sew up our eyes for research in order to help them! Proverbs states that a good man should be kind to his animals.

A. Wills

29th Sept. 2006

Sunday shooting would be a step backwards

From the Rt Revd Richard Llewellyn Sir, — I am growing increasingly concerned at possible plans to remove the restrictions surrounding the shooting of gamebirds on Sundays and Christmas Day. The Game Act 1891 makes shooting gamebirds on these days an offence.

About 35 million birds are intensively bred and reared each year to be used as live targets for slaughter by the shooting industry. There is no reason why the restrictions currently in place, imposed to protect the peace and tranquillity of the countryside on God's day of rest, should now be lifted.

The countryside should be open to all to enjoy peacefully on a Sunday. Allowing game shooting on this day and Christmas Day puts the interests of one small group above those of other countryside-users. Some of those who wish to take part in church services or take a peaceful stroll in the countryside will find that Sunday shooting impacts negatively on their activities.

Allowing game shooting on Sundays and Christmas Day is a step backwards for animal welfare and the peace of the countryside, which is why I am adding my support to a

campaign by the League Against Cruel Sports opposing any changes to the current law. Sunday is a day for recreation, not for destruction. Is it really asking too much to keep Sunday a day of peace and safety for gamebirds and hares?

RICHARD LLEWELLYN Chairman The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals PO Box 7193, Hook Hampshire RG27 8GT

13th October 2006

Don't shoot?

From the Revd John Kepam Sir, — Like the Rt Revd Richard Llewellyn (Letters, 29 September), I am not in favour of shooting on Sundays or Christmas Day. But I am interested that he adds his "support to a campaign by the League Against Cruel Sports opposing any changes to the current law". What a wonderful paradox — to find that the Bishop and the League support shooting on weekdays!

JOHN REPATH The Rectory, New Galloway Castle Douglas DG7 3RP

Space Saver Sunday Times

8th October 2006

Millions of animals to die in new EU chemical tests

Nicola Smith Brussels

TENS of millions of rabbits, mice and guinea pigs are facing a painful death in laboratory experiments to be imposed next April because of new European Union rules on chemical testing. The new laws will set compulsory tests for about 30,000 chemicals that have been on the market since before 1981, when there were no stringent health and safety requirements.

Many of the chemicals are used in household items, from shampoo to children's toys, and EU policymakers have pushed for the new standards, arguing that too little is known about the dangers for human health and the environment. Products will have to stop using unsafe chemicals or be banned, but the tests cannot be carried out without the "collateral damage" to millions of animals. Campaigners protest that the tests are too indiscriminate and that not enough has been done to find humane alternatives.

Current estimates of the number of animals to be affected range from the 16m predicted by the chemicals industry to 45m over 15 years calculated by Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment. The toxicological experiments will include chemicals dropped into rabbits' eyes, irritants tested on guinea pigs' skin and cancerous tumours grown on mice. The health risks of chemical exposure during pregnancy will also be assessed on rabbits, causing their babies to be stillborn.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it was "horrified" at the prospect of so many animal experiments. A spokesman said that despite some positive changes to the draft law, too many animal tests would still be carried out unnecessarily. Alistair Currie, campaigns director of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, said: "It is an animal welfare crisis. All of these tests could be replaced with non-animal tests."

The new law, known as Reach (the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals), is the largest piece of legislation ever adopted by the EU and one of its most contentious. It has pitted the chemicals industry against the environmental lobby, the EU against America and, unusually, animal rights lobbyists against conservationists. In a U-turn last week David Cameron, the Conservative leader, pledged that his 26 MEPs would back the legislation, boosting-hopes that it will be finalised by the end of the year.

The European parliament's environment committee faces a crucial vote on the law in Brussels on Tuesday. Chris Davies, a Liberal Democrat MEP, said he would table a series of amendments to improve its animal welfare provisions but conceded that millions of creatures would still be sacrificed. "We can do a lot more to reduce the need for tests and to speed up the introduction of alternative testing methods," he said. "But let's not pretend there will be no animal testing." The European commission said it could reduce the number of animal tests by 50% if approval is given to alternatives such as computer modelling. #

Weston Mail

27th June 2006

Cruelty to whales

• SIR - A return to the hunting of whales is in my opinion totally unacceptable. I write as a veterinary surgeon with over 40 years experience in general practice. Apart from arguments from conservation and other standpoints I consider the prime reason for opposing it is its very cruelty. There has been little mention, in discussions on radio and television, of the fact that whales are mammals and as such have a capacity for feeling comparable to that of the land mammals familiar to us. This capacity for feeling is, I suggest, not so very different from our own sensory capability.

Killing wild animals humanely is difficult and in the case of a very large marine animal virtually impossible. Whales are killed by shooting them with a harpoon to which a length of line is attached. The harpoons are fitted with explosive heads, which explode on entering the whale. It requires little imagination to realise how this can result in a slow and agonising death. If allowing such a method of killing is unimaginable for land mammals why should it be permissible for marine mammals?

Whales and related species seem to increasingly trust humans. We have discovered much about them in recent years, particularly their complex and beautiful songs of communication that can travel hundreds of miles through the ocean. What sort of a message will be transmitted by a harpooned whale dying in agony and what will be the effect on other whales of this and the blood and offal discharged into the sea from factory ships?

Martin Strong, Wernolaum Penrherber, Newcastle, Emlyn

The Catholic Times

28th May 2006

Cow's milk is not great for kids

AGNETA SUTTON is certainly right when she laments the lack of exercise and sunshine which are causing children to grow up with weak bones (Science, *The Catholic Times*, May 21). She is, however, misinformed if she believes that drinking cow's milk will improve the situation.

The consumption of cow's milk places the individual in a significantly higher risk category than those who do not eat dairy products for the five major degenerative diseases. Those who drink cow's milk are significantly more likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer and yes, even osteoporosis, which is now a national epidemic.

The reasons for this were not understood when I had cow's milk as a child in the 1970s. They are now understood to be linked to pollution being concentrated in the milk, naturally occurring growth hormones, low levels of magnesium which render absorption of calcium difficult, antibiotics, growth promoters and the very concentrated levels of protein which the human body does not need. In order to excrete this excess protein, the body leeches calcium from the consumer's bones.

In countries with low dairy consumption, osteoporosis is very rare. When people move from Japan to a place where dairy consumption is high, their risk of developing osteoporosis becomes correspondingly high unless they stick to their previous dairy-free diet.

If the government truly cared about children's health, they would replace cow's milk in state schools with free fresh fruit at break times and include large amounts of green leafy vegetables, nuts and seeds in school lunches. These are packed not only with vitamins but also calcium in a form friendly to the human body.

Karen Rodgers, Cambridge

11th June 2006

All living beings experience pain

I AGREE with Agneta Sutton (Science, *The Catholic Times*, May 7), 'Of course babies feel pain'. It is difficult to understand how the medical profession could have been taught for so long that babies can't feel pain. Doctors used to believe that only someone who had the gift of language and reasoning could experience pain. Whereas ordinary people with common sense have always known that anything with a sensitive nervous system can feel pain and discomfort.

