

Christian Vegetarian Association UK

Working towards a violence-free world

Veg4Lent Campaign 2008

Our time has come

In the past 12 years we have diligently sent Veg4Lent letters and flyers to the clergy and received very little in return. Our endeavours to reintroduce the ancient church tradition of abstaining from meat during Lent, did not receive the response you would have expected from a church that claims to follow the compassionate teachings of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. On looking back however, our efforts have not been in vane, during this time we have become known and I believe respected throughout the United Kingdom, and our membership has gone from strength to strength.

Over the past two hundred years humankind's cruelty towards animals has increased tenfold and the undeclared war we are now waging against God's other creatures continues to escalate unabated. The hell on earth we have created for the majority of God's creatures is continually ignored by an indifferent church, a church that refuses to acknowledge that this one sided war against the weak of this world even exists. In the near future, the suffering and slaughter of over 50 billion animals annually is set to double as third world nations become affluent and adopt the western lifestyle.

It is imperative that we continue to find ways to bring this suffering and waste of the world's resources, before the church and the environmental movement in general. I am not being cynical or irresponsible when I say that only the threat of a disaster will focus minds. The effects of global warming, the depletion of food stocks, the impending shortage of safe drinking water and an increase in global unrest and war through our selfishness and greed, are major disasters now threatening the survival of the human race.

CVAUK believe that God has made the way ahead very clear. Both Christian and secular environmentalists, usually through vested interests rather than ignorance, continue to deny the devastating impact a meat based diet has on the environment and it's contribution towards these impending disasters. It is therefore necessary for vegetarians to proclaim the truth, that recycling the plant based healthy diet God has provided for us, through animals, is an inefficient way to feed the world and the main cause of unrest within the world.

The world is able to support either 2.5 billion carnivores or 10 billion vegetarians/vegans, to ignore this simple fact will result in hell on earth for not only God's other creatures but also the human race. We must urgently change our carnivorous ways or we shall reap what we have sown.

During Veg4Lent 2007, I wrote a letter to all the serving Anglican Bishops in the U.K. In the letter I quoted various proclamations made by the church and other respected organisations. These letters reflect CVAUK's concerns explained on page 1 of this booklet. Notes for further reading on the subject were enclosed along with a questionnaire to encourage a response. To my delight this correspondence continued until August 2007 requiring two more letters and a final report.

Some would say that the Bishops response was negative but I disagree, to start with, of the Bishops who replied (22%), none actually ridiculed or condemned vegetarianism. Their answers also showed that there was a growing concern about our treatment of God's creation and a few had actively started a dialogue within their diocese on the subject while others said they noted my comments, so they may, in the future, take into account what I had written.

CVAUK believe that we should continue to follow this line of argument in the future, by encouraging CVAUK members to write similar letters to their local churches and diocese. Catholic members should write similar letters to their priests quoting Catholic declarations rather than Anglican. To this end, you will find in this booklet, my three 2007 Campaign Letters, Questionnaire and Report as writing aids, please feel free to 'pick and mix' (or if you have a computer 'cut & paste' a file of this booklet will be supplied on request).

Please send a copy of any letter you write to CVAUK and we will publish some of the best in our newsletters.

Wanted: relevant Catholic creation caring declarations (especially with regard to our treatment of animals) to enable CVAUK to write to the Catholic Bishops in Lent 2009.

Vegetarian Christian Action (VCA)

A coalition between CVAUK and Kindness Unlimited, VCA is a Christian action group promoting the benefits of a vegetarian diet at Christian and secular environmental meetings/services and marches.

Our aim: to dispel the widely held belief that Christians don't care about God's creation and at the same time encourage church leaders and Christian environmentalists to reconsider their generally unsympathetic position regarding the blessings of a plant based diet.

If you would like to know more about VCA campaigns please contact:

Don Gwillim Tel: 01428 723747 Email: dongwil@uk2.net

**Please refer to pages 19 & 20 for further advice and form,
for other CVAUK resources.**

**1st letter to serving C of E Bishops in the U.K.
dated 1st March 2007**

Your Grace,

Caring for God's Creation

As a member of the Church of England I was delighted to discover that 'Caring for all of God's creation' has been debated within the Church of England since the 1970's, and over the ensuing years a number of affirmative motions and declarations have been approved by the General Synod.

In 1990, the General Synod debated a Private Member's Motion put down by the Archdeacon of Colchester, this motion was a major step forward in creation theology and called for action "*That this Synod, recognising the welfare of animals and their just treatment as an essential part of our responsibility towards creation.....*"¹

This was followed in 1998 by the Lambeth 98 Resolution 1.8 and 1.9.² and in November 2004 'The Ethical Investment Advisory Group' of the C of E published an Environmental statement "*the covenant of God's love embraces not only human beings but all of creation...*"³

In the same year editors of the World Watch Institute concluded that the human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every major category of environmental damage now threatening the human future.....⁴ . Also in 2004, Max Oelshlaeger wrote '*I think that religion.....[is] more important in the effort to conserve life on earth than all the politicians and experts put together. The church may be in fact our last chance*'.⁵ CVAUK agrees with this statement and sincerely believes that the time has come to urgently address our responsibility towards God's creation which, in the light of recent environmental concerns, must now rate second only to evangelism.

