



Christians
and
animal rights

The Witness

Volume 76 • Number 10 • October 1993

Youth in crisis

THE BRIEF ARTICLE by Thurid Pörksen [7/93] brought back memories. The "Grundtvig" he referred to became a bishop and, in 1955, we visited Copenhagen and saw the church named after him. In his time, both the spirit as well as the economics of Denmark were at a low ebb. He started the Folk School movement of adult education which gave both elemental education of reading and writing but also fundamentals in better farming which helped to improve their economy.

More important, the school instilled a new self-respect in the Danish people. They became proud of their nation. But it was not a nationalism that made them feel superior to other people and nations. In a day of ethnic and national rivalries, we could well emulate that model.

Jim Bristah
Swords into Plowshares Gallery
Detroit MI

EVERY ISSUE OF *THE WITNESS* challenges and enlightens, but the June and the July/August issues have especially spoken to me this summer. You are sending out brave and increasingly vital messages about the terrible brokenness of our world — often heartbreaking to read but *not* numbing. You nourish hope and encourage initiative.

Margaret Sheets
Philadelphia, PA

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR GOOD WORK. I found Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's editorial, "Transforming despair," particularly moving, especially since my partner was recently

interim pastor in Pontiac. I got to know the woes of Detroit and points north a little better while I was commuting there, and am somewhat chagrined that I'm glad

to be back in Ohio and away from the social turmoil.

Robert E. Bennett
Gambier, OH

Israel/Palestine

THE ARTICLE "Peace in Israel/Palestine?" by Craig R. Smith [7/93] depicted an important human rights effort of the Rabbis for Human Rights. Unfortunately, the article vividly described the alleged atrocities of HAMAS so as to imply that Arab/Palestinian acts of violence are more inhuman and degrading to its perpetrators and victims than the dehumanization imposed by the State (of Israel) on its indigenous non-Jewish residents.

The Rabbis for Human Rights, and persons committed to human rights internationally, must challenge the facade of the "democracy" of Israel. Clearly it is a democracy exclusively for persons of Jewish origin.

Palestinians state that HAMAS was inspired and financed by Israel to split loyalties from the Palestinian Liberation Organization moderate leadership.

HAMAS resembles the State of Israel as it promotes a religious State as an organizing strategy. The exclusivity of a "religious commitment" organizing strategy, whether it be Jewish, Islamic or Christian, is a reaction to the fear of diversity.

Human rights efforts, whether in Israel or the U.S., have the awesome task of identifying State-imposed social, economic and judicial inequities that create second-class citizenship status for segments of its population. Clearly, "Eyes gouged out and gonads cut and stuffed in their mouths" is learned violence in reaction to massive, long-term and inhuman conditions.

Nancy Adadow Gray
Arab Community Center for
Economic and Social Services
Dearborn, MI

A question of tone?

I LOVE *THE WITNESS* MAGAZINE; I really do. I am not an Episcopalian, I am not a "churched" Christian ... I am not even a person who can pray without blushing over my ignorance in matters of divine etiquette.

But I love *The Witness* because it is thought-provoking, stimulating, informative and well-balanced in its perspectives. It has both "cerebral" and "gut" appeal; it extends a general

aura of kindness and compassion to all manner of cultures on this globe. I do not agree with many of the viewpoints expressed in its articles, but I always trust "itiness" to endow me with a little spiritual gift of insight I lacked before reading yet another issue.

I love the magazine. What troubles me, however, are its READERS! Sometimes I go through the Letters to the Editor and ponder just who this magnificent magazine is being sent to. Take Barbara O'Neill's letter in the July/August issue, in which she refers to "conservative fundamentalists" as "the greatest threat to the Body of Christ today." Gosh ... Don't you think we could list 10 pages of forces encroaching upon Christ's turf which are more dangerous than literalist Christians? Environmental catastrophe? Rampant materialism? Epidemic egotism? Technological-mechanistic debilitation of human sensitivity? Rising crime, poverty, territorial war, racism, educational decay, terrorism, economic ... well. Ten pages the point does not require.

I remember Mr. Barry's letter, I thought it was pretty damned "raging" myself. But I hardly see how Ms. O'Neill can say his letter suggests the need for the church to engage in more dialogues such as the Trinity conference when she refers to people with a "Trinity" mind-set as being spiritual infants; "dysfunctional" and "dangerously" isolated; a people with a natty little "punitive deity." Those kind of insults would make a house-broken pussycat go for the throat! She even heaps calumny upon the man's future pastorship.

It's a really snotty letter; and I'm afraid it's typical of many liberal Christians' attitudes. Hey, you ever notice this is a very diverse planet? Animal life, plant life, aquatic life ... weather patterns — lots of diversity. You might conclude from living here a few weeks that God has a penchant for spectrum manufacturing. So is there room for conservative fundamentalists here?

Fundamentalists take the Bible on faith, and it's a little difficult for them to engage in sophisticated debates on the subject when "faith" is not rooted in logic. They provide balance for liberal Christians by maintaining the roots of western religious tradition. Progressivism, of any ideology, can easily de-

Letters

volve into dissipation when it flies too far from the source which mothered it. And for Christians, that *is* the Bible.

Being one of those free-floating “unchurched,” I’ve managed to side-step the in-fighting of denominations, and the warring fractionalism of right vs. left. But I haven’t noticed, over the years, that liberal Christians exactly dazzle me with a display of tolerance and courtesy which is superior — at least “within the family” — to conservatives’. One thing about fundamentalists; they’re up-front with their bigotry. If they think you’re off the mark, they’ll tell you: you’re damned. This is called “self-righteousness.” Many a liberal Christian will — like Ms. O’Neill — put on a

saintly smile while dropping poisoned sugar in your drink. This is called “passing the Mickey.”

Snottiness is unattractive. But *sneaky* snottiness is deplorable.

Sometimes I think the “Body of Christ” just up and left when *he* did. A lot of our religious history looks like mighty poor attempts to “salvage” the parts.

Dierdre Luzwick
Cambridge, Wis.

Witness praise

WE THINK YOU ARE DOING a superb job. *The Witness* is capturing even my four skep-

tical sisters. What you did at Pittsburgh was truly wonderful!

Johnny Crocker
W. Kingston, RI

WE APPRECIATE YOUR WIT, WISDOM, stands and creativity in a pretty blasé time (in the church)!

C.T. and R.M. Trelease
Albuquerque, NM

IT’S INSPIRING TO KNOW that *The Witness* is an uncompromising prophetic voice in the Episcopal Church.

William Vincent
Macomb, IL

Episcopal Communicators 1992 Awards

GENERAL EXCELLENCE, FIRST PLACE — 10/92, 11/92, 12/92

Remarkably high quality writing, consistently lively, always a model of clarity. Introductions grab the reader’s interest; conclusions draw the subject to a suitable close. Problems are fully exposed with hope for solutions.

Outstanding graphics! Themes for issues beautifully carried out. Reader response is valued. A remarkable publication!

IN-DEPTH COVERAGE, FIRST PLACE — *Harvesting rural America*, 9/92

Writing is simple, clear, and yet sophisticated. Great photos consistently. Inviting layouts, good use of pull quotes, sidebars, art.

DEVOTIONAL/INSPIRATIONAL, FIRST PLACE — *A War of Angels* by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, 10/92

A challenging blend of theology, spirituality and practice, rooted in Christian faith yet open to other life-giving influences.

NEWS STORY, SECOND PLACE — *The tools of harvest* by Julie A. Wortman, 9/92

Good details, good quotes, good analysis. Excellent art (by Robert McGovern) very powerful.

FEATURE, HONORABLE MENTION — *Beyond the confines of prison and death* by Marianne Arbogast, 12/92

Excellent depiction of a powerful story. Ties together important topics — prison realities, Islam, conversion, forgiveness.

READER RESPONSE, SECOND PLACE — *And on the third day...* 4/92 (Survey on resurrection beliefs.)

Good collection of respondents and an impressive level of honesty in their responses. A very creative idea, well-executed. Risky to undertake, but interesting in its results.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION, SECOND PLACE — *Genesis as resistance* by Bill Wylie-Kellermann, 10/92

Clear scholarly analysis of how Genesis functions to resist violence and authority. Comparison with Babylonian creation story provides insights.

CRITICAL REVIEW, SECOND PLACE — *Gods of Money* (Art & Society) by Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz, 3/92

Simple and clear writing. Very inviting, especially to the non-art reader. Layers of theological teaching add depth.

