



# Veg4Lent Introduction & Study Guide



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## **Mission statement**

**To promote a vegetarian diet for Lent as both an experiential opportunity and a transitional period throughout the whole of Christendom.**

When I look at the world today, I see a culture addicted to violence. There are more than 1 billion people suffering from malnourishment and its effects. There are more than 2 billion people without access to clean water, barely surviving in dire poverty. According to the United Nations, about 60,000 people, mostly women and children, die every single day from starvation and starvation-related diseases. In the U.S. alone, we kill more than 9 billion land animals each year by slitting their throats, sometimes while they're still conscious. We also kill more than 15 billion sea animals, generally by suffocation, bodily decomposition, or crushing; every single year.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr said: "The choice before us is no longer violence or non-violence; it's non-violence or non-existence." That's where we stand today, on the brink of a new culture of non-violence or the brink of non-existence.

**Fr John Dear – Catholic priest**

## **Why do we lack compassion for animals?**

It is a sad reflection on prevailing Christendom, when the humanitarian advocacy of vegetarianism is usually met with a callous dismissal from our churches. At a time when reasoned and compassionate understanding of animals and their interests is increasing in most areas of society, there are still far too many Christians reaching for the Bible in an attempt to justify needless bloodletting.

I would go further, and state that many of my fellow Christians are attempting to pervert the course of much desperately needed justice! From time to time, any tradition which is honest with itself, needs to reflect upon its accepted standards. Do we largely countenance and contribute to a widespread and very real, form of violence and oppression? Is it a counter productive evangelism, in the eyes of those contemplating a spiritual path, when compassion and integrity appear more consistent and widespread within other faiths and even secular philosophies? Can it not be said that a religion is largely meaning less, when love is absent (1 Corinthians 13)?

I have little doubt that the above will provoke many, further biblical quotes. I am more concerned about the motivation of those who feel morally threatened by the concept of an awakened conscience, to traditionally unheard cries of the innocent. If we are to be sincere as heralds of a more peaceable age, then let's not resist a perfectly practical, selfless and above all, beneficial spirit of change.

Our very lifestyles contain the power to bring about healing or harm, depending on the choices we make. In the last year 850 million animal lives were pitilessly taken in UK slaughterhouses. We have played a sizeable part and to our shame, continue to do so.

**John Michael, Cardiff**

## Vegetarian Diet for Lent Action Pack - Introduction (IssueA1)

**The Action Pack contains six separate study guides (detailed below) plus “Useful Information” booklet.**

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## **About our Contributors**

### **Rev'd. Dr Andrew Linzey**

Holds the world's first post in theology and animal welfare - the International Fund for Animal Welfare Senior Research Fellowship at Mansfield College, Oxford. He is also Special Professor of Theology in the University of Nottingham and has written or edited numerous books on theology and ethics including some pioneering works on theology and animals.

Rev'd Dr Andrew Linzey, Senior Research Fellow, Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford

### **Rev'd. J. R (Regina) Hyland**

An ordained evangelical minister who has worked in prison ministry and currently works with migrant farm workers As well as actively supporting issues of female equality and animal rights. Reverend Hyland edited 'Humane Religion', a bi-monthly journal, for several years, and has contributed numerous articles to religious periodicals.

Write to: Humane Religion, P.O.Box 25354, Sarasota, Florida 34277.

Visit their web site: [www.HumaneReligion.org](http://www.HumaneReligion.org) many wonderful articles.

**Revd. James Thompson**

Prepared for the Baptist ministry via the Glasgow Bible Training Institute as well as Kensit Bible College in London. Later, for the Congregational ministry, via Paton College and the University of Nottingham; and, later still, for the church of England, via. Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.. He has been involved in tutoring theology and humanities; he is the most outspoken cleric on the subject of animal liberation within Britain today.

**Revd Basil Wrighton MA**

A Roman Catholic priest, for many years editor of “The Ark” published by “The Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare”.

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His articles on Judaism and Vegetarianism are on the internet at

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**Frank I. Hoffman**

As a Jewish-United Methodist Pastor (retired), Frank has volunteered his time for many years in both prisons and churches. Both Mary (his wife) and Frank have a Science background; Mary is a retired Medical Technologist (MT-ASCP), and Frank began his professional career as a chemist.

Visit their site <http://www.all-creatures.org> a wonderful resource site for Christians who care for all of God’s creation.

**May Tripp**

Founder of ‘Animal Christian Concern’ a pressure movement within the churches having a membership of Archbishops, Bishops, clergy and lay Christians. Their aim is to strengthen the Christian Faith that Jesus Christ is Lord of the whole creation, and to encourage a greater awareness of animal welfare concerns. Write to: P.O.Box 70, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 5UX.