To ensure a sustainable future for God's creation, there is an urgent need to encourage our congregations to embrace the ideals of the Lambeth Conference 98 resolutions, that as God's Stewards, we must honour God's creation not only by thoughts and words but also by our deeds. To this end, we must stop, as soon as possible, our exploitation of the worlds diminishing resources. Many organisations within the Church of England have already signed up to the Catholic CAFOD "*livesimply*"⁶ project based on the radical idea: that God calls us to live simply...." *Living simply is about identifying what we need rather than grasping for more - sharing rather than hoarding*".

CVAUK's mission is to introduce 'Creation Care' as an urgent mission within the parish church. To this end we will encourage the adoption of the

principles already approved by the church, as outlined in this letter and the new “Mission and Public Affairs Council” report “sharing God’s planet”.⁷ We will also posit vegetarianism as a significant and logical response to the problems facing today’s world by encouraging Christians to try an ancient church tradition, a vegetarian diet during Lent. It should be no surprise to a Christian that the diet recommended by God in the Garden of Eden and destined for His new peaceable Kingdom, was the best diet for our health, the health of His creatures and the health of the Earth.

We do however recognise, that it is a matter of individual Christian conscience, in deciding whether or not to receive Our Lord's message as lending support to contemporary ethical vegetarianism. An informed choice is therefore essential in addressing what has become a grave humanitarian issue, which will increasingly require both a credible and compassionate Christian response over the coming decades.

We ask you please to give your opinion on the above ‘Creation Caring’ exegesis, by completing the enclosed questionnaire, and support our promotion of a ‘live simply’ lifestyle within our parish churches.

Yours in Christ

Notes

¹ **General Synod 1990** Private Members Motion:

“That this Synod, recognising the welfare of animals and their just treatment as an essential part of our responsibility towards creation calls upon the Board for Social Responsibility urgently to prepare a statement of Christian Stewardship in relation to the whole of creation to challenge Government, Church and people to engage in a critical review of human responsibility to the living environment.”

For further information:

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/smte.html#previousstatements

² **The ‘Lambeth 98. Resolution** Section 1. Resolution 1.8 Creation’ declared : This conference recognises:

(b)(i) that unless human beings take responsibility for caring for the earth, the consequences will be catastrophic because of: Overpopulation, unsustainable levels of consumption by the rich, poor quality and shortage of water, air pollution, eroded and impoverished soil, forest destruction and plant and animal extinction;

Download MS Word doc:

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/the_environment_-_lambeth_1998.doc

- ³ **The Ethical Investment Advisory Group** (Nov.2004) of the C of E published an Environmental statement which included the following:

i. the covenant of God's love embraces not only human beings but all of creation;
ii. creation is everywhere filled with God's sacred presence;
iii. human beings are the priests of creation, seeing God's presence in it, and offering creation's worship;
iv. the Sabbath principle of "enoughness" is a challenge to us to rest from unnecessary consumption..

Download pdf statement:

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ethical/policystatements/environment.pdf

- ⁴ **World Watch Institute** (July/August 2004) concluded that:

The human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every major category of environmental damage now threatening the human future - deforestation, erosion, fresh water scarcity, air and water pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, social injustice, the destabilization of communities, and the spread of disease. Lee Hall, the legal director for Friends of Animals, is more succinct: *"Behind virtually every great environmental complaint there's milk and meat."*

Global warming may be the most serious global social problem threatening life on Earth. We need to fight global warming on the governmental and corporate levels, and we also need to fight global warming on the everyday and personal levels. We need to fight global warming with our forks! In the enduring and powerful words of Mohandas Gandhi, "You must be the change you wish to see in this world.

For more information: www.worldwatch.org

- ⁵ **Max Oelshlaeger**, Caring for Creation, Yale University Press (2004) wrote (*Ref: Word doc in 2 above*):

"I think of religion, or more specifically the church ... engaging in discourse about their responsibilities to care for creation within the context of their traditions of faith, as being more important in the effort to conserve life on earth than all the politicians and experts put together. The church may be in fact our last chance."

- ⁶ **"livesimply"** (Dec. 2006), from the Pontifical Mission to CAFOD, Justice & Peace and Catholic Charismatic Renewal, creating a network determined to transform our communities.

"You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor, but you are giving back what is theirs.....You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone."