INTERVIEW, SECOND PLACE — *Abortion rights: a conversation between Carter Heyward and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann*, 6/92

Excellent idea. Strong topic, strong name recognition, excellent dialogue. Appropriate, provocative drawings, excellent use of child’s drawing. A critical contribution to the church’s discussion of a very important and controversial subject. Risky and extremely well-done.

EDITORIAL, FIRST PLACE — *Exchanging birthrights: a nation of Esaus* by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, 10/92

Distinctly mind-stretching. Importance of personal history as enabling critique of nationalism is effectively supported. Argument is wide-ranging and cogent.

COVER DESIGN, SECOND PLACE — *The hunt* by Dierdre Luzwick, 10/92

Powerful political composition.

LAYOUT, SECOND PLACE — *Clergy and sex abuse*, graphic by Betty LaDuke, 12/92

GRAPHIC, SECOND PLACE — *Figure with a halo gagged* by Edward Bisone.

PHOTOGRAPHY, SECOND PLACE — Indian infant at the Celebration of Survival by Ruth Fremson.

HUMOR GRAPHIC, FIRST PLACE — *The Ubiquitous Apocalypse* by Dierdre Luzwick

Subtle, accessible, personal. Good printing quality, good paper.

THE WITNESS

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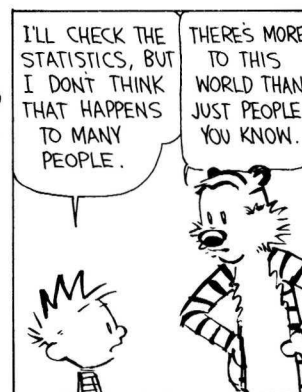
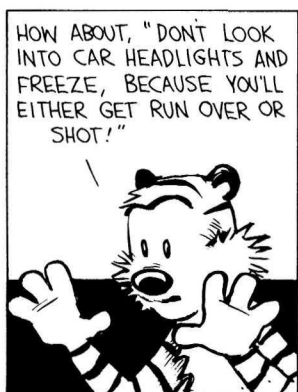
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hobbes

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Do animals count?

by Marianne Arbogast

God made the animals for us.

— from *Discovering God's World: A Religion Readiness Program for Four-Year Olds*, William H. Sadlier, New York, NY (1988)

The animals of this world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for whites or women for men.

— Alice Walker, in an introduction to *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, by Marjorie Spiegel, Mirror Books, New York, NY (1988)

In my Catholic school religion classes I learned that animals do not have immortal souls. But a science teacher insisted that, if we are made in God's image, then animals — like us in so many ways — must somehow reflect that Image also.

Her unorthodox viewpoint delighted me. I had loved and mourned the deaths of several dogs, and one calf named Star at my great-uncle's farm (whose fate I could never fully bear to contemplate). I

couldn't believe that they didn't matter to God.

Still, in neither science nor religion class do I recall any discussion of how we ought to treat someone who might lack a soul — but had eyes, ears, nose, mouth, blood and breath, feelings and desires, even language and intelligence. The question was considered unimportant.

I was forced to confront it years later, because of some mice.

I had never killed an animal before moving to Day House. But the Catholic Worker shelter and soup kitchen are the battlegrounds of an ongoing war with rats and mice, who vie with humans for control of the territory.

Though I didn't enjoy living with them, I detested setting traps, dreaded the sound of them snapping shut, hated releasing limp bodies into the garbage.

In an attempt to be more humane, we obtained several large metal boxes, designed to trap mice alive. In warm weather, we would release six or eight mice outside each day. But when the snow came and temperatures dropped, we thought it would be less cruel to kill them. We resorted to drowning, plunging the boxes into a laundry tub.

One day, I opened a box too soon. The

mice came swimming out, struggling toward the air at the surface as I frantically pushed them back under the water.

The experience remains vivid in my memory, and I can't recall it without an immense sorrow. I felt I had violated something holy, betrayed something at the core of my own being.

I love the story of St. Martin de Porres, who bargained with the mice in his friary to leave the brothers' food alone, and fed them in a barn. I can't say that it has offered much practical guidance for the soup kitchen, but it points me in a direction that feels joyful, rather than dissonant.

I haven't yet worked out a just relationship with the mice, but I know I need to keep trying. I know it's unjust that there should be no place for them.

I also know that the mice affected me so deeply because I saw them.

Carol Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, argues that in renaming animals as "meat" we objectify them and render them invisible. But living animals are invisible to us as well — on the factory farms which confine them in



Assistant editor **Marianne Arbogast** conceived and prepared this issue of *The Witness*.

cramped, indoor stalls and cages; in the laboratories testing our drugs and weapons and hairsprays; in the forests we are destroying and the waters we are poisoning in the maintenance of our deadly lifestyles. We rarely see them, yet we are intimately connected with their lives and deaths.

It's no longer possible to deny human moral responsibility toward the rest of creation, if only for our own sake. But an increasing chorus of voices is challenging the assumption that the earth exists for us alone. Eco-feminists, deep ecologists, animal rights activists and Christian theologians are asking us to re-examine our relationship with our non-human fellow creatures.

This issue of *The Witness* reflects some of the struggles involved in this process.

One is revealed in the very existence of an animal rights movement separate from the larger environmental movement.

Jay McDaniel [co-editor of *Good News for Animals?*, reviewed in this issue] offers a perspective I find helpful. McDaniel writes of the need to attend to the entire "web of life" without neglecting the "nodes in the web," the "individual animal with his or her numinous eyes." What we need, he says, is "an ecological Christianity that respects eyes as well as rainforests."

I think it is a question of eyes — our eyes and the eyes of animals, and, ultimately, the eyes of God. It's a question of whom we see and how we see them.

My science teacher saw animals as closely related to us. Where the concept of "souls" assumed a distinct boundary,

she envisioned a continuum of which humans were a part.

And doesn't the Gospel undermine our unending attempts to distinguish between "us" and "them," higher and lower, who counts and who doesn't? Doesn't it reverse the whole dynamic, scandalizing us with a God who is stranger, hungry and thirsty, naked and sick, imprisoned and executed? Our persistent question, "Who is my neighbor?" is answered over and over by the Spirit of the one who stretched the imagined limits, refusing to set boundaries for compassion.

What is the Spirit saying to us today about our relationship with our animal neighbors? The question is rising in the hearts of a growing number of Christians. We offer this issue of *The Witness* as an invitation to wrestle with it in faith. **tw**

Resisting the peaceable kingdom?

My friends will testify that I don't have much credibility in the area of animal rights. I am only recently combatting my overt hostility to house pets. I have children and I know some people have an aversion to sticky hands and runny noses, so I try to be humble.

But not too long ago, I was appalled by simultaneous articles about pet obesity in the U.S. and world hunger among humans. I threatened to write a book called *America's Hidden Food Resource: 89 Ways to Prepare Your Pet for Dinner*.

Wild animals, on the other hand, take my breath away. For Celts and American Indians learning to think as a swimmer, four-legged or winged one was a critical part of education.

But where pets are involved, I struggle. I often suspect that pets are subordinated for the therapeutic benefit of owners.

At the same time, I've noticed that pet owners are usually markedly better

than I am at dealing with wild creatures that can creep into human dwellings — like bats, mice and snakes. Their cross-cultural experiences with cats and dogs *do* seem to give them a language for the wild ones that make my heart soar (when they are sufficiently far away from me).

I have two other rebellious thoughts.

One is that I like the natural order and am not convinced that it is not part of the will of God, lion and lamb references notwithstanding. Life emerging from the decay of other lives is so constant a theme throughout creation that I can't believe God is not integral in the cycle, just as, while death may be a consequence of the fall, God is now deeply involved in our experience of life through death. My heart rises to see eagles and falcons partly *because* they are birds of prey.

Lastly, as my family camped throughout Michigan this summer, we enjoyed learning the indigenous animals, rivers, coast lines and virgin timber stands. I was struck by the numbers of people who

have established these relationships before us. Most of them were not back-to-the-land types. In fact, I've found their politics suspect in times past. They were the drivers of Winnebagos and families living out of tents replete with lawn furniture.

But, if asked, they could tell us far more than we knew about the migration of birds and the tracks and habitat of bears. Most of them are fisherpersons and hunters. Not drunken men who hunt gratuitously, but people who want to know the interdependence of creatures in wild habitat rather than grocery store meat aisles.

I believe, increasingly, that anthropocentrism is a sin which may cost us life on the planet. I know that animals have rights and may even hold secrets we need for the healing of ourselves and the earth.