Scientists and those in authority also seem to close their eyes to the fact that animals used in medical experiments or slaughtered in a cruel manner experience pain. I hope that new sensitive testing will make doctors aware that all sentient beings feel pain and fear - even if they don't have the gift of language.

A Wills, Ruislip, Middlesex

21st June 2006

Goldmine is devastating ecology and economy

By Debbie Wainwright

WHAT does gold mean to you? Some may answer wealth or power, others of a more sentimental disposition may talk of love and commitment. Sports fans may think of Olympic medals or the world cup, while dentists may have teeth in mind. For the people of the Siria Valley in Honduras however, their answers are far more brutal. David Flores, 65, of Porvenir town said: "Gold is like rubbish, it's like dirt. People get ill, families fight and environments are destroyed."

"Modesta Arteaga, 52, from the town of Pedernal, said: "Because I'm a Christian gold comes from God. It is gold mining that destroys the land. It would be better if the gold was just sleeping in the land then we would still have beautiful forests and healthy people." And Carlos Amador of Porvenir: "You can live without gold but not without water." These are some of the voices of the Siria Valley. People who live in around the San Martin gold mine run by Entre Mares, a subsidiary of Canadian gold mining multinational Glamis Gold.

It is the lives of these people and thousands like them that CAFOD and its Honduran partner, Caritas Tegucigalpa, are hoping to turn around with their new campaign *Unearth Justice*. The campaign will pressure gold mining companies, such as Glamis Gold, to clean up their act; to stop undermining the poor and to respect the rights of the people and protect the environment. In short, the aim is to turn gold into a blessing and not a curse for the people living in and among this precious metal.

Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez is at the forefront of the campaign in Honduras. Side by side with Caritas Tegucigalpa, he organised the first protest march against Entre Mares four years ago. Since then, he and CAFOD partners have been pushing for changes to the Honduran Mining Law that at present overwhelmingly favours rich and powerful multinationals over local communities. In an interview with CAFOD, Cardinal Rodriguez said: "How could I not get involved? The problems are evident. The lagoons and small rivers are dry now. There are problems for cattle and agriculture. The 40,000 people of Siria Valley are slowly being destroyed by this mine. "The mine is not bringing progress or real development, it is only bringing money for some companies. Looking to the price of gold, this has been a great injustice. A very unfair way of making business. What they are doing is not allowed in other developed countries and we must demand justice for our nation."

CAFOD and Caritas Tegucigalpa are also supporting a strong grass roots movement in the Siria Valley, the Environmental Committee, who are fighting for justice for their people. The committee has branches in small towns and villages throughout the Valley. Carlos Amador, a teacher with four young children, is one of the key activists. Carlos said: "When the mine arrived there was so little awareness of danger among the population so I went looking for information. It was very difficult to convince people of the threat because people had the idea of a goldmine as something which would bring them riches and development. Glamis Gold arrived in our communities promising these things.

"Instead, the negative impacts of the San Martin mine are extensive. Environmental destruction, implicit in open-pit mining, continues to damage the eco-systems in the region — forests, water sources, flora and fauna. Our job is to make sure that what is happening here in this valley does not happen in the rest of the country."

Unearth Justice exposes evidence of the ruin Carlos talks so passionately about. It reveals the pollution of water with cyanide and arsenic. The mine has also contributed to the weakening of the Siria Valley's local economy, traditionally based on agriculture and cattle. The report highlights further injustices and reveals evidence of people being forced from their homes to make way for the mine with many of those relocated no longer enjoy the security of their land ownership.

Rodolfo Arteaga, 44, is another active member of the environmental committee. He is desperate for solid evidence about what is happening to his home. He was born in the valley and can see for himself the damage that is being caused. Entre Mares has failed to let the people know about water pollution or the effect the gold mine is having on water levels and agriculture. Now he has proof.

"I've lived in the area all my life. I became a farmer and grew maize and beans and had cattle and horses. I lived off this by selling the extra crops. I grew up in the countryside and all was beautiful for me and abundant. We had fruit, bananas, avocado, mango, a vegetable garden and sweet water from the stream.

"Now, I don't grow anything to sell. The land and soil is not so good. There is not enough water and it is bad water. I can't make money from agriculture anymore. Since the mine, we are worse off health wise and money wise."

Rodolfo lives in the village of Palo Ralo, which lies 900 meters from the gold mine. His is the only community in the valley that was forced to move from their homes to make way for the mine in the year 2000. The Palo Ralo community used to enjoy fresh mountain water. They now rely on a company contracted by Entre Mares to bring them water in tanks. The village's own wells have been closed down due to arsenic pollution, the poison believed to be released by the mining process and fluoride. The people had been drinking from these wells for one and-a-half years. When there is not enough water to go around many people rely on family living in villages further away to provide them with water or they have to pay.

The Environmental Committee now faces something of a David and Goliath struggle and have lodged a formal complaint against Entre Mares with the public prosecutor on the grounds of contaminated water and damages to people's health. Their case is being investigated. Entre Mares is already facing a court battle in the Supreme Court for illegal deforestation and diverting the course of a river. For Rodolfo, proving that Entre Mares has caused environmental damage and suffering and his anger is not just the "ignorance of a poor farmer", is his driving goal and he wants justice. "I feel my rights and my dignity have been taken away. The land I inherited from my family has gone. I still think of my old village and see how the environment has been destroyed. We are simple, modest people. The mine is like a monster. I have no choice but to struggle for our rights. All people must know what is happening here and the damage gold mining causes so it doesn't happen again."

• To find out more please log on to www.cafod.org.uk or call 0207 095 5692

11th June 2006

Poor paying price of global warming

By Agneta Sutton

CLIMATE change will affect us all, but above all the poor. Christian Aid, in its report, *The Climate of Poverty; Facts, Fears and Hopes* (May 2006), argues that climate change and poverty are inextricably linked. According to the report, the poor are already the worst affected by global warming. And it is they who will suffer the most in the future. It is estimated that by the end of this century nearly 200 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa could die from climate-related diseases. The authors of the Report appeal to the UK and Irish governments to take a lead in calling for immediate action to halt the speed with which our globe is heating.

We are told that already global warming already is igniting violence in areas of Kenya badly hit by drought. Water is in short supply. The numbers of water holes are diminishing. And nomadic herders are killing each other in their attempts to secure water for their cattle. This is at the same time as sea levels are rising, as Arctic ice masses melt. This could affect countries such as Bangladesh whose population is living only just above the sea level at present. Rising sea levels could displace millions, leaving them without land and shelter. Other countries that might be badly affected are Egypt and Vietnam, not to mention numerous Pacific islands. Their fate may be that of Atlantis. This is the mythical city said to have sunk into the sea — and with it a whole civilisation.

The report calls for investment in renewable and green power. Above all it warns the poorer and less industrialised countries on Earth not to go down the same path as the industrialised world. Instead of increasing their dependence on fossil fuel, they should develop solar power, wind power and water power. And the richer countries of this world should help them to do so. This is not only because global warming affects us all. It is also because the industrialised and richer countries are responsible for the creation of the problem in the first place.