**Antony Neesham**

Established vege-consciousness in 1996 to help promote “VEG4LENT” as a contemporary adaption of an ancient tradition.

### **Dave Burrus**

Founder and Chief Executive of Christian Response (Worldwide) an ecumenical organisation dedicated to the care of all of God's creation. Dave has spent many years caring for the welfare of animals. Appeared on television in the 70's, when he was involved in saving marine life, in particular dolphins. Took early retirement and works full time as editor of bi-monthly magazine 'Caring' and manager of our Westcliff on Sea charity shop. As the sponsor of this Action Pack, contact information can be found on the front of all the booklets.

### **Don Gwillim**

Former Chairman of Christian Response (Worldwide). Retired Chief Design Engineer (Avionics). Became a Christian in 1986 and a vegetarian in 1995. Daughter Tracy is feature writer for 'Parrots' magazine and a member of the Institute of Animal Care Education. The family maintain a small animal sanctuary of rescued parrots, rabbits and dogs. Audrie his wife, paints in water colour. Don and Tracy's articles and Audrie's paintings can be seen on the family web site 'Parrots and Pets Advice' (PAPA) [www.foresta.free-online.co.uk](http://www.foresta.free-online.co.uk).



Western culture is inextricably bound up with man's exploitation of millions of animals as food, as research tools, for entertainment, and for clothing, and for enjoyment and company. The sheer scope and complexity of our exploitation is, I contend, an indication of how far we have accepted the dictum that animals exist for man's use and pleasure. It is sheer folly to suppose that we can completely extricate ourselves from this complexity of exploitation with minimal disturbance to Western society as we now know it. Nevertheless, having begun the slow and often tedious task of challenging traditional assumptions, new fields of sensitivity have already begun to emerge, and it is this task of hastening the moral evolution of the consciousness of our fellow humans that we must undertake. The Christian tradition with its vast influence on Western culture has a unique role to play in showing its ability to change perspectives and challenge even its most cherished assumptions.

*Revd Dr Andrew Linzey*

*Animals' Rights: a Symposium*

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## **Animal Agriculture**

**www.thevegetariansite.com**

### **Introduction: The Fall of the Traditional Farm**

To many people, the production of meat, eggs, and dairy still evokes images of traditional, idyllic farm settings where animals are treated humanely while alive. In reality, over the past few decades these farms have been almost entirely supplanted by intensive factory-style farms. Why? Increasing market demand for inexpensive animal products has forced agribusiness into a mode where production efficiency is paramount. Factory farms are high-production, largely mechanised indoor settings where animals are heavily crowded and routinely treated in an inhumane manner. A number of abusive practices are common, such as unanesthetized mutilations, excessive sub therapeutic drug use, and withholding food and water to regulate biological cycles or during transport (Fraser & Broom 1990; Mason & Singer 1990; Fox 1984). Furthermore, many animals live virtually their entire lives in cages or stalls which restrict them from even turning around. The current treatment of animals as nothing more than bio machines for food production is resulting in enormous animal welfare problems.

### **Poultry & Egg Production:**



Currently, nearly all chickens, turkeys, and egg-laying hens are raised under intensive methods. Unless specifically advertised as "free range" or "cage-free", essentially all supermarket and restaurant poultry and eggs (and any foods which contain them) are products of factory farming. So-called "broiler chickens", the chickens raised for their meat, are raised by the tens or hundreds of thousands indoors in warehouse-like buildings with automatic feeding equipment. Typically, each bird is given only half a square foot of floor space (Farm Sanctuary 1998; Coats 1989).

To prevent the birds from pecking at each other under such stressful conditions, a portion of their sensitive beaks is burned off without anesthesia by a hot blade. Behavioral and anatomical studies of this debeaking process show that it results in prolonged painful effects (Fraser & Broom 1990). After six to seven weeks, broiler chickens are transported to the slaughterhouse in tightly stacked crates. They are given no food or water during the journey or before slaughter. In the slaughterhouse, the chickens are secured upside-down by their feet on a moving rail. They are largely immobilized by an electrified bath, then their throats are slit by a mechanical blade, and finally they are submerged in a scalding tank, sometimes still conscious while boiled. Turkeys are raised and slaughtered similarly, though in addition to debeaking they often undergo unanesthetized toe clipping to reduce any damage due to fighting under the stressful environment

The plight of birds associated with egg laying begins at the hatchery. Since males cannot lay eggs, half of all new born chicks are soon eliminated by

suffocation, grinding alive, or by simply discarding them in trash cans. Females quickly grow to become egg layers. For virtually their entire lives, egg-laying hens are confined to small wire cages stacked in layers. Usually four or five debeaked hens are fit so tightly per cage that the birds eventually lose the majority of their feathers due to unavoidable rubbing against the cage wires. Egg-layers suffer even greater stresses than their broiler cousins because they are not given room to move about or even stretch their wings. A hens toes often become entangled in, or even grow around the cage wires, resulting in starvation when access to the food and water just inches away becomes impossible (Mason & Singer 1990; Coats 1989).