But I'm not convinced that it is unfaithful for a bear to eat me or me to eat it, particularly if I am closer (not more removed) from the killing.

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Sympathy

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals —
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting —
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore —
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to heaven he flings —
I know why the caged bird sings!

Paul Laurence Dunbar was the son of two runaway slaves.



Poetry

[This is for my brother Robbie whose respect for animals has taught me a lot about them and God and also something about men who don't conform entirely to what the world expects of them.]

Sometime last year a bear made its way over the bridge that connects the mainland to the island where I sometimes spend time. Word went out and excitement spread among the men and boys. Within three hours, they say, that bear was hanging dead in a public place. Each teller of the story spoke with a mixture of sadness and anger, but no one was in the least surprised. "That's just the way it is," one woman sighed. "If it's different, men kill it."

The problem as I see it is not simply the gratuitous killing of one more earthcreature, though that is a moral problem that *should* raise ethical questions for us. The larger picture, with far-ranging implications, is that this event images a ritual of boys being boys or, worse of boys becoming men and of men simply being themselves in a culture that teaches and preaches domination and conquest as a way of life for "real [white] men."

Be clear that men of color and women are not exempt from responsibility in perpetuating this culture of death, but our violent acts tend often to be twisted, self-defeating efforts to get along, even survive, in hetero/sexist racist pa-

triarchy. This doesn't make us more innocent than our white brothers or morally superior to them. It does mean that we're less likely than white men to survive the effects of our own violence, much less thrive in a society in which men of color

Treblinka, Soweto and Sarajevo; about earthcreatures destroyed because they were just Indians, Jews, Blacks or Muslims. I wonder if we trivialize the fate of non-human animals *not* because we don't think their lives are important but because we *know* it's all connected — the bear and Bosnia — and we are simply overwhelmed.

Experiencing the world

Feminist liberation theologians understand that we can speak truthfully about God only insofar as we are speaking truthfully about how we experience the world. It's not that God *is* the world, but rather that we *know* God through our embodied, daily experiences in and of the world we share. Most Christians, however, have been weaned on the contrary assumption that we are closest to the Creator when we are farthest away from creation.

Lutheran pastor and theologian H. Paul Santmire names this latter assumption the "motif of ascent" and acknowledges that it signals the most common Christian response to the creation: the effort to rise above it through prayer, denial, and, in effect, through neglect and indifference. Santmire suggests that there is another, less evident, but morally forceful, motif in Christian history — an "ecological" theme — that meets us not only through Francis of Assisi but also in the work of Augustine of Hippo, and "in the dynamics of Hebraic faith, the proclamation of Jesus, and the theology of Paul and

Pauline authors of Colossians and Ephesians," in which the *whole* creation, not just its human component, is celebrated as God's own.

But Santmire does not name, as morally problematic, the most ecologically



Lord of the Least

© Hue Bumgarner-Kirby

The bear and Bosnia

by Carter Heyward

and women and children of all colors are historically and habitually slaughtered — like the bear — when we have dared to cross into white men's turf.

This dreadful story is about a bear, yes, and it is also about Wounded Knee,

Carter Heyward is Howard Chandler Robbins Professor of Theology at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and a contributing editor of *The Witness*. Artist **Hue Bumgarner-Kirby** lives in Albuquerque, N.M. Artist **Anne Cox** lives in Berkeley, Mich.

devastating motif in Christianity and Judaism — the domination motif.

Domination is the problem that feminist liberation theologians and ethicists such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, Beverly Harrison and Sallie McFague cite as foundational to the problems the church has always had with non-human “nature” as well as with our own embodied (especially female) human selves — the bear and Bosnia. It is entangled among the roots of Christianity’s positioning of its god above the world, its Christ isolated as a male savior above and in opposition to history, its church above non-Christian people, its men above women and children, and its people above non-human creatures.

It is a matter of how we experience the world: Who owns whom? Who is entitled — spiritually authorized and called by God — to control whom? Feminist liberation theologians suggest that women’s lives bear witness to the answers to these questions.

Depending upon the circumstances of our lives, we may in our own times and places experience the world as full of wonder and joy but, if we are honest with ourselves in relation to our sister and brother earthcreatures, human and other, we also experience the world as shattered by violence — violence aimed at everyone, but justified as right or appropriate when women, children and non-human earthcreatures are the victims. And this experience of violence, and of the despair it calls forth, evokes women’s prayer and generates women’s spirituality.

This is why feminist and other liberation theologians insist that, if we are to speak of God at all, we must be raising questions about economic exploitation of all creatures in late-monopoly capitalism as it advances globally; and about the interactive design of white racism, male gender oppression, compulsory heterosexuality and Christianity’s claim, im-

plicit or explicit, to possess spiritually the final or supreme religious truth.

Feminist liberation theology must insist that we dig vigorously and patiently for roots that connect what happened to the bear and what happens constantly to human and non-human earthcreatures in a world in which the dominant patriarchal religions, especially Christianity, have taught us to control or destroy what is sensual, embodied, down-to-earth, womanly and childlike along with those creaturely impulses (like sexual desire) that turn us away from “spiritual” things.

The Anglican Church is not among the worst offenders among Christianity’s traditions in the failure to develop an adequate theology of creation. Anglicanism’s incarnational emphasis on Christ’s embodied presence in the world suggests theologically that, as a church, not only as individuals, we could cultivate a genuine respect for the earth and its varied creatures, both human and non-human. Still, we have failed over the years to act unambiguously on behalf of either social or ecological justice.

Turning to the animals

For all of our history as “civilized man” and, certainly, as “Christian soldiers,” we have turned to a god whom we believe is Lord and Father of all. From time to time, folks have come along with other images of the Sacred and at times we have tolerated them — Francis of Assisi comes to mind, and other prophets, poets, political revolutionaries and peacemakers, as long as their challenges to the patriarchal foundations of Christi-

anity have not threatened actually to transform it. But, with other feminist liberation theologians on every continent of our planet home today, I believe that Christianity must be transformed, its patriarchal assumptions uprooted and its

symbolic universe reimagined if we are to bear life and hope in and for the world rather than continue to help hold in place the cultures of death and despair we have helped create.

But where, and how, in the world do we even begin such spiritual work? Maybe, in the tradition of religious con-

version — of “turning around” — we should turn in a new direction. Maybe we should turn to the animals rather than the heavens, though not to the animals of our idealized imaginations, not to the “peaceable kingdom,” not to our fantasized notions of beasts who do no harm to one another “except for food,” but rather to the real world of animals — to the bear — if we really hope to meet and be met by our salvation. What might we learn, we Christians, from the animals?

Three lessons, for starters. Something about the sacredness of otherness that we as Christians have not known. Something about the “rights” of anyone, human or non-human, that we as western Christians have not understood very well. And something about the radicality and extent of incarnation that we as humans have not been encouraged, through patriarchal religion, to realize.

Sacred other

Much of our Christian heritage has been steeped in an assumption that God is “other” than us: that is, that we are not God. Although through the living pres-

I wonder if we trivialize the fate of non-human animals not because we don't think their lives are important but because we know it's all connected — the bear and Bosnia — and we are simply overwhelmed.

ence of Jesus we may experience the Sacred as with us — Spirit guide, Higher Power, Liberator, Friend — God is essentially “other” than human and very definitely “other” than bear, lizard or snail.

The term used by Christian theologians for this “otherness” has been “transcendence”: God may be with us, but God is also “somewhere else.” God may be like us, but God is also unlike us.

Most, if not all, Christians over the two millennia of the church have assumed, moreover, that God is more “like” us, even in His [sic] otherness, than “like” a whale, much less like a serpent. Perhaps even Jesus, our brother from Nazareth, was inclined to experience his human friends as more “important” to God than sparrows. But like us, we might faithfully assume that Jesus had much to learn about the world of God.

We as Christians, and here I speak especially of we who are white western Christians with our human-centered — anthropocentric and, therefore, anthropomorphic — faith, have not learned to see images of God in “other” members of creation, the slugs and sharks we try to avoid as well as the dogs and dolphins whose company we seek. Having learned that we humans are the only creatures with “soul,” “conscience,” or “morals,” we have disregarded the actual basis of all morality, which is the making of right-relation with the whole created world in all of its otherness and differences from us.