Richer countries are also urged to make a greater effort to cut carbon dioxide emissions. This is with the implication that doing otherwise is selfish. Countries with growing economies such as China, India and Brazil should also agree to cut emissions. Climate change is destroying the development in developing countries. It is noted that Africa is going backwards, rather than forward. The poorer are getting poorer.

Of course, not everyone will take this Christian Aid report seriously. There are still those who dispute that global heating is taking place. There are still those who argue that if it is actually taking place, we humans have everything. But the prestigious International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Office (WMO), in 1988, has shown beyond any doubt that global heating is taking place. It has shown that during the 20th century the surface temperature of the earth temperature increased by about 0.6 degrees Celsius. And two thirds of that increase has taken place since 1975. By 2100 temperatures may have risen another 1.5C-6C degrees. In other words, the report shows that global heating is accelerating. And who is blamed? Humankind is! James Lovelock, the world famous UK climatologist, and founder of the Gaia theory, agrees. He, too, insists that global heating is accelerating. Indeed, he argues that the situation is now so grave that we have to take emergency action. Referring to the Earth's present condition as a disease, he says that it puts human civilisation in imminent danger. In his book *The Revenge of Gaia*, he argues that nuclear energy is "the only effective medicine we have now". In order to save Gaia, that is, life on earth, we must switch from fossil fuel to nuclear power immediately, in his opinion.

Gaia is the ancient Greek goddess of the earth. On James Lovelock's understanding, together all life on earth, in conjunction with the soil, the water the atmosphere on which life is dependent, behave like a self-regulating organism. And today Gaia, this quasi-organism, is reacting to human violation of its equilibrium.

James Lovelock does not advocate nuclear energy as a long term solution to curbing global warming. He sees it as an emergency measure. And he advocates its use "until clean and everlasting fusion, the energy that empowers the sun, and renewable energy are available". This said, contrary to the greens, who worry about nuclear wastage, which takes hundreds of years to break down, he says that nuclear power is "the one safe and proven energy source that has minimal global consequences".

Perhaps, he is too optimistic about nuclear power. It may be a quick fix. It may be economically attractive. The greens' worry about nuclear waste is, however, well founded. But extreme emergencies may call for extreme measures. The question is whether extreme efforts to convert to renewable energy sources might be safer?

25th June 2006 - AGNETA BUTTON (*The Catholic Times*, June 11) is absolutely right. It is the poor who are paying the price of global warming. The warnings from the scientists are dire. Billions of our brothers and sisters throughout the world are at serious personal risk from climate change because of our selfishness. We will be personally and collectively responsible for their deaths unless we mend our ways and reduce our own carbon dioxide emissions. The Church has always preached self-denial. Now is the time to examine our consciences: Do we really need to drive everywhere; to holiday overseas; to walk around the house in shirtsleeves on a winter's day; to buy fancy foods that have been flown half way around the world? Are not these all examples of an unhealthy materialism?

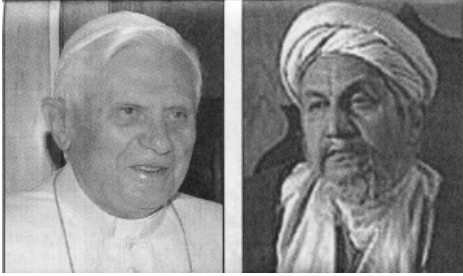
Preventing climate change is as much a moral issue as preventing abortion and euthanasia. Catholics must give the lead by word and deed. Our Lord's message of "love your neighbour" has never been more relevant.

Stephen Garsed, Fulwood, Preston

16th July 2006

Leaders of faith follow the eco-friendly paths

By Tim Buckley



Friends of the earth - The Pope and Grand Ayatollah Yusef Saanei

MORE than a decade ago on an Aegean island, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians made a startling proposition: That pollution and other attacks on the environment could be considered sins. At the time, the idea earned him little more than a nickname - the "green patriarch". It's no longer such a radical view. Eco-friendly attitudes have increasingly moved into the mainstream of many faiths -from Muslim clerics urging water conservation in the fast-growing Gulf states to evangelical preachers in the US calling attention to global warming.

This week, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I will lead another high-profile group of religious leaders, scientists and activists on a trip to examine the interplay of faith and ecology. The week-long voyage along the Amazon will be Bartholomew's sixth green journey since the first in 1995 to the Greek island of Patmos — where biblical tradition says the book of Revelation was compiled.

The efforts of Bartholomew and others have energised some of the most lively theological explorations in recent years — with fresh studies and interpretation of Scripture along environmental lines. The global movement also offers rare common ground for religious groups at a time of confrontation on issues from gay clergy to suspicions between the Muslim world and the West.

"The environment brings a sense of urgency and shared purpose that few other issues can bring," said Mary Evelyn Tucker, a co-founder of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, a group that will begin a relationship with Yale University in September. "It cuts across all religious traditions." Evidence of an expanding environmental ethos can be found in nearly every faith. In New York, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life draws clear links between Judaic traditions and the battles to ease global warming. In China, a Buddhist conference in April urged greater emphasis on environmental protection. Hindu religious scholars have raised alarms about possible environmental fallout from the rapid modernisation in India.

In June, Pope Benedict XVI told a crowd in St Peter's Square to shun "fake freedoms which destroy the environment and man", though he did not elaborate. In Iran, Grand Ayatollah Yusef Saanei said it was "the duty of every Muslim" to protect the environment. Many *fatwas*, or religious edicts, across the Muslim world echo similar Koranic readings that God entrusted humans to protect the earth.

"Religion is built on story telling. The stories reach people in ways that academics or activists or NGOs cannot," said Victoria Finlay, a spokeswoman for the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, a London-based group founded by Prince Philip. "It took a while for the two sides to begin to understand each other. But now the NGOs and others recognise what a powerful force religion can play." Among the alliance's current projects is encouraging Muslim imams in Kenya to denounce the widespread use of dynamite to catch fish and push for a return of traditional nets, which trap large fish but allow smaller, breeding-age fish to escape.

"The environment is a great unifier," said Fr James Keenan, a Boston College moral theologian who is hosting a meeting of more than 400 Catholic scholars in Padua, Italy, starting this weekend. "You are not going to find anyone saying: Well, there is no moral connection between religion and the environment.' All the faiths can bring something to the table." Bartholomew's trip hopes to draw the attention of religious leaders to the critical pressures facing the Amazon, including clearing pristine rain forest for farmland. One goal is to tap the immense reach of Brazil's Pentecostal and evangelical-style churches, which continue to chip away at the Catholic majority.

In the US, many evangelical leaders have discovered the message of ecology - drawing links between the biblical command for proper stewardship of the Earth and environmental activism. The Evangelical Environmental Network — best known for its clean-air campaign *What Would Jesus Drive?* - opened a new effort earlier this year against global warming, the Evangelical Climate Initiative, which drew some of its most prominent supporters to date, including the Rev Rick Warren, author of the runaway best seller *The Purpose Driven Life*.