For more information: www.livesimply.org.uk

- ⁷ **“sharing God’s planet”** (2005) a Christian vision for a sustainable future, a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council. Church House Publishing.

The freedom to use and abuse the earth could be contained while there was not too much of it going on. But there has never before been anything like the level of human intervention seen during the twentieth century, and there is now great cause for concern. The extent to which humans altered their environments in order to live the lives they wanted was unprecedented. The level (rather than the intrinsic nature) of alteration of and interference with the earth upon which humanity is engaged is such that the earth may be reaching breaking point. These are the signs of the times to which environmental scientists and others are pointing, and the pictures of the future that they paint are not happy ones for the human species, nor for life on earth generally.

Download pdf version:

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/gs1558.pdf

For more information:

www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org/measure.php

CVAUK Questionnaire 2007

Please support our desire to promote a creation caring awareness within our parish church.

A. Do you agree that Lambeth 98 Resolutions 1.8 and 1.9 validates the following exegesis:

1. Demonstrates that God loves all of His creation, not just the human race?
2. That the dominion God gave to mankind over his creation is not domination, rather it requires Christians to be good stewards of all that he has put in our charge (God’s Creation). Just as God’s dominion over mankind means that he loves us and cares about us?
3. That stewardship requires Christians to reflect God’s image of goodness and mercy?
4. Christians should be prepared to make sacrificial changes to their lifestyle to benefit the poor, God’s creatures and the environment?

B. Do you agree that the following actions would help God’s Creation and should therefore be encouraged by the parish church:

1. Christians should consider their personal impact on the environment in their daily lives and seek to bring about change in the way mankind treats it?
2. Christians should consider embracing a vegetarian diet during Lent, as part of their contribution to living a simple life?

C. Would you consider a vegetarian diet during Lent?

Comments:.....

Thank you for completing our questionnaire, please write any further comments overleaf.

Please encourage parishioners who adopt a vegetarian diet for Lent to donate any money saved to:

Help International Plant Protein Organisation,
The old Vicarage, Llangynog, Carmarthen, SA33 5BS
Email: hippocharity@aol.com
Registered Charity No 1075420

HIPPO raises funds to assist food growing projects, orphanages, construction of wells and bore holes, planting of trees, and provision of community care, in poor countries, without adding to the pressure on the environment. They will be pleased to answer your enquiries.

Title: Name: Signed :

N.B. The Bishops were required to tick a 'Yes' or 'No' box next to each question.

**2nd letter to serving C of E Bishops in the U.K.
dated 12th April 2007**

Your Grace,

Request for your Support Please.

On the 1st March, the Christian Vegetarian Association, as part of their Veg4Lent 2007 campaign, sent you a letter and Questionnaire. The letter introduced and substantiated various theological insights regarding a Christian's responsibility towards God's creation and showed how a vegetarian diet is now recognised as a major factor in reversing adverse climate change. We asked for your opinion and support and to assist you, enclosed a very easy questionnaire.

The Bishops who kindly replied confirmed our concern that vegetarianism is still a contentious issue within the church. The World Watch Institute's conclusion that *'the human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every category of environmental damage now threatening the human race'*, supported CVAUK's desire to promote vegetarianism within the church. This conclusion was

however, either rejected or ignored by your silence and vegetarianism casually dismissed as irrelevant or as only one of many options.

The World Watch Institute's conclusions were verified in November 2006 by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation report 'Livestock's Long Shadow'** which concludes that *'The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global. The findings of this report suggest that it should be a major policy focus when dealing with problems of land degradation, climate change and air pollution, water shortage and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity. Livestock's contribution to environmental problems is on a massive scale and its potential contribution to their solution is equally large. The impact is so significant that it needs to be addressed with urgency.'*

CVAUK maintain that when considering wise Christian stewardship of the animal kingdom, eating becomes a morally and spiritually significant act which has far reaching implications as to the integrity of creation as a whole. Being made in God's image is a privilege but it comes with certain duties and obligations that as good stewards our behaviour should, as far as is humanly possible, benefit the whole of God's creation, not just humankind.

CVAUK's letter dated 1st March, was primarily designed to encourage you to research our claims for yourself and to come to conclusions that made sense to you, so that you could decide whether the version of discipleship that we are advocating is one of integrity or self deception. CVAUK was established to support Christian vegetarians and encourage secular vegetarians seeking spiritual guidance. Whilst also wishing to help non-vegetarian church-goers to adopt a compassionate diet, it becomes doubly hard to proclaim Christian compassion and mercy when our church leaders fail to support Christians who oppose those industries which systematically, wilfully and wantonly degrade the quality and integrity of God's creation.