Turning to the animals, we are called to reckon with the blasphemy of the deer hunt for sport and to consider seriously what it means for us to eat cows and

chickens and fish raised in a spirit of indifference to their suffering in order to maximize our profit and pleasure. I do not believe, ethically, that we should be eating animals — and I have not yet given

up this practice entirely. I think we should be considering this matter collectively, as church communities, wrestling with it as a serious moral question and not be torn as individuals between our pangs of conscience and our

senses that it really doesn’t make much difference, to the animals or anyone else, what we do individually.

At the very least, every Christian man, woman and child, if we raise or eat meat, should be doing so with a great deal of humility and gratitude to the animals themselves and, through them, to the One who gives herself or himself so that we may live: “Take, eat. Is this not my body?”

“Rights” and right-relation

We in the West have inherited an understanding of “rights” as essentially an absolute guarantee of privileges granted to particular (white) men (sometimes men of color and women; seldom to children; almost never to non-human animals). The problem with most discussions of “human rights” (civil rights, women’s rights, gay/lesbian rights, animal rights, etc.) is that we seem to suppose that if we merely add on another group’s “rights” to those already assumed by many men, we will be closer to a just society. We seldom realize

A justice-centered theory of rights for humans and non-humans in not simply about keeping either chickens or people in cleaner slaughterhouses and prisons.

[God] meets us in the sensuality of our embodied selves and as “other,” stranger, alien. He howls in the coyote’s call as surely as she chants the call to worship.

how truncated from any real, lasting possibilities for justice our efforts for “rights” are because most westerners do not experience or understand justice-making to be the on-going movement to create right, mutually empowering, relation. We tend rather to imagine that “justice” is about everybody having access to the same possibilities for profit and pleasure and that we should have a “right” to this access.

In a limited way this is, of course, true. (One of my favorite slogans from earlier in the women’s movement is: “Women seek the right to be as mediocre on the job as men have been.”) In an unjust world, movements for “rights” are necessary for even minimal forms of justice to be established — integration, fair housing and women’s ordination come to mind.

It is important, for the sake of compassion and decency, that we learn to treat our animal companions on the earth with much greater kindness and respect than we, collectively, have thought much about. “Animal rights” are ethically an important issue and spiritually and politically an important struggle. But, turning to the animals, we may be led to see that a justice-centered theory of rights for humans and non-humans is not simply

about keeping either chickens or people in cleaner slaughterhouses and prisons. It must also be about tearing down the material, ideological and spiritual barriers that prevent us from realizing

and creating the conditions that will enable us to live in the Holy Spirit of genuine mutuality. I am referring to social, religious, economic and other institutions and structures that promote domination

and control as the basis of our life together; systems and ways of organizing our lives that keep us from realizing deep in our bodyselves that we frogs, elephants and humans are an eco-system of blood, tears, hunger, growth, disease and possibility; and that whether we like each other, or whether we see any “reason” for each other (I, for instance, can’t find a good reason for mosquitoes!), we need each other.

We need each other not only because we are members of the same eco-system, but also because we are different. Justice, as mutually empowering relation, is possible because we are different. It requires us to respect and honor one another in our differences.

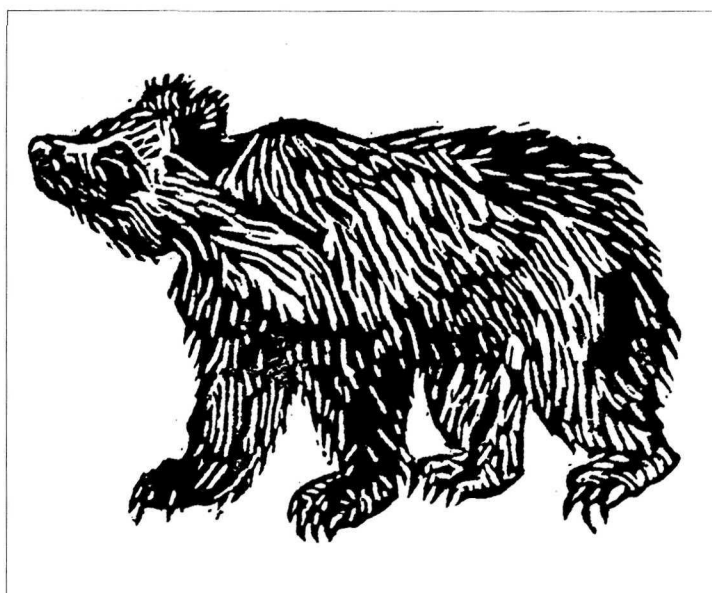
Justice demands that we see, in the bear, not an image of ourselves (what Teilhard de Chardin and many other Christians who attempt to take creation seriously tend to assume), but rather an image of a bear; and that we welcome the bear not as we might greet a human sister or brother, but rather as we should greet a sister or brother bear. That we perhaps cannot image what this means, much less how to do it, except with guns, is not surprising given the scarcity of ethical resources we, as Christians, bring to the possibility of celebrating mutuality with either human or non-human creatures.

We Christians need practice! We need to be helping each other learn how we really might turn to the animals — including the humans most vulnerable to the ravages of violence — in order to learn what we need to learn from those who are different from us, those most alien. Just as we white Christians need to be attentively listening to pigs, porcupines, mudfats and rivers. The church

has a vocation — theologically and ethically, pastorally and liturgically — to help us learn how to envision, create and live together in right-relation on this planet.

“May the spirits be with us”

Early in 1991, Korean feminist theologian Chung Hyun Kyung, a Christian, spoke with passion and faith to the World Council of Churches meeting in Canberra, Australia. In her talk, Chung called forth the spirits of her people and ancestors, thereby embodying an ancient Korean



Anne Cox

wisdom, a shamanistic tradition that infuses her work. A storm of controversy ensued, with Orthodox bishops and others protesting this display of “syncretism” as anti-Christian. They asked how a serious Christian could call forth “spirits.” Did she not know that there is only one true Spirit, only one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Yes, feminist liberation theologies are leading us into the world of spirits and animals — and, through them, very close to the Holy One whom we have met in the struggles for justice that call us forth.

Turning to the eagle, we see more clearly that God is indeed Many. The sacred Spirit that soars through us as the movement for justice and compassion meets us in many, infinitely many, moments in this movement through all time and eternity. She meets us in the sensuality of our embodied selves and as “other,” stranger, alien. He howls in the coyote’s call as surely as she chants the call to worship. She invites us to re-image life, whispering to us that life is more — and stranger — than it seems. God knows that life is more than a biological process that begins

with a seed and a fertile womb. Our life, our very soul — as earthcreatures together and individually — is a spirited process marked as much by disruption as by continuity, by brokenness and pain as by healing and happiness. Our life is a social and biological, political and emotional, historical and economic movement of energy and meaning and possibility that involves us all.

And this life in the world of God is not centered around human beings any more than the cosmos is centered around the earth. The root of our salvation, call it Christ, God, love or justice does not have a single face. It has countless different human faces, arms and amputations — and also the faces and bodies of lambs, falcons and scorpions. Holy spirits? For sure! Many holy spirits to be respected and invoked and marvelled at! We Christians are being called to think again about monotheism, about what it actually may mean in and for our lives and for the life of the One who is Many. We dare not be smug about the turning, the conversion, required of us. Maybe we need to bow ourselves down before the bear and ask for forgiveness and help.

FAY

The first Western law forbidding cruelty to domestic animals was authored by a nonconformist Anglican clergyman who emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Asked to compile a legal code for the colony, Nathaniel Ward included in it "Liberty 92, Cruelty to animals forbidden." The Puritans adopted it in 1641.

But the modern "anti-cruelty" movement can be traced to the emerging urban middle class of 18th- and early 19th-century England. Removed for the first time in history from the necessity of living close to domestic animals, and occupied with human-rights issues such as slavery and women's suffrage, the English middle class was the ideal place for concerns about the rights of animals to take root. Among the early advocates of humane treatment for animals was the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, who adopted a vegetarian diet in anticipation of the prophet Isaiah's "peaceable kingdom." In 1824, under the leadership of Anglican priest Arthur Broome, a group which included William Wilberforce formed the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the prefix "Royal" was bequeathed by Queen Victoria in 1840). It was to be a society "based on Christian principles," and one of its goals was the sponsoring of "sermons of humane education" in London's churches.

The SPCA idea migrated to the United States following the Civil War. It spread from New York to other urban centers, where SPCAs opened shelters for stray dogs, cats, and other injured or abandoned animals. The American Humane Association, founded in 1877, also opened shelters for animals and lobbied for child-protection services as well.