But some scepticism remains within the evangelical community. Christian leaders with close ties to the Bush administration, calling themselves the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, said "the science is not settled on global warming", and argued that most evangelicals do not back the call for regulating greenhouse emissions. Among the alliance's supporters are James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, and the Rev Richard Land, head of the public policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Still, small acts indicate the mood of many congregations, like the Unitarian church in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, that's looking for a new building. The congregation recently sold its historic home and is working with an architect who specialises in designing 'green' places of worship. It techniques include recycled construction materials and aligning the structure to use the maximum natural light.

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23rd July 2006

Bully for you -Three nuns looks on before the last bullfight of the famous San Fermin festival, in Pamplona, in northern Spain. The festival held since 1591, attracts tens of thousands of tourists each year for nine days of revelry, morning bull-runs and afternoon bullfights.

23rd July 2006

Time for Christians to shun all cruel sport

WHEN the late Pope John Paul II entreated Christians everywhere to act towards animals "as intelligent and noble masters and guardians of nature and not as heedless exploiters and destroyers", can we accept bullfighting as a way of life in certain European and Central/South American countries?

The moral choice by moral and spiritual beings, that is adult men and women in "civilised" Christian countries, should be obvious from the nature of the sport. The whole object is to torment a bull in a captive state - often disadvantaged by having its horns shaved or being drugged - using pain-inflicting and wounding banderillas, lances, spikes and similar implements until it succumbs to a not always accurate or instantly fatal stab between the shoulder blades.

In France and Portugal the bull is not killed but still suffers excruciatingly from deliberate goading tactics, sharp wounding implements, violent manhandling and several men (not just one "brave" matador) against one animal. By any normal modern standards of behaviour towards animals (whether or not we accept meat as part of our diet) this is cruelty, and the open enjoyment of that kind of cruelty as entertainment makes it reprehensible.

EC and British law self-evidently requires that a meat-producing ox is slaughtered as quickly and with as little suffering as possible - a bull engaged in a bullfight takes 20 minutes or longer to die in agonising circumstances. On the one hand, modern knowledge of animals' biology and behaviour shows more in common between beast and man than was previously thought, including salient emotions (hinted at in Holman Hunt's thought provoking depiction of the sacrificial 'scapegoat'), on the other Genesis 1-2 interpreted intelligently interprets evolution as set in motion by God for God's purpose and glory, giving man special responsibilities towards living creation.

Either way, we have a clear duty to behave with respect towards animals, and have a moral choice of engaging or not engaging in cruelty. Why else would the aficionados excuse the bullfight as 'art' or 'a way of life'? Evidently, the Spanish public no longer ignore the ethical implications, and are turning away from the tradition to such an extent that its promoters are trying to attract British tourists in to fill empty seats.

One London-based tour operator is promoting bullfight tours in the Madrid area. British Catholics and other Christians know the obvious facts of what the bulls go through to provide 'spectacular entertainment', and surely ought to think again as a matter of conscience. The Catholic tradition is more truly and worthily represented in Spain's religious art, cathedrals and sites of pilgrimage. Barcelona has banned the abhorrent ritual - surely we can examine ourselves and find it in ourselves to celebrate our higher compassionate rather than fallen natures.

Miss Katherine Watson, Stockport, Cheshire

6th August 2006

Church must fight barbaric bloodsport

WELL done to Miss Katherine Watson for highlighting the barbarism and cruelty of bullfighting (Letters, *The Catholic Times*, July 23). It's about time the Church campaigned to put an end to this dreadful spectacle the running of the bulls which also causes much suffering and distress to these poor creatures. I cannot understand how anyone can treat animals in this way. They are sinning against our Creator. I was saddened when I saw the photo in the same edition of a matador with nuns beside him titled *Bully for you*.

Iris O'Mara, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

**3rd July 2006 The News - Portsmouth
CVAUK member Helena Youle joins the PETA campaign**

No Bull: I'll run naked in streets for a cause

by Sue Wade

WEARING nothing but plastic bull horns and a red scarf, Helena Youle is set to run naked through the streets. However, the 58 year-old isn't some kind of adventurous naturist. Instead she is stripping off as part of a campaign aimed at stopping cruelty to bulls in Spain. Mrs Youle is an ardent campaigner against bullfights and also the annual Running of the Bulls. During the week-long festival of San Fermin in Pamplona six bulls and six cows are released to stampede through the streets and into the bull ring every day.

In protest campaigners from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) hold the Running of the Nudes the day before the first bull run. Mrs Youle, of Blenheim, Gardens, Havant, has never gone nude in public before and although she is nervous, she's determined to see it through. She said 'It's all about showing people you can have fun without cruelty. I was asked to join in earlier this year and I hate the thought of animal cruelty so much I didn't take much persuasion.

I'm a bit nervous about doing it as I've never done anything like this before, but as there are so many people doing it I'm hoping won't be that bad.

This is the fifth year PETA has held the run. The first year only about 20 people took part but on Wednesday, 1,000 nude people are expected to run through the Spanish streets. Mrs Youle said 'we don't want to stop the festival just the cruelty to the bulls. I'm looking forward to seeing all the other things that happen at the festival. My husband Tony isn't coming to Spain with me He doesn't seem to mind what I'm doing though.. 'He just let's me get on with these ideas'.

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27th August 2006

A duty of care for God's earth

By Agneta Sutton

SO God created man in His own image and created male and female. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them: "be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'" (Gn 1: 27-28). This passage tells us that, created in the image of God, Adam and Eve are given a special task, that of acting as God's stewards.

The term 'subdue' might be interpreted in different ways. And different versions of the Bible use different words. Whether we say 'conquer' or 'subdue', and whether we speak of 'dominion' over other creatures or of being their 'masters', the fact that these words come immediately after the assertion that we are made in the image of God, is surely significant. It suggests that it is precisely because we are created in the image of God that we have been entrusted with the responsibility of acting as caretakers.

Today we should take this responsibility more seriously than ever. Not only is the world torn apart by wars, not only are people in some parts of the world eating too much while those in other parts are starving, but unless we take our stewardship seriously we risk bequeathing an inhospitable world to future generations. We can no longer afford to adopt a short-sighted and instrumentalist approach to the riches of the earth. The animals and the fields are not just there for us to use as we please. Our stewardship entails a responsibility to vicariously care for what has been entrusted to us. As stewards we have even in some way to represent God. Today this is truer than ever. In order to preserve a habitable Earth for the future, we must adopt both a fatherly and motherly attitude towards life in general on our planet.

We may even have to take over part of what God and nature hitherto have done without our active help. We may have to help planet Earth to regulate its climate, because so many scientists think it is in an unstable state. We are in an interglacial period, which in itself makes for a certain lack of stability. In addition, we humans have been adding to the instability. According to James Lovelock, the originator of the Gaia theory, the Earth system has a capacity to stay close to the right temperature and the right chemical composition for life, and it has done so for over three billion years. This is a quarter of the time the universe has existed. Our planet is acting like an organism, with plant and animal life, as well as dead matter, interacting as a self-regulating system, optimising the conditions that we need for life.