Matthew C. Halteman, Christian Philosopher, puts it this way: *Far from being a trivial matter of personal preference, the question of how we choose to eat cuts to the very heart of our calling to be good stewards of God's creation. If it is the renewal of creation (rather than its unmaking) that we profess to serve, we as Christians must address ourselves with more honesty and conviction to the ethics of eating.*

Please consider supporting the efforts of CVAUK by endorsing a vegetarian diet as both a logical and acceptable Christian response to the care of God's creation. If however, you are still unable to accept the authoritative reports and exegesis contained in this and our previous letter, we would be grateful if you could explain why, so that we may try to understand your position.

Yours in Christ,

**3rd letter to serving C of E Bishops in the U.K.
dated 10th August 2007**

Your Grace

Why did we approach the Bishops for their support?

CVAUK wrote two letters dated 1st March and 12th April 2007 (details enclosed), to all the serving Church of England Bishops in the United Kingdom as part of their Veg4Lent campaign, please find enclosed a report of their replies and our comments.

In today's church, Christian vegetarians are ridiculed and falsely accused of demanding a change to a meat free diet when they only want to inform, and many Christian vegetarians have left the Church due to hostility and other unacceptable attitudes towards their choice of diet.

Why is the adopting of a vegetarian diet so important? According to <http://www.overpopulation.org> the number of people the earth can support *"depends on whether you want to live like an Indian or an American. Each American consumes 1,760 pounds of grain annually, **mainly because of the grains used to feed farm animals**. If everyone on the planet consumed that much grain, the Earth would support only about 2.5 billion people. But in India, people consume about 440 pounds each. If everyone else in the world did likewise, the world's grain would support about 10 billion people.*

In the light of this knowledge, we believe Christian leaders should be promoting the advantages of a vegetarian diet as an option that will significantly reduce an individual's use of the world's finite resources. However, as explained above, experience has shown that vegetarianism is still a contentious issue within the Church.

To alleviate this situation CVAUK would like Church leaders to initially investigate our claims and if found to be true, support our efforts to encourage Christians to reduce their consumption of meat and seriously consider the overall benefits of a vegetarian diet.

CVAUK members passionately believe that people of faith, whose golden rule is to *"do unto others, as you would wish them to do to you"*, can save humankind. That Christianity in particular can play a major role in leading the world towards an enlightened, sustainable future, a future that will include an altruistic lifestyle which embraces the compassionate, self sacrificial teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, is something with which we are sure you all agree. What will our answer be when our Lord asks us, 'What did you do when I was hungry, thirsty, poor or sick?

Yours in Christ,

Final Report - Lent campaign 2007 to serving C of E Bishops in the U.K.

Subject: Vegetarianism and caring for God's creation.

The Bishops replies and CVAUK's answers to the questions raised.

Confidentiality has required the removal of all names and the need to refer to the two Archbishops as Bishops.

All replies are to CVAUK's first letter dated 1st March 2007, Letter dated 12th April 2007 and letter dated 10th August 2007.

An open reply (answers in italics) to all the Bishops who were kind enough to respond to our two letters.

Bishop A (Reply to first letter)

I cannot but disagree with "editors of the World Watch Institute" whom you quote as concluding that "the human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every major category of environmental damage ..."

Our second letter quoted 'Livestocks long shadow' a United Nations report that confirmed the above comment but you have not commented on this in your second reply (see below). Since CVAUK's second letter, DEFRA is now urging the government to encourage a move towards a vegan diet, due to the disastrous consequences of animal agriculture on the environment I do hope you have an open mind and will investigate the concerns expressed by a major environmental institute, the United Nations and now a government department .

While I myself adopt a vegan diet during Lent,

We were delighted to hear that you adopted a vegan diet for lent and from your answers we assume your reasons were ascetical and demonstrates how a vegetarian diet can assist us, in our spiritual journey through life.

I cannot agree that the various resolutions you cite in your letter support your argument.

May I respectfully ask you to read The Lambeth 98 Resolution 1.8 Creation. As an example, (b) (i) states: that unless human beings take responsibility for caring for the earth, the consequences will be catastrophic because of : and then goes on to list the problems that need to be urgently addressed. These are in areas where animal agriculture has a significant ecological footprint.

What they do support, and what we can agree on, is a simpler lifestyle.

We agree that a simpler lifestyle should be encouraged but contend that a plant based diet should be an acceptable RECOMMENDATION placed at, or near, the top of the list of priorities.

Bishop A (Reply to second letter)

While I respect the choices which you and other vegetarians have made,

We thank you for your comment and pleased to hear that you do not disagree with our choice of diet.

I could not claim that biblical theology or Christian tradition support it sufficiently to pressurise others to follow suit.

Our letter was designed to respectfully request your support for a very benign lifestyle, it was never our intention to pressurize anyone. We only want you to consider the facts and if proved correct, support our claim that a plant based diet can make a significant contribution towards solving our ecological problems.