Treatment of companion animals,

Jan Nunley is newscaster for National Public Radio's environmental program "Living on Earth" and a frequent contributor to *The Witness*.



"Meat Out" demonstration in Rockville, Md.

courtesy PETA

Animal rights: militancy and ambiguities

by Jan Nunley

along with issues of vivisection and wildlife conservation, formed the core concerns of animal welfare organizations until the end of World War II. But the 1950s brought a new consciousness to the humane movement. A new generation of activists began demanding changes in areas that hadn't been addressed for years — like the treatment of farm animals and the use of animals for exhibition and entertainment.

The first sign of the new militancy was the birth of the Humane Society of the United States, which in 1954 split off from the American Humane Association during a power struggle over the direction of the older group. The AHA retained its emphasis on shelters; the HSUS, which does not maintain shelters, concentrates on animal advocacy through lobbying and public education.

It was not until the 1970s that groups emerged seeking not only the welfare, but the rights and even the liberation of animals from human control. Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham, in 1789, first proposed a moral calculus for non-human creatures — "The question," wrote Bentham, "is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?" Bentham's philosophical gauntlet wasn't picked up until 1976, with Australian philosopher Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation*. Singer maintains that "where animals and humans have similar interests ... those interests are to be counted equally, with no automatic discount just because one of the beings is not human." Likewise, American philosopher Tom Regan argues for the abolition of all animal experimentation, livestock agriculture, commercial and sport hunting and

trapping. Animals, like humans, have inherent value because they are “the experiencing subjects of a life,” says Regan; therefore they also have rights, like humans. What distinguishes humans from non-humans is that we are made in God’s moral image, with a responsibility to care for the non-human creation just as God originally intended — which, to Regan, means veganism, pure and simple: no meat, milk, cheese, fish or eggs to eat; no fur, leather, wool, down or silk to wear.

One of the first organizations to engage in and encourage confrontation on behalf of animal rights was television personality Cleveland Armory’s Fund for Animals, Inc. (1967). The Fund maintains several sanctuaries for animals it has rescued — burros, goats, and horses — until they can be adopted out. But perhaps its most daring move was to support the formation of still another animal rescue group: Captain Paul Watson’s Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Armory provided the funding for Watson’s first *Sea Shepherd*, which rammed a pirate whaler (ironically named the *Sierra*) off the coast of Portugal in 1978.

At about the same time, Henry Spira, a New York activist inspired by Singer’s book, began documenting the sufferings of lab animals during experiments such as the Draize test (which measures how substances affect skin and membranes) and the LD50, or “lethal dose, 50 percent” test (which determines the dosage at which half the test animals die in a given period). Spira’s work indirectly led to the most controversial group of all: the Animal Liberation Front (1979), which is the only domestic animal-rights group on the FBI’s list of terrorist organizations. ALF has claimed responsibility for “liberating” numerous

lab animals, and for some costly acts of sabotage against university research laboratories.

Within a year of ALF’s first raid, Alex Pacheco and Ingrid Newkirk formed People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (1980), the most up-front and in-your-face of the above-ground animal liberation groups. Pacheco, a *Sea Shepherd* veteran, exposed the abuse of monkeys at a Silver Spring, Maryland research facility, solidly establishing the group’s activist reputation. PETA is best known for its bluntly titled boycott campaigns, such as “Fur is Dead” and “Meat Stinks,” and its dramatic photographs of animals undergoing laboratory testing for cosmetics or the rigors of factory farming. The group has even spawned its own nemesis: Putting People First, a two-year-old Wise Use-affiliated group whose largest donors are PETA’s targets — hunters, trappers, furriers, circuses and rodeos, and carriage-horse companies. Both PETA and In Defense of Animals (1983)

“The question,” wrote Bentham, “is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but Can they suffer?”

Environmentalists frequently balk at including animal-rights groups in the Green camp. Each group uses a different set of lenses when it views the natural world. Where environmentalists envision an interconnected system, a community of plants, animals, soil, and water, animal-rights advocates focus on individual

Where environmentalists envision an interconnected system, a community of plants, animals, soil, and water, animal-rights advocates focus on individual animals in pain.

animals in pain. To gain support for regulation or a ban, environmentalists might back rigorously monitored animal testing to assess the harmful effects of a pesticide or herbicide on endangered wildlife. But the rights of a single research animal,

down to the lowliest lab rat, loom larger for an animal-rights advocate. An environmentalist would join a PETA anti-fur campaign, might even forego leather in protest of toxic-chemical dumping by a tannery, but abandoning cold-weather

wools and silks for synthetics made from petrochemicals — whose recovery and manufacture put wildlife habitat ranging from ocean to tundra at risk — doesn’t seem as clear-cut a choice as it does for an animal-rights supporter.

Even when the two sides cooperate, the peace can be uneasy. The plight of an African elephant and black rhino have united a wide range of nature groups to lobby for bans on exotic-animal products. But the tensions are never far from the surface. In Hawaii, the Nature Conservancy is currently going head-to-head with PETA over the treatment of wild pigs on the island of Molokai. The pigs were originally introduced to the island by humans; lacking any natural enemies, they’re overrunning and endangering the island’s native flora and fauna. Nature Conservancy officials have been snaring the pigs in an attempt to save indigenous species, but PETA says snaring is inhumane and must be stopped.

As with many environmental groups, animal-rights advocates frequently blame Western monotheism for the widespread belief that creation exists solely as a “resource” for human rapaciousness. Fortu-

nately, the movement does have some theologians on the front lines. Marc Wessels is a UCC minister who's executive director of the ecumenical International Network for Religion and Animals.

"We're trying to educate the religious community about the plight and suffering of non-human animals," says Wessels, "and to ask them to consider their religious traditions and try to do something to improve their lot."

The group organizes the yearly World Week of Prayer for Animals, holds

nonviolence workshops for animal-rights protestors, publishes a journal and monographs, and lobbies denominations for animal-rights resolutions. In addition, Wessels lectures at seminaries, hosts a weekly radio program, "and when I'm not doing that I'm protesting where I need to be" — whether it's against hunting on church property or Episcopal priests blessing fox hunts.

Wessels embraced animal rights while serving parishes in Australia, after encountering Peter Singer. But he doesn't call himself an activist, just a Christian

who's trying to develop a "Christ-centered perspective" on compassion for animals. He's a vegan, out of concern for "who is this sitting on my plate, and why is that so, and what does that mean in terms of my relationship not only to that animal but to our fellow humans." He admits there are some humbling ambiguities in the animal-rights position: "We have to struggle with our place in the whole scheme of things. I think it's a matter of continually redefining ourselves as we understand more about the creation." **TW**

The star thrower

Loren Eiseley reaches a revelatory breakthrough in understanding the as yet untapped possibilities for compassion within our species. Walking on a beach in early morning after a rain, he saw "a gigantic rainbow of incredible perfection ... Somewhere toward its foot I discerned a human figure standing, as it seemed to me, within the rainbow, gazing fixedly at something in the sand. Eventually, he stooped and flung the object beyond the breaking surf." He found that the man was picking up still-living starfish, which had been washed ashore by the sea and could not get back, slowly choking in the sand. The man says simply, "The stars throw well. One can help them." Initially, Eiseley reacted as a scientist and observer, and told himself the fellow was mad. He walked away. But he had seen that rainbow attempting to attach itself to earth. He realized that he did love the world.

"I love its small ones, the things beaten in the strangling surf, the bird, singing, which flies and falls and is not seen again ... I love the lost ones, the failures of the world.' It was like the renunciation of my scientific heritage."

He felt that he had come to "one of the last great rifts in nature. But no, it was not a rift but a joining: the expression of love projected beyond the species boundary by a creature born of Darwinian struggle ... I had seen the star thrower cross that rift and, in so doing, he had reasserted the human right to define his own frontier. He had moved to the utmost edge of natural being, if not across its boundaries. It was as though at some point the supernatural had touched hesitantly, for an instant, upon the natural."

So Eiseley returned and began himself to pick up a star and spin it out to sea.

"It was like a sowing — the sowing of life on an infinitely gigantic scale ... The task was not to be assumed lightly, for it was men as well as starfish that we sought to save. I picked up a star whose tube feet ventured timidly among my fingers while, like a true star, it cried soundlessly for life. I saw it with an unaccustomed clarity and cast far out. With it, I flung myself as forfeit, for the first time, into some unknown dimension of existence. From Darwin's tangled bank of unceasing struggle, selfishness, and death, had arisen, incomprehensibly, the thrower who loved not man (only) but life. It was the subtle cleft in nature before which biological thinking had faltered. We had

reached the last shore of an invisible island — yet, strangely, also a shore that the primitives had always known. They had sensed intuitively that man cannot exist spiritually without life, his brother, even if he slays ... We had lost our way ... but we had kept, some of us, the memory of the perfect circle of compassion from life to death and back again to life — the completion of the rainbow of existence."