How does this work? Algae pump down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, as do forests. This is good, because too much carbon dioxide makes for over-heating. Glaciers reflect the sun's heat, sending it back into the atmosphere. Marine organisms produce gases which, when oxidized in the air, produce cloud-condensation particles and thus make sure we have rain. And so the cycle goes on. Although the sun has been getting hotter and hotter, life on earth has survived. There have been ups and downs, yes, but Gaia has done remarkably well. "Only for a very brief period in the Earth's history was the sun's warmth ideal for life, and that was about two billion years ago," James Lovelock tells us in his latest book, *The Revenge of Gaia*. And yet Gaia has managed to retain a relatively cool and comfortable temperature - one that favours life.

But today Gaia is facing a special challenge. We humans are adding vast quantities of carbon dioxide to the air. This can only push up global temperatures. At the same time we are interfering with Gaia's temperature regulating system by cutting down forests, which makes it doubly hard for Gaia to keep us cool. At the moment Arctic ice is melting. This is a result of global warming, which in turn promotes further global warming. If carbon dioxide levels in the air rise further, the global temperature could rise more than four degrees celsius in the not so distant future.

Some scientists say that a rise globally of four degrees celsius would be enough to destabilize the tropical rainforests and cause them to disappear altogether. This would lead to further global warming, which in turn could warm the seas and release trapped methane into the air. And methane is an even more potent green-house gas than carbon-dioxide. In short, we must heed the writing on the wall. We must seek to prevent such a chain reaction, a chain reaction which could prove unstoppable. We have been given a mandate to rule over the Earth. We must prove ourselves worthy of the task. #

3rd Sept. 2006

Pope preaches on damage to planet

By Jane Murhill

POPE Benedict XVI delivered a strong warning against environmental damage, saying it was aggravating the already heavy burden on the world's poor. The Pope, speaking at his summer villa, Castel Gandolfo outside Rome, expressed support for the Italian church's first day dedicated to the protection of creation, which was celebrated September 1.

The Holy Father claimed that the created world was a great gift of God but is presently "exposed to serious risks by life choices and lifestyles that can degrade it". "In particular, environmental degradation makes poor people's existence intolerable," he said. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church says the world's poor, who often live in polluted slums, are connected to the environmental crisis. In cases of poverty and hunger, it is "virtually impossible" to avoid environmental exploitation, said the 2004 social doctrine.

Pope Benedict said, "In dialogue with Christians of various churches, we need to commit ourselves to caring for the created world, without squandering its resources, and sharing them in a cooperative way." The Italian initiative aimed to promote the Church's teaching on care for the environment. In churches throughout the country, the faithful were being asked to pray and to meditate on ecological damage.

3rd Sept. 2006

Environment is central to ethos of safe family home

Speaking before the Angelus to the crowds who went to the Papal summer villa at Castel Gandolfo outside Rome, Pope Benedict XVI said last weekend: "Environmental degradation makes poor people's existence intolerable." The Pope delivered a strong warning against environmental damage, saying it was aggravating the already heavy burden on the world's poor. He said the created world was a great gift of God but is presently "exposed to serious risks by life choices and lifestyles that can degrade it." He continued: "In dialogue with Christians of various churches, we need to commit ourselves to caring for the created world, without squandering its resources, and sharing them in a cooperative way."

Pope Benedict was promoting a new initiative scheduled by the Italian Bishops' Conference for Friday (September 1) of celebrating a special day dedicated to the protection of creation. In his Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace, Pope John Paul II pointed out that "the most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution".

John Paul II told a conference of health and environmental experts in 1997 that the defence of life and the promotion of health, especially among very poor and developing peoples, will be simultaneously the measure and the basic criterion of the ecological horizon at both the regional and world level. The truth of the matter is that the environment *is* both a resource for the human family as well as our family home. The problem is that, as Pope John Paul II once said in 1997, today the environment as 'resource' risks threatening the environment as 'home'.

Sacred Scripture itself makes it clear that the Creator offers the environment to the human family as both a home and a resource. The consequence of this doctrine is quite clear: it is the relationship man has with God that determines his relationship with his fellows and with his environment. This is why Christian culture has always recognised the creatures that surround man as also gifts of God to be nurtured and safeguarded with a sense of gratitude to the Creator.

Pope John Paul said then that two firm points of reference and inspiration are needed. These are a clear knowledge of creation as a work of God's provident wisdom and the awareness of human dignity and responsibility in the plan of creation. Pope John Paul's words still have a relevance today: "It is by looking at the face of God that man can brighten the face of the earth and ensure environmental hospitality for man today and tomorrow." #

17th Sept. 2006

Climate change 'poses double threat'

By Paul Donovan

BRITAIN'S new climate change ambassador has claimed the threat posed is potentially the most serious there has ever been "to security and prosperity". Climate ambassador John Ashton urged that climate change must be tackled "whatever it costs", going on to argue that the price of not solving it will inevitably be larger.

Catholic environmentalists welcomed Mr Ashton's appointment, but warned the UK position is undermined by its rising emissions. Greenhouse gas production is increasing in nearly every country, and it is this that Mr Ashton believes makes climate change a real and urgent threat in Britain and around the globe.

Catholic environmental expert Ellen Teague backed Mr Ashton's call and welcomed "signs that Christian groups and individuals are addressing the problem". At a local level, the take up of Operation Noah, the Church's climate change campaign, and the Eco-Congregation programme, is growing in Catholic parishes," said Mrs Teague. She added: "Already, many Catholics are planning to attend the Stop Climate Chaos Day in London on November 4, which incorporates an ecumenical worship service organised by Operation Noah and Christian Ecology Link." #

29th Sept. 2006

No guns on Sunday

From Bishop Malcolm McMahon of Nottingham, president of Catholic Concern for Animals

SIR - I am growing increasingly concerned at possible plans to remove the restrictions surrounding the shooting of game birds on God's day of rest and Christmas Day. The Game Act 1891 makes shooting game birds on these days an offence. Around 35 million birds are intensively bred and reared each year to be used as live targets by the shooting industry and I can see no reason why the restrictions currently in place, imposed to protect the peace and tranquillity of the countryside on the Lord's Day, should now be lifted.

God set aside Sunday as a day of rest, blessing and sanctifying it. It is a day for people to come to Church and worship God, a day when Christians celebrate life. I am appalled that anyone should want to put an end to the life of a creature on that day. Sunday is a day for peace, rest and reflection - it should not be a day marred by the sound of gunfire. Allowing game shooting on Sundays and Christmas Day is a step backward, both for animal welfare and religion, which is why I am giving my backing to a campaign by the League Against Cruel Sports to prevent any change in the current Sunday shooting laws.

Malcolm McMahon, Nottingham.