I agree that Church tradition does not support a vegetarian diet but biblical theology does. I therefore respectfully suggest that you read Genesis 1:29, when the world was considered 'very good' by God, humankind's diet was plant based. Also in Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah describes the future Kingdom of Peace as plant based. Even Genesis 9:3, confirms that before the flood, God wanted our diet to be plant based and that eating flesh was a concession to a fallen world.

Bishop A (Reply to third letter) 17th August 2007

Thank you for your letter dated 10th August, I note your comments.

Bishop B (Reply to first letter)

There is no doubt that we all have a responsibility to care for God's creation, but there are differing opinions on how this should be undertaken.

We agree, all the more reason why every option should be openly discussed without prejudice, including a vegetarian diet.

Bishop B (Reply to second letter)

Bishop has asked me to write and thank you for your comments, but he sees no purpose in continuing this conversation further.

How can Christian vegetarians ever come to an understanding of the Churches' position on this subject when it's leaders refuse to discuss it with them. This comment also applies to all the Bishops who failed to answer our letters.

Bishop C (Reply to first letter only)

I thought you might like to see our diocesan Environmental Policy, which builds on many of the references which you quote, and also summarises the Church of England Report Sharing God's Planet. We adopted this a year ago at our Diocesan Synod, and each parish and committee and church school is now working towards implementing this. I hope you will find this encouraging.

We find your reply very encouraging and conclude that you have no objection to the church including a vegetarian diet as an acceptable 'creation caring' option.

Bishop D (Reply to first letter only)

Regrettably, the Bishop will not be returning your questionnaire but wishes you well with the Caring Creation Programme.

We thank you for your best wishes and conclude that you have no objections to vegetarian diet being introduced as an acceptable 'creation caring' option.

Bishop E (Reply to first letter only)

No letter, returned completed questionnaire (See page 6).

He answered 'Yes' to general creation questions A1 to B1 (Lambeth Resolutions 1.8 & 1.9) but 'No' to Veg4Lent questions B2 (parishioners' embracing vegetarian diet for Lent) & C (would you embrace a vegetarian diet for Lent) with comment: The vegetarian option is only one of many.

Thank you for agreeing that: God loves all of creation not just mankind (A1); that dominion is not domination and that we should be good stewards reflecting God's love for us (A2); that Christians should reflect God's goodness and mercy (A3); Christians should be prepared to make sacrificial changes to their lifestyle to benefit the poor, God's creatures and the environment (A4) and Christians should be encouraged by the parish church to consider their personal impact on the environment in their daily lives and seek to bring about change in the way mankind treats it (B1).

*Why, considering the positive impact a vegetarian diet would have on our ability to care for God's creation, as agreed above, were you unable to answer 'yes' to the parish church encouraging their flock to **consider** a vegetarian diet during Lent (B2)? Surely it is up to each individual's conscience to decide whether they should abstain from eating meat during Lent or on a permanent basis. To withhold a vegetarian option just because you personally would not consider it, is surely another way of forcing your own views onto others?*

We regret your own decision not to consider a vegetarian diet during Lent (C) and question why you felt it necessary to dismiss this very important option as being 'only one of many'.

Bishop F (Replied to second letter only)

I am not aware of having seen your previous letter of March 1st but I would want to confirm that Vegetarianism is one possible response to the concerns we all share for the welfare of the environment in general and God's animal creation in particular. I am therefore happy to agree that a vegetarian diet is acceptable while being clear that it is not required of Christians.

Thank you for confirming that a vegetarian diet is an acceptable option in response to the call to care for God's creation. We are aware that the Anglican Church has no written stipulations on the subject, but that God gives everyone freedom of choice between accepting or rejecting His Word of Life.

I am aware of the care provided by the farming industry for its livestock and I certainly do not believe that farming "systematically, willfully and wantonly degrades the quality and integrity of God's creation".

It is obvious that you have not visited a factory farm or read any altruistic literature on the subject.

In the end I would support St. Paul's view in Romans 14 that this is not an issue over which we should quarrel.

In St Paul's day there were no factory farms and their lifestyle was not threatening the very existence of life on earth. St Paul opted to abstain from eating meat so as not to mislead his brethren.

Bishop G (Replied to second letter only)

I am not a vegetarian, and I do not believe that it is a requirement of Christian teaching that one should be a vegetarian. However, I understand the views of those who are vegetarian.

Surely, if you understand vegetarians, you will know that it is a requirement of Christian teaching to love as God loves? The truth is important when considering how to care for one another. Mounting scientific evidence and clinical observation have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that meat eating is very damaging. Our desire for meat not only diverts food and good drinking water from the poor and hungry but also damages our health and the rest of God's creation. Surely Christian teaching requires us to care for the poor, sick, hungry, and the Earth?

I have a central desire to respect the whole of God's creation, and while I believe this is consistent with eating fish and meat, I believe it poses serious questions to some contemporary farming methods. I keep a few free-range hens as a practical demonstration of this belief, and I am also careful in my purchase of meat or meals, with this commitment in mind.