The 20th-century scientist intuitively understood the full meaning of the rainbow, that ancient symbol binding the Creator to the creation. The human he saw within the rainbow is the key. Our capacity to change ourselves, to redefine our humanity and give "wings to the spirit," as Eiseley put it, is what Christian faith is about.

In Christ, the creative Word made flesh, we know the direction in which we are to grow into that image of God which is "the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Only a human nature so restored will be able to help restore and heal the earth.

— Olive J. Brose

[Excerpts from "The Ghost Continent" in *The Unexpected Universe*, copyright 1969 by Loren Eiseley, reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace & Company.]

Reclaiming a positive tradition: interview with Andrew Linzey

by Marianne Arbogast

Andrew Linzey, an Anglican priest and member of the Theology Faculty in the University of Oxford, has been in the forefront of theological reflection on animal rights for many years. He has written or edited 13 books on theology and ethics, including Animal Rights: A Christian Assessment (1976) and Christianity and the Rights of Animals (1986). Linzey is currently the IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) Senior Research Fellow in Theology and Animal Rights of Mansfield College, Oxford. This year, he gave the first lectures on the theology of animal rights in the history of the University of Oxford.

Q.: I think while most Christians would oppose what they would consider unnecessary cruelty to animals, many would share an assumption that animals exist for human use. From a theological standpoint, what's wrong with this perspective?

A.: In the first place, it has only a very dubious claim to be a scriptural point of view. If you look, for example, at the second chapter of Genesis, you'll find that God makes a beautiful garden, and then humans are created almost as an afterthought, to serve the garden and to till it. The truest rendering theologically is not that the world is made for us, but rather that we are made for the world.

In Genesis 1, verse 27, humans are

made in the image of God, then they are given dominion in verse 28, then in verse 29 they're given a vegetarian diet. I find it astonishing that so much exegesis of



Andrew Linzey

courtesy Oxford Times

Genesis has concentrated on the word "dominion," to the exclusion of the next verse. Dominion cannot and does not mean despotism. We are even precluded from killing for food.

Q.: So you would see vegetarianism as a moral imperative?

A.: I think living without killing is a Christian imperative.

Q.: How do you answer the argument

that nature is inherently violent and that the "food chain" is built into the natural order? Many people would say it's romanticism or sentimentality to wish it were otherwise.

A.: Animal rightists have not created the vision of the lion lying down with the lamb. And animal rightists have not created the idea that God so loves the world that She shares Her very being with creation, to reconcile all things to Herself.

These visionary strands are very deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Perhaps I should also say that I am deeply worried by many Christian ecologists who want to baptize the laws of nature as though they were the given laws of God. Because of our desecration of the world, many people have now swung to the view that we must somehow sacralize nature. That will only issue in a new barbarism, not just towards animals, but towards human beings, too. I believe the mature Christian view is that the cosmos—including the laws of nature, as we call them—is to be transformed and redeemed.

To live "unnaturally" is the very heart of the Gospel. Jesus does not, when he meets sick people, say, "Oh, jolly good, here is the system of disease and decay working efficiently in the world, one life making its way at the expense of another as God intended." He works against nature, healing the sick, raising the dead, preventing even the winds from blowing. What we see in Jesus is a glimpse of how the world is to be transformed into the Peaceable Kingdom. I believe in Jesus our Liberator—including liberation from what we now think to be elementary biology.

Q.: If the suffering of animals—even that which comes from animals preying upon one another—is not God's will,

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would you explain it in terms of the Fall?

A.: It seems to me one cannot understand properly the Christian faith without understanding its eschatological frame of reference. The Fall means for me that God the Lover, the Creator, the Preserver, the Sustainer is as yet still working in every part and particle of creation to bring it to that fullness that She intends for it.

If you ask me how it is that creation is lost, fallen, estranged from its Creator, I have no simple answer. I think, however, there may be something in the notion that human beings are somehow central to the disintegration of creation.

Reflect for a moment on what we do to animals in, for example, sporting events — fox hunting, bear baiting, cock throwing, stag hunting, and many others. What we do is to bring together whatever natural antipathy there may be between one species and another, and heighten it to its most quintessential point.

I'm not denying that there is violence and aggression in the natural order. But many human activities exacerbate and intensify it.

Q.: I think it would be possible for someone to deplore those kinds of activities, and still say that some killing is an integral part of the natural balance. I wonder if there is a danger in critiquing the natural world — even from a Gospel standpoint — rather than trying to live in harmony with nature as it is?

A.: But we are very selective about what we take to be the so-called harmonies in nature. There is also hierarchy, there is male dominance, there are power relations in nature. Now would you accept that those are acceptable relationships that we should emulate?

Q.: Not at all. But we can imagine the world without sexism or without war. And I think we can't imagine a world in

which a lion would eat hay, or in which there would be no killing of animals by other animals.

A.: Well, you are right to use the word "imagination," because I believe moral imagination is at the very heart of the quest for justice for animals. It's also at the heart of the quest for justice between human beings. There was a time when we couldn't imagine that society could be economically possible without the slave trade. There was a time — indeed still is for some people — when we couldn't imagine that black people and white people could live together harmoniously. It was once thought — and the Christian tradition helped sanction this — that the relationship between men and women was essentially unequal. It was thought there was something given in nature, that differences between race or gender were such that relationships of equality and harmony were not possible.

Q.: In your essay in the book, Good News for Animals, you make the statement that "some recent commentators have seen a potentially sinister relationship between far right philosophy and some forms of green political theory."

A.: If one takes the natural world as it is now as a source of moral illumination, then it is difficult to see how one could support the great moral movements of the last hundred years — emancipation, justice and equality. Because nature as we understand it appears to make very little room for individual rights.

There is one way of reading Darwin in which it can be seen to be a legitimization of "might is right." It seems to me that moral insight begins at the point at which we say, "I'm acting contrary to the order of the world as it now appears to me."

Q.: Do you find yourself often in disagreement with others who are working in similar areas, particularly in the environmental movement? I have a sense that



St. Jerome heals a lion

there is some conflict between the animal-rights and environmental movements.

A.: Yes, because a number of ecologists have taken two key ideas into their systems. The first is that animals are resources to be harvested, not individuals with individual rights. And the second is the idea that human beings have the right to manage the earth. I look on the prospect of ever-increasing human management, control, manipulation and dominance of the earth with horror. I think the invisible blueprint is that we humans ought to design the world to our own benefit. That, I think, is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of creation.



from the 15th-century Book of Hours of Jean, Duke of Berry

Ecology without theology can lead to a new kind of egoistic humanism. I'm not a humanist — I don't think humans are the measure of all things.

Q.: Yet I think there are people who feel that they are serving the cause of justice by intervening in nature in ways that might reduce suffering.

A.: I'm not for ecological quietism in the sense that human beings should never seek to do anything that might improve the natural order. I think intervention in nature is often justifiable because of the previous mistakes we have made. But it needs to go hand in hand with the contemplation of other creatures. There is a know-

ing that comes from exercising dominance and control, and there's a knowing that comes through empathy and communion. We want to exercise a control with no real affective knowledge — we see it simply as an exercise in resource management, at a distance.

Q.: You're saying that we need to be humble about human capacity and understanding. But aren't you taking a human religious or moral understanding and applying that to nature?

A.: What I'm trying to press for is a theocentric view of creation which relativizes all humanistic understandings. I believe that in Jesus we are given a unique glimpse into what is objectively true about the nature of human life. You see, I do actually believe that the life of self-sacrificial love is at the very heart of the cosmos. I do believe that is in some way profoundly true about the whole of creation.

Q.: I think people have the hardest time with animal rights when it seems that animal interests are pitted against human interests. For instance, if experimentation on animals could save human lives, wouldn't it then be justified?

A.: It sounds commonsensical humanitarianism — in utilitarian terms, really quite obvious that we should sacrifice other "lower" species to sustain our lives and well-being and to provide all kinds of advantages. But there is a radical spiritual question that should be asked: Is it really credible that God's will as Creator is that all other species of life, even and especially those with sensitivity and sentience, should give way to the inexorable demands of human society for a more satisfying life?