15th October 2006

Anti-hunting bunch turn a bishop's head

By Christopher Graffius

OCTOBER 4 was the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. It will always remain a red-letter day for me because this year, just as dusk was drawing in, I caught my first salmon, in five years of fishing for them, on the River Hodder. Should I have been hauling in "brother salmon" on such a day? Was it right? Personally I've no qualms. The apostles were fishermen, and there's even the possibility that Jesus himself went fishing in his resurrected body. Who else caught the fish that he provided for breakfast in John: 21?

Fishing and shooting happen to be my recreation and relaxation. Conducted to high standards, with proper respect for the quarry and as long as what is caught or shot is eaten, most people have no problems - and I'm not aware of any Church proscription against these activities. So I was surprised to see that on the same day, Bishop Malcolm McMahon of Nottingham, the president of Catholic Concern for Animals, declared his support for a League Against Cruel Sports campaign against a possible change in the law on shooting game on Sundays. In his letter to *The Tablet*, the bishop, who I hope never tucks into roast beef and Yorkshire pudding on a Sunday, declared that Sunday was a day of rest and a celebration of life and that he was "appalled" that anyone should want to shoot an animal - and presumably hook a fish - on such a day.

I wonder just how well briefed the bishop was on this issue. If he was depending on the League Against Cruel Sports, I imagine his briefing was rather partial. The League is widely viewed as being rather extreme in its views. The bishop may not realise that the current law was passed as part of the Game Act 1891 which had the aim of stopping the peasantry poaching the squire's pheasants. The Sunday prohibition has its origins in Victorian Sabbatarianism. It only applies to England and Wales and it only refers to game species such as pheasant or partridge. You can quite legally shoot a duck or goose on a Sunday. The Presbyterian prohibition against shooting and fishing on Sundays in Scotland is not law but merely a convention.

The Government is currently conducting a public consultation on the game laws. One aspect of this is to ask for views on the prohibition on shooting game on a Sunday. In this regard I'm sorry to see the bishop an cahoots with the League Against Cruel Sports. It gives a rather partial impression of the Catholic Church's views on fieldsports. I would suggest that if the bishop had checked the facts and thought a bit, he would have come up with a different response. I hope he would have said that the class-ridden definition of 'game' should be scrapped. He should have approved of the proposals to scrap the prohibition on dealing in 'game' outside the shooting season — a ban introduced before the invention of the freezer.

On Sunday shooting, he should have distinguished between driven and rough shooting. The former involves employees such as gamekeepers, beaters and pickers-up. It involves rather a lot of people and rather a lot of shots which can disturb those who live around a shoot. In addition, some driven shoots are commercial money-making ventures. A prohibition on that on a Sunday makes good practical sense.

But the bishop should not have come out against rough shooting. By which I mean man, dog and gun — or fisherman, rod and net - in search of the recreation and relaxation that comes from wandering the woods and fields in search of good food. For all I know, the bishop is an out and out anti, who takes an extremist view on these matters I doubt it - I'm not keen to think of Catholic bishops being extremists on animal welfare or rights. In any event, a bishop should not use his position to push a personal agenda in politics. The lesson here is that bishops should intervene in politics by setting out the great moral principles enunciated by Catholic social teaching - but they should then not submerge themselves in the detail without understanding it.

22nd October 2006

Violence of bloodsports

WHAT a highly commendable stance by Bishop Malcolm McMahon of Nottingham in backing the League Against Cruel Sports' campaign against Sunday shooting (Politics, *The Catholic Times*, October 15). Leaving aside the bogus conservation image which shooting enthusiasts tend to portray, it is a past time which in itself comprises one of the most gruesome and cowardly bloodsports still in existence.

The cynical disclaimer of fox hunters who 'rarely see a kill' is at least a credible description of their experience in the field. Those who shoot birds for pleasure have no such excuse for their behaviour. They are fully aware of the disgusting violence which instantly ensues from their selfish and often inept actions. Such callous activity can hardly be construed as a Christian source of 'sport' but instead inflicts pointless suffering on the Sabbath; or any other day of the week! Let us hope that the Bishop of Nottingham's noble, if maverick stance, will save not only birds from gunshot but the reputation of the Church from an institutional and anthropocentric apathy towards non-human suffering.

John M Gilheany, Roath, Cardiff

29th October 2006

Hunting excuses will not wash

HOW disappointing that Christopher Graffius not only seeks to defend his recreational activities of shooting and fishing but does so on the most dubious of grounds (Politics, *The Catholic Times*, October 15). Does he really expect us to swallow the line that it is fine to ban other people shooting on a Sunday because it may involve commercial gain but it is quite in order for him to go wandering in the woods because he is simply in search of good food?

As Christopher himself admits, killing wild animals is simply recreation and there is no valid distinction based on commercial considerations at all. There is plenty of good food to be had through the regulated commercial outlets and nor does the rather feeble assertion that because the apostles were fisherman, this in some way validates his recreational activities 2,000 years later.

In biblical times, the much smaller population of the earth had to some extent rely on hunting to live. Modern-day considerations are completely different. The eternal truths of the Catholic faith remain immutable but it is surely the duty of responsible people to apply common sense to the particular material problems of their own eras.

When so many of the earth's species are under threat in other parts of the world due to destruction of their natural environments by man and in this country Christopher Graffius's "brother salmon" has almost disappeared from our rivers due to thoughtless over fishing, the time has surely long since been upon us when indiscriminate killing of wildlife, serves no purpose whatsoever. Christopher Graffius would do well to listen more carefully and give more thought to what Bishop McMahon is saying.

Andrew Thomas, Wrexham

Space filler

The Door - Oxford Diocesan Newspaper

October 2006

Thinking about our food

Why we need to use our buying power wisely

By Helen Peacocke Food writer for The Oxford Times

If we use the excuse that we are far too busy to check labels as we seek out those two-for-one bargains and search for the cheapest deals as we shop for food we are endorsing the cheap-food policies the supermarkets encourage. Low prices for the consumer — low wages for the producer. Think about it. Our shopping basket really does make a statement and it's not always a positive one.

The products we buy to feed our families can say we care about our loved ones, the food producers and the environment or suggest we simply don't bother about anything except our own desperate need to get the shopping done as quickly as possible.

Pick up a cheap carton of eggs and we are saying yes to the wretched conditions in which battery hens are kept. Pick up a bargain ready-to-cook chicken that costs half the price of a free-range variety and we are also saying yes to the battery hen's plight. We ignore the black bruises on its legs caused by the cramped conditions in which the poor creature eked out its few pitiful months, and cheerfully feed its soft white puffy flesh to our families with little (if any) regard for the chemicals that were pumped into the poor creature to keep it alive. By reaching for a free-range chicken that costs twice as much our purse will be lighter, but we will have made a positive statement that benefits both chicken and those we feed. After all, there's usually something in the shopping trolley we can do without to make up the difference, be it a glossy magazine, a tub of ice cream or that extra packet of biscuits.