From your comments above, you have already started to question the way you eat; that, to, is where we all started and why we have tried to enter into a dialogue on the subject with the Bishops.

Bishop H (Replied to second letter only)

The reason that I had not replied to your first letter was that I felt a certain unease about the way in which the questions had been framed (especially the last two questions) and also that you gave no indication of how the information gathered from bishops would be used. Bishops are more likely to respond to questionnaires that indicate that the data collected will not identify individual bishops – experience has shown that some organisations pass on questionnaire responses to newspapers in which they identify the respondents with whatever spin they choose.

CVAUK thank you for sharing your concern and trust that this final letter and summary of answers will allay your fears.

I would describe myself as a 'vegetarian option' person. When given a choice, I normally go for vegetarian food (unless it is cholesterol laden) and tend not to eat meat at home and certainly not during Lent. When offered hospitality, I will eat meat rather than cause a fuss or embarrass my host(ess). I do not therefore have any problems with answering 'Yes' to A 1-4 and B1 but I have a problem with B2 in that it is too specific and prescriptive.

Thank you for confirming that you would avoid eating meat at home and during Lent. It was great to hear from a Bishop who took the problems created by animal food seriously.

*Regarding the Questionnaire please see our comments to **Bishop E** above. It was not however, our intention to require any set directive or ruling on adopting a vegetarian diet. Our problem is that when caring for God's creation is mentioned within the church, the vegetarian option is ignored or ridiculed. Within today's*

Church, the blessings of a vegetarian diet are still an unacceptable truth that we are trying to correct.

I believe that all Christians should consider what they eat, for environmental, animal welfare and health reasons — and not just in Lent. Also, I would not want to separate animal welfare and environmental issues from issues of justice for human beings and Fair trade is all part of the wider picture of how we act as stewards of creation.

As you will note from our answers, we completely agree with you.

Lent is primarily a time to prepare for Easter by prayer, bible study and acts of self denial. I issued a Pastoral Letter to be read out on the Sunday before Lent in which I asked the people to go without a meal on Ash Wednesday and Fridays in Lent and suggested that as an alternative they might wish to go without certain foods, so they could consider a vegetarian diet, but I would not go so far as to say that they should and I am unhappy about linking it too closely with Lent because I would want them to make their ethical choices throughout the year and not have a great meat celebration once Lent is over!

Wonderful, we could not agree with you more.

I would also wish to avoid the suggestion that eating meat in itself is unethical. It is fairly certain that Jesus ate meat,

Are you saying that the cruelty and violence of the factory farm, the unnecessary feeding of grain to cattle destined for the rich, instead of feeding the grain direct to the poor and hungry, would be acceptable to Jesus? If we believe that Jesus truly worked miracles of healing, was without sin, and was God made man, why is it considered certain that He could not avoid eating the flesh of animals?

and I am aware that there are hill farmers here in who cannot diversify and struggle to make a living with sheep. The sheep are not intensely farmed but are fairly well treated and are killed humanely.

We do not believe that any killing can be called humane, we kill lambs that are only a few months old in a slaughter house usually miles away or after a terrible journey to the continent where we have no control over the way they are killed.

I am sure that I agree with the aims of your organisation, but I have a few reservations about its methods. I do not think that you can separate the ill treatment of people from the ill treatment of animals.

To our knowledge we have never separated the ill treatment of people from the ill treatment of animals. A plant food diet does not only free animals from the cruelty and violence of animal agriculture, it also benefits humankind. The World Health Organisation has said that vegetarian societies live longer and healthier lives. Also, when Christians adopt a vegetarian diet, they release food which could, with the right will, be used to feed the poor and hungry.

The church does indeed have a duty to challenge people about the moral choices that they make whenever they go shopping when they may be colluding with the exploitation of animals or humans. A vegetarian friend of mine buys battery laid eggs and Nescafe without seeing the lack of logic. But equally, I am aware that I

drive a car in order to visit my parishes and recently I took an air flight to visit (where the money raised during Lent will be used to provide food for malnourished children) so I am conscious of the need to improve my own carbon footprint!

Yes, we agree, there are other options that we need to consider if we are going to help all the people of this world. It is said that if everyone had the same lifestyle as the British we would need 3+ planets to survive. This means that people in the UK will be required to reduce their consumption of the world's resources by a massive 60% to attain a 'one earth' sustainable lifestyle. We must therefore look into every aspect of our lives, including our energy consumption in the home, our cars, holidays and our diet, one or two options will not be enough., we will need to consider all the options.

I do not know what kind of response you have received from bishops, but may I suggest that if you send them a questionnaire in the future that you explain more clearly the purpose of the questionnaire and how you will use the information that you obtain.