That is not to say that there are not

sometimes conflicts between animal rights and human rights, but the difficulty with animal experimentation is [that it has become an] institution which uses millions of animals every year, who are bred and reared and transported solely for the purpose of becoming laboratory tools in human laboratories. I can't believe that that betokens a right spiritual relationship between humans and animals.

Q.: We received a recent letter from a reader, in which he objects to "the deep ecology dictum that all life has intrinsic rights equal to those of human beings," noting that "human beings are the only species with a highly developed capacity to conceptualize and act purposefully concerning the relationships between itself, other species, and the rest of the created order," and saying that "recognizing this reality and wrestling with its complex ramifications is ... what it means for people of faith in our time to have dominion over the earth." How would you respond to that?

A.: I largely agree with it. I have never argued for any precise equality between humans and animals. I believe we are placed in a higher position — for want of a better term — over animals. But instead of using our power as a license for tyr-

Ecology without theology can lead to a new kind of egoistic humanism.

anny, I suggest exactly the opposite. It's precisely because we have intelligence, a developed moral sense, a capacity

for a faithful relationship with God, that I believe we exist in relationship to animals *something like* the relationship between parents and children. As the father of four children, I don't believe my children have a claim to equal consideration, but more than equal consideration. I believe that paradigm of lordship expressed in service is what we see most

clearly in the life and person of Jesus, a paradigm of unfolding, ever-inclusive generosity.

Q.: It seems that you're drawing moral conclusions based on Scripture that are not explicitly drawn there and have not been drawn by the Church.

A.: I don't agree that the ideas aren't there within the Christian tradition. There's a negative tradition within Christendom that justifies animal exploitation. But there's also a very, very positive tradition that we have never allowed to speak.

One of the good things in the Christian tradition is the testimony, through countless stories and legends, of something like two-thirds of the canonized saints of East and West. Most of these defended animals or protected them and/or showed particular sensitivity to their suffering. Now for many hundreds of years we have regarded these hagiographical pieces as sentimental gloss. In fact, they express a very profound theological truth: As we grow into knowledge and love of the Creator of all things, so we should at the same time grow into a deeper awareness of the unity of, and sensitivity towards, creatures that God has made.

To me animal rights is spiritual struggle and spiritual discovery. It's about how we can actually feel with God her suffering in all the creatures She has made. It is an experiential challenge which involves all our abilities, including any mystical abilities we might have. It's an idea that can transform our life.

Q.: You've written that you advocate "progressive disengagement" from ex-

ploitation of animals. What do you mean by that and how can we do it?

A.: I think the first important thing is to make the change in perception. At the heart of the animal rights movement is the perception that animals are not just things here for our use, but beings with

At the heart of the animal rights movement is the perception that animals are not just things here for our use, but beings with intrinsic value.

intrinsic value. We need to allow that perception to take hold of us — our imagination, our heart, our head, our hands. We need to ingest it spiritually. This cannot always happen at once.

Within the Anglo-Catholic tradition in which I was brought up we used to talk about self-examination and penitence and repentance. I think we need to do all those things. I think we have to ask, in what way am I living a life that contributes to the suffering of animals? In what ways can I reasonably move, even in small things — in the products I buy, in the foods I eat, the clothes I wear, even indeed the taxes I pay? How can we move towards the realization of the Peaceable Kingdom?

But I think it is vital that the movement doesn't degenerate into self-righteousness or pious moralism. When faced with the burden of moral perception, people tend to move either towards despair — the idea that somehow this moral insight cannot be realized in the world as it is — or they move towards a kind of moral zeal, and they want to butcher the butchers and vivisect the vivisectioners. I believe Christian ethics can offer us a third way, which is not despairing, because despair is not a Christian option, and not zeal, because we need to recognize our common sinfulness. I am opposed to animal rightists who demand a kind of purity which is intolerantly self-righteous. For

example, when I was last in the States, I saw someone with a placard which read, "If you're not a vegan [one who eats no animal or dairy products], you are a nazi." Well, much in favor of veganism as I am, I don't believe that.

Q.: How do you respond to people who say that it's wrong to devote energy to animal welfare in a world filled with so much human suffering?

A.: I used to be a great deal more sympathetic to that argument than I am now. I now see that it rests upon the idea that human suffering is qualitatively different from animal suffering. I don't believe that any more. I think all suffering is suffering. Indeed, there may be a way in which the suffering of innocents — children or animals or the defenseless — is a greater moral outrage. I think there is something quite demonic about the infliction of suffering upon those who are wholly within our power, unprotected and vulnerable. And I reached that conclusion through contemplation and meditation on the central Christian symbol, which is the cross. I believe the cross is the vindication of the suffering of innocents, and it points us to the moral gravity of oppressing the vulnerable.

Q.: How can you speak about these things to people who don't share a Christian faith?

A.: I think certain perceptions are dependent upon God. However, the God of Jesus Christ is not to be identified with the God of the church. God the Creator is making her will known through beauty, through works of literature, art, poetry, and in a thousand ways throughout the whole created order.

The Creator Spirit is at work in the universe, bringing people to new perceptions and new possibilities. I'm not often hopeful about human beings, but I'm very hopeful about God. **TW**

Malice Green

Detroit has been swept by waves of anger since the killing of Malice Green. Two Detroit police officers, Larry Nevers and Walter Budzyn, were convicted of Green's murder in the middle of an excruciatingly hot week in August. As we go to press, Detroit is waiting to hear what sentence Judge George Crockett will pass on the officers, who are — for the time being — at liberty.

Crockett, widely praised for his fairness during the trial, was criticized for releasing the officers by Detroit's NAACP director Wendell Anthony.

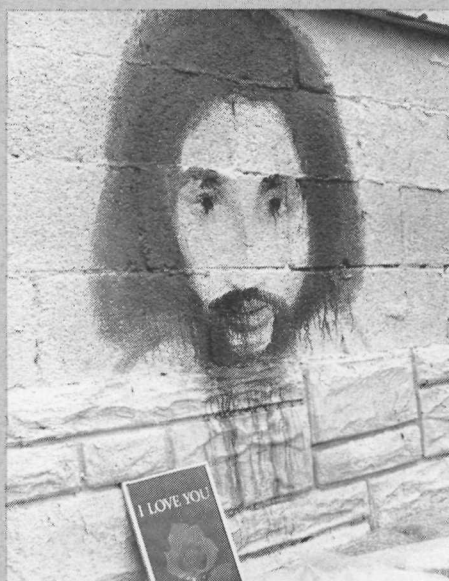
Crockett has suggested that in more than 20 years of police service, the officers demonstrated their responsibility to the community and, he said, he didn't want to incarcerate them until preparations could be made to insure their safety in jail.

Malice Green, an unemployed auto worker, was beaten to death last year. The convicted officers had been trying to locate a stolen car somewhat similar to Green's. When they called in Green's license plate number, they learned it was recorded as Green's own vehicle.

Two hours later, despite the fact that the stolen car had been located, the officers stopped in front of a crack house to question Green. When he fled to his car and refused to open his fist, the officers beat him repeatedly with their flashlights. Members of the Emergency Medical Service, who were called to the scene, testified against the officers. After Green died, the police again requested any information regarding Green's license plate number, also asking if Green had been wanted for any crimes.

Members of Deadly Force, the national organizing committee to end police terror in America, contend that European American officers have never done serious jail time for killing an African American. Members say they have been fired; they have been put on probation but they have not done serious time.

The next issue of *The Witness* will carry an article exploring some of Green's legacy for Motown's residents.



Malice Green's shrine

Jim West

Crone ceremony

Croning ceremonies celebrate the importance of latter years in women's lives, the moment of moving beyond menopause, beyond childrearing, often beyond professional life. For *Honoring the Gifts of Wisdom and Age: The Croning Celebration for Older Women* by Eleanor Morrison, send \$6 to Leaven, Inc., P.O. Box 23233, Lansing, Mich., 48909.

S.O.S.

The Great Serpent Mound in Ohio is under threat. A recreational housing developer plans to create a man-made lake to accompany his golf course and condominiums by flooding farm lands that encircle two-thirds of the Serpent Mound.

For thousands of years this winding image sculpted by Native Americans from tons of dirt has been protected.

Joe Napora of S.O.S. (Save Ohio's Serpent mound) says "I'm asking anyone who cares for the heritage of Native Americans, anyone who care for our collective heritage, anyone who believes that there are such places as sacred sites, anyone who simply sees the folly of golf courses and \$350,000 condos replacing farm land and creating a recreational lake from a free flowing river, anyone and everyone to help stop the

destruction of the Serpent Mound."