Money can also be saved by thinking twice when buying those little extras to complete the meal. The packet of stuffing mix for instance, which can so easily be made at home from a little stale bread that would have otherwise been thrown away. Even the instant gravy granules aren't necessary once you learn to create your own gravy from the meat juices left in the pan.

Then there are those fancy bags of salad leaves. Next time you shop take a moment to weigh a real lettuce and you will find that those trendy assortments of leaves, kept fresh by artificial means are costing double that of a whole lettuce. And, if you purchase a lettuce at a farm shop or a Farmers Market you can be confident that it's really fresh and has not flown thousands of miles to get here having been grown in an Italian poly tunnel. You may feel smug about picking up some of those two-for-one items but who do you think pays the real price for your bargain - it's certainly not the supermarkets. It's the producer who is being squeezed into offering this bargain in the vain promise that this promotion will pay for itself in the end. It doesn't of course. Most shoppers are hungry for bargains - not quality foods. When that offer ends, shoppers simply seek out the next one. Any memory of the previous offer is forgotten in the rush to pack away yet another supermarket shop.

Then there are the bananas, the chocolate, cocoa powder and coffee. Gravitating towards a known brand is so easy, why bother to seek out Fairtrade goods? Actually, it really is worth the bother and the time. Every Fairtrade item purchased makes a positive impact on the life of a farmer somewhere in the Third World struggling to send their children to school. All we have to do is spend a few extra minutes checking the goods we buy and we will have made a real difference to both the Fairtrade producers and our own farmers who struggle against great odds to make ends meet. Next time you pick up a bargain just ask yourself who is paying the real price - the producers, the animals, the environment or you. Perhaps that will be enough to motivate you to think twice about real food.

Evangelicals Now

Climate change

From Professor S. Berry, University College London

May 2006

Dear Editor,

Am I alone in feeling uneasy about Josh Moody's stance in his Letter from America (*EN*, April)? He asks 'what are evangelicals to think and do' about issues like climate change. He gives the conventional answer that our priority must be 'repent and believe the good news', not 'repent and change the climate'. Obviously right. But actually and biblically, only half right. The good news is that Christ reconciled all things to the Father, all things whether on earth or in heaven (Colossians 1.20). Our personal commitment is only part of his purpose.

We need reconciliation because we are fallen. The most explicit references to the Fall in the New Testament are in Romans 5-8, culminating in 8.19-22, where Paul explicitly links our treatment of the non-human creation to our redeemed status (which is present fact, not merely future hope: Romans 5.2, etc.). Tom Wright comments on the Romans 8 passage, 'If you insist on reading Romans simply as a book about how human beings "get saved", in the sense of "going to heaven when they die", you will find that these verses function as a kind of odd, apocalyptic appendix. That, in consequence, is how the tradition has often regarded them.... In fact, the passage is the deliberate and carefully-planned climax to the whole train of thought in Romans 5-8, and indeed Romans 1-8 as a whole'. Our care for creation is an integral part of God's saving plan.

Evangelicals are rightly jealous of biblical authority, but this leads us to erect mighty defences around our interpretations. My question is: are we so scared of lapsing into a 'social gospel' that we fail to take on board the extent of the 'reconciliation' wrought by Christ through the cross? Surely any serious response to the first command to our first parents ('to tend the garden'), a command illustrated in Scripture by the difficult relationship of the Israelites to the promised land which they only entered through God's 'passover' redemption and one which has to be coupled with an honest look at the New Testament, means we have to take creation care as part of the gospel mandate? This is not mere expediency or political correctness; it is simple biblical obedience to the evangel. As Tearfund in particular has pointed out, our 'neighbours' are the millions we are affecting in the developing world through climate change.

November 2006

Rhythm of the rain?

The Christian and climate change

Why should Christians be green? Don't we pay taxes so that the government can deal with issues like global warming? And besides, hasn't the church got better things to do?

These are the kinds of questions which go through the minds of many ordinary churchgoers as the TV news carries yet another story of what the scientists are saying about changing weather patterns.

Future London, Footprints of a Generation was an exhibition sponsored by the Mayor. Held at the Truman Brewery in East London and then the Science Museum (futurelondon.co.uk), it may go on tour around the London boroughs. The exhibition takes you through five successive arenas, covering transport, food, the natural world, buildings and the Olympics. In each arena the visitor is first confronted with the damage our lifestyles cause, then presented with greener choices. So, in the transport arena, the visitor walks through a giant exhaust pipe. In the buildings arena there is a dry garden and energy-saving appliances. The aim is a positive one — to inspire Londoners to 'green our lifestyles and our city'.

Political activity

Recently the three main political parties (in England) have been making more noise about global warming. The Conservatives' new *Aims and Values* statement talks of the opportunities of green technology and tough carbon targets. The Lib Dems want to tax environmental pollution and resource depletion. In its *Energy Review (2006)* the Labour government emphasised the importance of restricting global warming to 2°C. So the debate has moved beyond 'Is it happening?' (yes), and 'Does it matter?' (yes), and even 'Can we do anything?' (yes), to 'What should we do?' The main parties have different emphases, but they all share a bottom line: 'Living and working with environmental care in mind does not mean a reduced standard of living or quality of life' (Ken Livingstone).

Public opinion

The parties are all trying to maintain a delicate balance: to assure voters both that the environment is safe in their hands, and that any green policies will be painless. Politics is always the art of the possible, and there seems little popular enthusiasm for significant lifestyle changes. This is why the fuel protests in 2000 halted the fuel duty escalator so easily. The average motorist was beginning to feel the pressure to either accept more tax or else reduce his mileage; neither choice was acceptable. Even though flying is the fastest growing source of CO2 emissions, government policy is to massively expand airport capacity, notably at Stansted. For we will not give up our cheap flights to Edinburgh or Nice, and the government knows it.

Fingers crossed

This lack of popular support ties the hands of all the parties. Green policies are popular in theory, but not in practice. Therefore everyone hopes that some technological wizardry will cut our emissions of greenhouse gases. Then we can continue to consume while reducing the emissions that are responsible for global warming. The parties intend to set taxes at a level that will encourage the development of green technology, but not force us to change our behaviour in ways we resent. This represents a huge gamble — that technological advances can cut emissions faster than the demand for energy rises.

If the gamble fails then the consequences may be catastrophic, although not necessarily for us. It is the poor who are likely to suffer most from climate change, because they do not have the resources to adapt quickly enough. This is true of most natural disasters, even in the richest countries. When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans last year, who died? It was overwhelmingly the poor and under-privileged. The risk is high that the gamble will fail. (See box alongside on avoiding dangerous climate change.)

Materialism

No mainstream party can think of curbing our consumption because we are, at heart, materialists. Life consists in what we own, the places we visit, and the experiences we enjoy. Having rejected God, we are left with an aching void that we must fill with whatever can satisfy for a few fleeting moments. So we think nothing of eating out-of-season foods that have been transported across the world to reach our plates. Our comfort demands our air-conditioned living rooms on wheels. We leave appliances on standby because we

cannot bear to wait a few seconds. We fly to the Mediterranean for a few days to catch some sun. We are mostly heedless of the environmental consequences.