After roughly a year, hens reach the end of their initial egg laying cycle, at which time they are often slaughtered for low-grade meat. Fortunately, there are replacements for eggs in baking, in "egg" salad, and even in omelettes.

### **Pork Production**



Despite the fact that pigs are highly intelligent and very curious beings, the industry intensively confines them indoors to small pens with concrete floors and metal bars. Without natural stimulation, and under such crowded conditions, pigs often resort to tail biting, which can result in serious injury or infection. The industry has responded to this problem by removing piglets' tails without anaesthesia. Other unanesthetized mutilations commonly endured by the young piglets include castration and ear notching (for identification purposes). Most breeding sows live virtually their entire lives in highly -constraining metal stalls, which make simply turning around an impossibility. Under this perpetual confinement, anomalous behaviours such as sham-chewing (chewing when no food is present) and bar biting are common (Fraser & Broom 1990). Sows typically endure a continuous cycle of pregnancies until reproductive efficacy declines, at which time they are sent to slaughter.

### **Dairy and Veal Production**



The methods of dairy and veal production are presented together because they are inextricably linked. New-born calves are a necessary consequence of the dairy industry because cows must give birth regularly in order to produce acceptable levels of milk. Within one to three days, a new-born calf is taken from its mother so that it does not consume too much of the milk which the industry intends for humans. Female calves are raised to replace older dairy cows, while male calves are used for their meat. Many male calves are raised and slaughtered for beef, but others are used for veal--either slaughtered within a few days for the low-grade variety, or confined to small crates for months to be raised for "milk-fed veal" (now banned in the U.K.). "Milk-fed veal" calves are actually fed only a milk substitute mixture which is devoid of essential

nutrients such as iron. The borderline anaemia brought about by this iron deficiency, combined with a complete lack of exercise (a calf cannot even turn around in its wooden crate) guarantees that the resulting meat is a tender pinkish-white, which is the quality of veal most appreciated by consumers. The bodies of modern dairy cows are heavily taxed. In addition to being forced to bear calves regularly, selective breeding and the use of hormones (such as BGH) to produce as much milk per cow as possible have deleterious health effects. Lameness and mastitis, an udder ailment, are both very common.

With a plentiful supply of young cows to replace those with declining levels of milk production, cows are routinely slaughtered for inexpensive ground beef. In fact, although healthy cows can live for 20 to 25 years, our modern dairy cows typically are slaughtered after only a few years.

### **Beef Production**



Beef cattle usually are raised on range land for months to years before being rounded up for transport to feedlots. Unlike most other animals raised for food, range cattle can get adequate exercise and experience less psychological distress. Still, a number of abusive processes are commonly administered by ranchers, including branding, and unanesthetized dehorning and castration. Furthermore, range cattle are often denied adequate shelter to protect against harsh weather conditions. Most cattle spend the last few months of their lives at "finishing" feedlots, where densities are high and the terrain consists only of dirt and manure. Unfortunately, beef cattle endure the same transportation problems as pigs (see above). Even extremely sick animals are transported to slaughter rather than being humanely euthanized. These "downers" (as they are called by the industry) are still economically valuable, so an attempt is made to bring them to slaughter before they die because animals which die natural deaths cannot be used for human consumption. Since the animals cannot walk, they are usually dragged by chains or pushed with heavy equipment. Farm animals are specifically exempted from federal animal welfare laws, so downed animal trade is legal throughout the U.S. - except in the State of California, where new legislation requires that downed animals be humanely euthanized.

### **Humane Alternatives?**

Although they represent a small minority of the animal agribusiness, some traditional farms do still exist. These farms rarely can compete with factory-style agribusiness directly, so an alternative niche market has been established instead. Marketed "free-range eggs", "sustainable meats", and "organic" dairy products are derived from animals which are raised under better conditions than within the now-standard intensive system. (Is it not ironic that traditional farming is now "alternative farming"?)