We thank you for your valuable advice and for taking the time to write such a long letter to us. We trust that our future campaigns will reflect the advice you have so kindly given us in this letter

Bishop J (Replied to second letter only)

I very much sympathise with the values of the CVAUK but as yet I am not a vegetarian. I fear that a public endorsement by myself could therefore be construed as hypocritical.

However, I do wish you well in your advocacy and assure you that I continue to reflect seriously and theologically on the ethics of eating.

Thank you for understanding our concerns, you obviously accept that it is important that we each consider how our diet is contributing to these problems. We note with sadness that you do not feel able to promote this world sustaining lifestyle until you have yourself become a vegetarian. We do however look forward to the outcome of your theological reflections and hope you will publish them.

Bishop K (Replied to second letter only)

Thank you for your letter dated 12 April asking me to consider endorsing a vegetarian diet as both a logical and acceptable Christian response to the care of God's creation.

This is one of those issues upon which Christians have disagreed over the centuries, but have learned to respect one another's views. The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals stated in its Bulletin 69, which I received recently, that it holds no official view on vegetarianism.

We will leave the committee of the ASWA to answer why they do not have an official view on this most important subject.

Although I greatly respect the beliefs of those who are vegetarians, I am not one myself. The Diocese of is predominantly rural and, since my arrival here, I have tried to support its farmers as much as possible.

Thank you for respecting our beliefs. Whatever we as a nation decide to eat, our farmers will always endeavour to meet our needs. In faith we believe that there must be useful crops and farming solutions even for poor land.

I agree that how we choose to eat is part of our calling to be good stewards of God's creation. So, in supporting farmers, I am naturally concerned with ensuring high standards of animal husbandry and welfare. Also, I believe there is a general trend now for people to eat less meat than they used to, and a greater concern with where it has come from. This can be seen here in where people are able to buy their meat from a weekly Farmers' market, a shop called or a new food market called, and know that the animals have been raised and killed locally, as humanely as possible.

*On this subject please see our answer to **Bishop H** on page 14.*

So, rather than urge Christians to become vegetarians I would want to ask them to think seriously about what they eat and where it has come from.

All we ask is that you inform Christians of the benefits of a vegetarian diet, declaring that animals are living, sensitive creatures, loved by God, and must therefore not be treated as inanimate objects. Being in possession of all the facts, Christians will then be in a position to decide for themselves.

Bishop L (Replied to second letter only)

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Christian Vegetarian Association in the UK. I am very happy to be supportive of anyone who chooses vegetarianism as a lifestyle choice but I am equally aware that others choose differently. I therefore think it inappropriate for me to specifically support one lifestyle choice over another in this particular area. I shall observe the outcome of your campaign with interest.

Thank you, we appreciate your support. All we ask is that you state that the benefits of a vegetarian diet are considerable and an acceptable option within the Church. Surely, to deliberately withhold the advantages of any option would be obstructing a Christians ability to make a fully informed, intelligent and compassionate choice?

Bishop M (Replied to second letter only)

Thank you for your letter received 16th April inviting the to consider endorsing a Vegetarian diet. This is not something the feels able to do not least as he himself eats meat. I am sorry to have to send a disappointing reply.

Thank you for your commiserations, we are also disappointed, especially as the Bishop is a strong supporter of 'Contraction and Convergence' which promotes the idea that all people have a right to an equal share of the worlds resources

(convergence) and that rich nations lifestyles will need to contract significantly in order to make this a reality. CVAUK believe that there is now ample proof that vegetarianism can make a significant contribution towards attaining this ideal and should not be ignored.

Bishop N (Replied to third letter only) 15th August 2007

Thank you for your letter of the 10th August. I intend to bring this correspondence before our mission board, in the hope that we can encourage people in our diocese to make informed decisions.

Bishop P (Replied to third letter only) 7th September 2007

Thank you for your letter of 10th August: I am sorry not to have replied sooner. I am also sorry that you say that Christian vegetarians are ridiculed. I have to say that that is not at all my experience and I would certainly hope that it is not the experience of most others. As you also rightly say, vegetarians eat a great deal less grain, directly and indirectly, than meat eaters and that is an increasingly significant issue, to say nothing of the aspects of health, diet, obesity, etc.

CVAUK conclusions.

We would like to thank all the Bishops who replied to our letters and are delighted at their unanimous respect of our choice of diet, especially as only a few hundred years ago their predecessors would have burnt us at the stake as heretics? However, their replies have raised more questions than answers and judging from the number of replies (19%), vegetarianism is still a contentious issue within the Church. Also the present situation is highly confusing, as the Bishops would support an individual Christian vegetarian but would not be prepared to promote a vegetarian diet within the Church.