Salt and light

But Christians are different. We want to take proper care of the creation God has entrusted to us. It does not trouble us unduly if we have to curb our lifestyles. After all, we know that there are many things we cannot enjoy now. We do — if we are real Christians — make real sacrifices for the sake of serving Christ. But we look forward to enjoying creation to the full when God makes all things new. Our citizenship is in heaven; in this world we are just a-passing through. Salty Christians may, in the providence of God, be the preservative that halts the runaway pollution of the West. The light of Christian other-worldliness may penetrate the darkest corners of materialism.

People are beginning to take climate change seriously. But they do not know how to respond, because there are no easy answers. There is no guarantee that reducing our CO2 emissions to safe levels will be compatible with our present way of life. What a witness it would be to the watching world if the church were to accept this! We have the power to change our lifestyles, because we are not materialists. We do not have to taste all the world can offer, because we are waiting for the world to come. We can live sustainably without being bribed.

Peter wrote to us that we might suffer as a result of doing good (I Peter 3.13-17). Of course, he was not thinking of our environmental actions, but of other ways in which Christians stick out like a sore thumb. Yet the principles remain the same. Peter declared that we are actually privileged if we suffer for doing good. He encouraged us not to fear or be troubled, but to remember Christ. The apostle expected our distinctive behaviour to make people puzzled: how can these Christians act like this? Then what opportunities will arise to tell of our hope and the reason for it! If we speak with gentle respect, not with harsh arrogance or a superior attitude, we will shame the world!

Next year is the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect led the fight in the teeth of British economic interests and at great personal cost. The world still respects and honours these evangelical Christians. Their contribution to the cause of the gospel is incalculable. Will future generations look back with gratitude to a similar attitude and struggle from us.

Taking the pledge

The Future London exhibition ended with a display inviting the visitor to make a pledge. The suggested pledges were small changes such as using energy-efficient light-bulbs, car-sharing, or buying locally-sourced food. This 'taking the pledge' evokes the Victorian temperance movement. Now we know that movement had its bad side. At times it confused a vow with conversion, or abstinence with godliness. But we cannot dismiss it altogether, for we do see virtue in temperance and frown on alcohol abuse.

Perhaps it would be good to commit ourselves to specific green actions. We need not fill in a card and carry it around! But green pledges would signal to our churches and the watching world that we are serious about stewarding God's creation. We shrink back from abusing our bodies with alcohol; why should we pollute the environment?

Dr. Tim Mitchell,

Highbury Baptist Church; formerly of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

Avoiding dangerous climate change

- In September scientists from the Tyndall Centre (www.tyndall.ac.uk) published a climate road map for the UK. They concluded that immediate action is required to avert dangerous climate change.
- The research assumed that global warming should be limited to 2°C since the Industrial Revolution. The UK government has accepted this target, believing that this may avert the worst effects of climate change (*Energy White Paper, 2003*).
- To achieve a reasonable-to-high probability of not exceeding 2°C implies that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are stabilised at 450 ppmv of CO2 equivalent. If each nation is allowed a fair share of that CO2, the UK's allocation between 2000 and 2050 would be 4.6Gt.
- None of the three main parties has policies in place that would limit UK emissions to 4.6Gt.
- Indeed, there has not yet been any sustained fall in UK carbon emissions. Officially, we are on target to achieve domestic CO2 reductions between 1990 and 2010 of between 12% (the Kyoto commitment) and 20% (the government's voluntary target). However, these figures are misleading. If UK contributions to international shipping and aviation are added, there has been no overall reduction since 1990.
- To limit UK emissions to 4.6Gt would require us to start a decades-long programme of carbon reduction within the next few years. Annual emissions would have to fall by 70% in just 25 years.

Our Anatomy says: we are Vegetarian

There is no doubt that we are physiologically akin to other creatures, especially in the Mammalian group to which we belong; and that Man, to have the kind of digestive apparatus with which he is endowed, must have evolved for millions of years living on fruits, nuts, grains and succulent leaves—the inference is that the further away we get from this diet the less likely we are to be healthy; this is borne out by national health statistics which show the biggest flesh-eating nations to have the biggest incidence of disease. The anatomy of Man is absolutely distinct from that of carnivorous animals, it is more like that of his cousins, the largely frugivorous apes.

The following differences compiled by **T. H. Huxley (former president of the Royal Society)**, show that Man is not, and never could have been a carnivore:

Flesh-eaters:

- a. Have very short bowels for the rapid expulsion of putrefactive bacteria- inseparable from decomposing flesh.
- b. Have long teeth and most have retractable claws for killing and holding living prey. Man can only catch and kill the meat-bearing animals with instruments.
- c. Have jaws which open only in an up and down motion.
- d. Do not sweat through the skin but control body heat by extruding the tongue and by rapid breathing.
- e. Their saliva is minus ptyalin and cannot pre-digest starches.
- f. They secrete ten times more hydrochloric acid than vegetarians, sufficient to dissolve bones in the diet.
- g. They lap water like a cat.

Vegetarians:

- a. Have very long bowels for dealing with fermentative bacteria, which is evolved in the digestion of vegetarian foods.
- b. Do not have sabre-like teeth and claws, though some may have defensive horns.
- c. Have jaws which can move sideways for chewing.
- d. Have the ferment ptyalin in the saliva for the pre-digestion of starches,
- e. Have sweat pores for heat control and the elimination of impurities,
- f. Take liquids by suction through the teeth.

There are many other differences (according to T. H. Huxley in **Man's Place in Nature**. Dent):

Man and Ape	Carnivora	Omnivora
Discoidal placenta	Zonary placenta	Placenta non-deciduate
Two hands and two feet	Four Footed	Four Footed
Flat Nails	Have claws	Have Hoofs
Walks upright	Go on all fours	Go on all fours
Without tails	Have tails	Have tails
Eyes look forward	Eyes look sideways	Eyes look sideways
Well developed incisor teeth	Slightly developed incisor teeth	Very well developed incisor teeth
Blunt molar teeth Dental formula: 5. 1. 4. 1. 5. 5. 1. 4. 1. 5.	Pointed molar teeth Dental formula: 5 to 8 6. 1 5 to 8 5 to 8 1. 6. 1 5 to 8	Molar teeth in folds Dental formula: 8. 1. 2. to 3. 1. 8 8. 1. 2. to 3. 1. 8
Well-developed salivary glands	Small salivary glands	Well-developed salivary glands
Alkaline reaction saliva and urine	Acid reaction of saliva and urine	Saliva and urine acid
Smooth tongue	Rasping tongue	Smooth tongue
Mammary glands on breast	Teats on abdomen	Teats on abdomen
Stomach with duodenum (as a secondary stomach)	Stomach simple and roundish	Stomach simple & roundish, large Cul-de-sac
Intestinal canal 12 times length of body	Intestinal canal 3 times length of body	Intestinal canal 10 times length of body
Colon convoluted	Colon smooth	Intestinal canal smooth and convoluted