Unfortunately, traditional farming has never been cruelty-free, and these farms today are typically no better. The animals endure the same stresses of

handling, transportation, and slaughter as their factory cousins. Furthermore, dairy calves are often still sold for veal production, free-range egg-laying hens are usually supplied by the same inhumane hatcheries that supply factory farms, and many chickens are still painfully debeaked. The consumer should be aware that terms such as "free Range" are not regulated and are sometimes abused. The living conditions and amount of space for the animals varies considerably from farm to farm.

References: Coats, C. D., *Old MacDonald's Factory Farm* (New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 87. *Ibid.*, p. 92. *Farm Sanctuary* 1998, *The Truth About Poultry*, p. 1. Fox, M. W., *Farm Animals: Husbandry, Behavior, and Veterinary Practice* (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1984), chap. 1. Fraser, A. F. & Broom, D. M., *Farm Animal Behavior and Welfare*, 3rd ed. (London: Bailliere Tindall, 1990), p. 383. Mason, J. & Singer, P., *Animal Factories*, rev. ed. (New York: Harmony Books, 1990), chap. 1, 3



### **Our Health - Physical.**



The British Medical Association states that 'vegetarians have lower rates of obesity, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, large bowel disorders, cancers and gall stones. Cholesterol levels tend to be lower in vegetarians and a number of components of the vegetarian diet have been noted to have lower blood cholesterol'.

In Britain, a 12-year study of 6,115 vegetarians and 5,015 meat-eaters found that vegetarians tended to live longer - their risk of dying early being 28 per cent lower. Another study of British eating compared 6,000 British vegetarians with a control group of health conscious meat-eaters and concluded that the vegetarians were 29 per cent less likely to die from heart disease. In Germany, an 11-year study of 1,900 vegetarians found that mortality from all causes was attributable to reduced heart disease in men and women.

I do not understand many people's views on this subject - they know there's a risk of heart disease from a meaty diet, but they think you need meat to give you protein. But the good news is: no, you don't. Eggs, cheese, nuts, beans and soya based foods will give you more than enough of it.

### **The Vegetarian Society**

### **Finally our Health - Spiritual.**

We know what we are doing to this fragile little planet of ours. You read the papers. You know how we're destroying the land that gives us food, polluting the air that we breathe, and contaminating the rivers that give us drinking water. I don't have to pound you with facts and figures. You know that the problems



*Pick up your cross*

related to the destruction of the environment are now severe. And what is making matters worse is that people in general, and Christians in particular, don't care.

Even when Christians have been commissioned by God to be good stewards of His creation, they appear to be the least concerned with what is going on. And of all the Christians, those who call themselves evangelicals have the worst record. Studies show that the more zealously committed people become to evangelical churches, the less concerned they are about the horrible things that are happening to the environment. We "Bible believing, born again, spirit-filled Christians", more than any others, seem to have turned deaf ears to the pleas to save God's creation from what has been called sinful exploitation.

In all this I want to set the task of creation-care in the context of Christian spirituality. I want you to come away from reading this book (How to Rescue the Earth) with a sense that there is no way that you can be faithful to scripture and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit without becoming involved in the efforts to rescue the environment. I want to make it clear that to evidence the "fruit of the spirit" (Gal.5:22-23), you must be a person who empathises with the suffering of all of God's creation and who makes praying for the deliverance of creation from its bondage to evil (Romans 8:21) a part of your devotional life. I hope you will be motivated to enter into kinship with nature and through this kinship, to worship God in new ways.

**Tony Campolo** Extract from his book: How To Rescue The Earth Without Worshipping Nature.

Eating the scorched bodies of animals.....  
becomes impossible the moment it becomes  
conscious instead of thoughtlessly habitual.

*George Bernard Shaw*



Let no one regard as light the burden of his responsibility. While so much ill-treatment of animals goes on, while the moans of thirsty animals in railway trucks sound unheard, while so much brutality prevails in our slaughterhouses... we all bear guilt. Everything that lives has value as a living thing, as one of the manifestations of the mystery that is life.

*Albert Schweitzer*

**Should anyone be condemned for eating meat?**

No. Consumers do not purchase their neatly wrapped cellophane packages of meat at the grocery with a cold, calloused heart against animals. Nor do they sit down to a meal of steak or chicken with a murderous attitude. Most people are very affectionate toward animals and grieve over their death. However, relatively few are aware of the cruelty and suffering that factory-farmed animals have to endure. If consumers personally had to raise animals with the torturous methods of intensive animal farming and then personally slaughter the animals they ate, very few would continue to eat meat. They would recognise that abusive treatment of animals is morally wrong and would have no part in it. Yet unwittingly they are abetting one of the most hideous industries humanity has ever devised.

*Extract from "Is GOD a Vegetarian"*

*By Richard Alan Young*

*Professor of New Testament studies at Temple Baptist Seminary*

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