Colin Spencer, in his book 'Vegetarianism: A History' writes: *A vegetarian lifestyle is an unspoken criticism. But, more than that, vegetarianism is one of the signs of a radical thinker, the individual who criticises the status quo, who desires something better, more humane and more civilised for the whole of the world. It makes meat-eaters uneasy and they often react aggressively.* If this closed minded, inflexible attitude truly exists in the Church, is there any hope for humankind? In today's world humankind has, for the first time, the power to destroy not only the rest of God's creatures but also himself and the world as we know it. The Church needs radical leaders capable of an unbiased re-examination of past attitudes and outdated traditions, failure to tackle these new problems, through denial or intransigence, could be catastrophic.

At a time when the food and water supply to billions may depend on how we react today, suppressing the truth about the benefits of a vegetarian diet, is unacceptable, and to deny well researched facts presented by reputable independent organisations such as the Worldwatch Institute and the United Nations is surely irresponsible. You do not need a 'university degree' to know that feeding grain and

water to animals rather than direct to human beings, is extremely inefficient. Any option that releases food and water to the poor, hungry and a growing world population (extra 80 million humans/year), must be worth the undivided and unbiased attention of the Church, if we are going to avoid mass starvation, thirst and continuous wars over shrinking world resources.

We agree with those Bishops who suggest that the promotion of a vegetarian diet by a carnivore would be hypocritical, but wouldn't it be more hypocritical to knowingly conceal an option just because you do not practice it? A humble admission that other options do exist with the proviso that it's adoption was up to the individual, would be a more honest approach. God gave us all a free will and nobody has the right to withhold information that may impede our freedom to assess all the facts prior to making a decision. CVAUK also believe that as Christians we should not be destroying God's creation, and that a Christian's reasons for becoming vegetarian, whether ascetical, altruistic or selfish, is a major step towards making peace with God.

God has made it perfectly clear in both the New and Old Testaments that he detests violence. It was God's reason for destroying the world (Gen 6:13) and both God's original Creation (Gen 1:29) and future Peaceable Kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9) are nonviolent. Jesus said '*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*' (Math 5:9) and Paul wrote '*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed*' (Rom 8:19).

As Christians, our hope is for an everlasting peace, based on the nonviolent teachings of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. For centuries we have been at war with the rest of God's creation but in today's world it is not necessary to kill 50 billion animals for food each year, so now is the ideal time to perceive God's future kingdom by becoming God's peacemakers.

N.B. Please refer to the CVAUK letter dated 10th August 2007 sent with this report, see page 9.

General Veg4Lent Information

Finding the name of the priest in charge and the address of a church is a major task which can involve many hours. Obtaining this information locally is much easier than from a distance, so this is one area of our campaign where you could really help. Church addresses can be obtained from local Diocese / Denomination Handbooks. These Handbooks can be borrowed from your church office, bought in your local church bookshop or viewed in your local library. You can also discover all the churches in your area from Yellow Pages / Thompson Directories, they do not however give the post code. Names and Church contact details can also be found in local newspapers. If you have access to the Internet, this could be another source of information. The Yellow pages web site <http://www.yell.com> is excellent and very reliable. Click on the SEARCH tab and in the top search box type "Places of Worship" or "Religious Organisations" and the Town/ Village in the bottom box. In large Towns or Cities you get better results if you type in each district separately e.g. Putney, London / Wandsworth, London etc.

When addressing envelopes, if possible, add the name and title of the recipient (Diocese and Denomination Handbooks give title, name and post code). It is however, not always possible to obtain the name of the priest, in which case address the letter to the "Priest in Charge". Including the name of the priest and handwriting the address may avoid the letter going straight into the waste paper basket unopened.

Instead of sending out letters over Lent consider sending out a booklet instead or handing out booklets outside churches or other Christian events throughout the year. CVAUK have copies of CVA USA booklet: 'Honoring God's Creation' (excuse American spelling). This booklet has been sent to all members in the past. If however, you have not received your copy or have passed it on to someone else, please request another copy from Don Gwillim.

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 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.

Rev. Malcolm Duncan

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

ADDRESSES

Please supply Church addresses.

Number of addresses required : **Denomination**

In the following area(s)

.....

CVA USA BOOKLET - Honoring God's Creation

Please supply **copies**

Postage Guide :

25 Booklets £2.00

50 Booklets £3.50

100 Booklets £5.50

200 Booklets £8.50

I enclose cheque for £

to cover postage and packing.

CVAUK PUBLICATIONS

To order CVAUK publications , T-Shirts Transfers, Cards, DVD's and Slide Shows, please use CVAUK 'Resource List' and 'Order Form'.

I have lost my CVAUK Resource List, please supply a new one.

I need some more 'Order Forms'. Number required

Name

Post Code **Tel. No.**

Please return form to:

CVAUK, Foresta, Pines Road, Liphook, GU30 7PL.

Thank you for volunteering to become a part of CVAUK's efforts to raise a vegetarian consciousness within the Christian community.

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