Letters can be sent to Gov. George Voinovich, State House, Columbus, Ohio, 43215; Senators John Glenn and Howard Metzenbaum, U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510.

— S.O.S., 2800 Moore St.,
Ashland, KY 41101

A two-edged sword

[During the summer] *60 Minutes* featured Wise Use Movement (WUM) organizational meetings and interviews with activists who live amid chemical and plastic plants emissions in the blue-collar community of Lower Price Hill, Cincinnati. In brief: the activists voice public concern over repeated coughing, weakness and other disease symptoms epidemic among their children. They demand action from the city. The Environmental Protection Agency levies dozens of fines for illegal emissions and the neighborhood industries pay fines while making no adjustment.

Response come not from industry, but from a Wise Use Movement campaign. On the public front, letters and broadcasts attack the community campaign as alarmist. On the personal front, citizen leaders are subjected to regular physical attacks, beatings, threats and even poisonings. One interview is with a leader forced to leave the community. Those indicted by Cincinnati's prosecutor identify

short takes

openly as WUM members.

"The sword of political power is a two-edged sword," WUM founder Ron Arnold proclaims before the camera. "The one is to carve a niche for yourself in the political process. The other is to kill the [expletives deleted]."

— David Shevin, *The Advertiser-Tribune*, Tiffin, OH 6/19/93

The surrealities of meat

by Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz

A dark, expressive drawing shows a man carrying a McDonald's bag, walking down a nighttime street past a butcher shop with a display of meats in the window. The scene is lit by a lone street lamp and by the glow of a crescent moon. He nervously glances over his shoulders. He is being followed . . . not by a would-be mugger or a gang of hoodlums . . . but by an eerie crowd of animals, "the ghosts of his meat," the spirits of the flesh that he regularly consumes.

This surrealistic image is the work of English-born artist Sue Coe, an animal-rights activist who has managed to forge an art form that is a cross between traditional illustration, expressionism, and investigative journalism. She has visited dozens of slaughterhouses and meat processing plants and has documented—often in excruciating detail—the routine cruelty of a system designed to provide

cheap meat to the American consumer. She has also turned her attention toward genetic engineering, animal research, working conditions in the processing plants and environmental pollution.

Coe's artwork is not only a plea for ethical vegetarianism but is also a hard reminder that the modern meat industry is entwined with political and economic interests that are neither concerned with the welfare of the animals being slaughtered nor the health of the humans who consume them. Her *Porkopolis* series includes drawings with matter-of-fact titles like "Electrocution," "Scalding Vat and Scraping Machine," "Castration" and "Hydroclipper Hog Head Dropper," juxtaposed with financially savvy ones like "Wall Street—Making a Killing," and "Wheel of Fortune . . . Today's Pig is Tomorrow's Bacon." In addition, Coe makes strong connections between the cruelty of modern methods of meat production and the subsequent dehumanization of those that work in the industry. While many of us may still envision family farmers raising poultry in small farm yards, for example, Coe presents us with alternate pictures—ones taken from brutal reality. In "DeBeaking," a hunched-over man, working by the light of a single bare bulb, repeatedly jams the heads of chickens into a machine that cuts their beaks off, a precautionary measure to

insure that the animals won't peck themselves and others to death during their closely penned-up lives in mass-production sheds. Off to the side is a cassette player, presumably to provide music to relieve his boredom.

As Christians, what should be our response to such imagery? Are we all to become vegetarians? The writers of the gospels and the epistles seem to have had no problem with the practice of raising and consuming animals as they knew it. The tending of lambs in open pastures, however, is a far cry from the modern routine of chaining calves to tiny veal houses (a cruelty intended to prevent the development of less valuable red flesh). In addition, as activists such as Frances Moore Lappé have reminded us, taking a global view of food distribution and issues of hunger forces us to recognize the sheer inefficiency of eating meat on both a production and nutritional level. (Although traditional cattle raising on grasslands isn't necessarily problematic, assuming the grasslands haven't been clearcut out of valuable rainforest.)

Sue Coe presents us with hard imagery, hard questions and no easy answers. But she believes it is crucial that we see the realities of the system that delivers cheap meat to our tables, if we are to make an informed moral decision about our relationship to it.

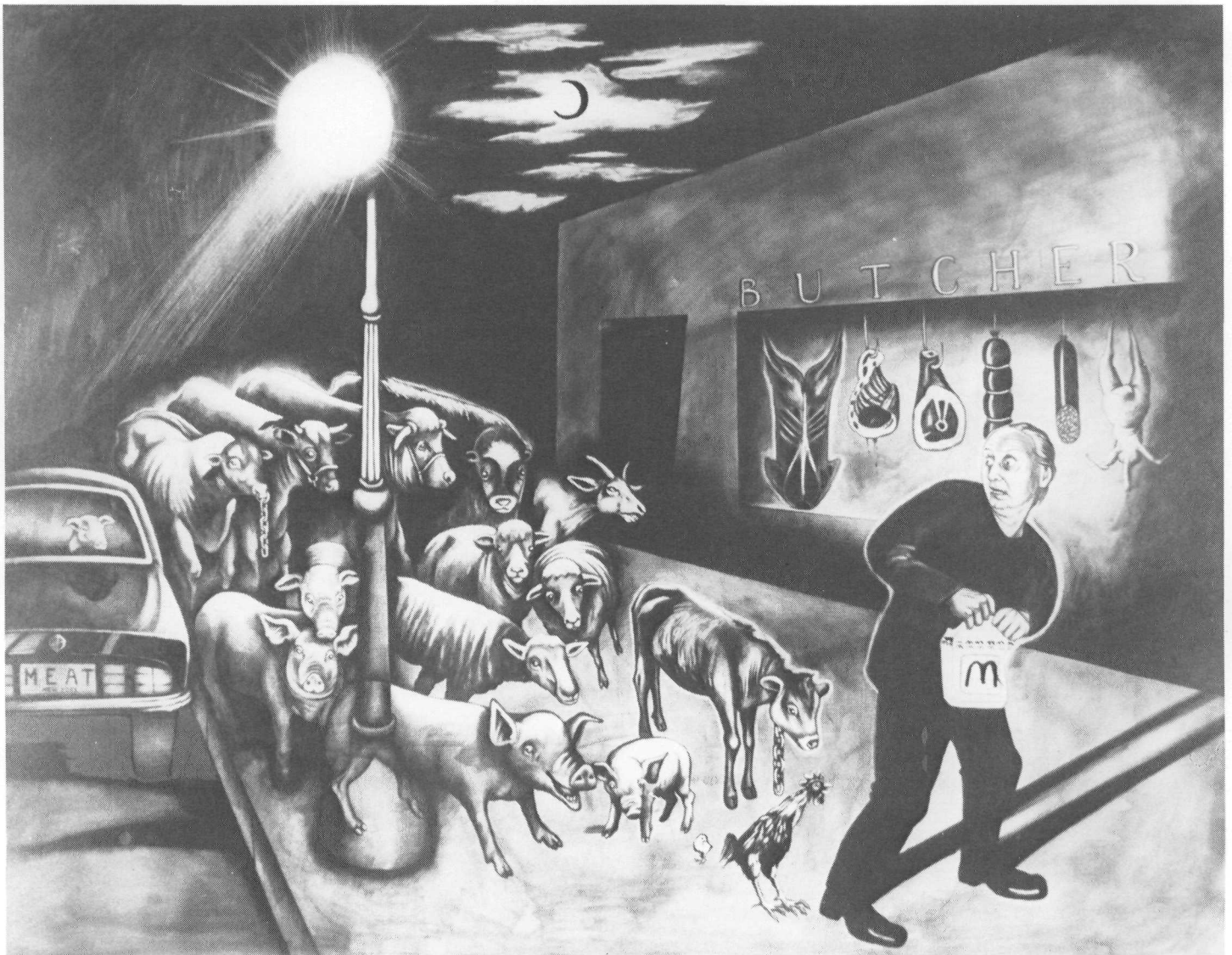
TW



art and society

Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz,
Philadelphia artists, edit the Art & Society
Section of *The Witness*.

Coe's artwork is a hard reminder that the modern meat industry is entwined with political and economic interests that are concerned neither with the welfare of the animals being slaughtered nor the health of the humans who consume them.



Modern Man Followed by the Ghosts of His Meat, ©1990 Sue Coe.

Courtesy of Galerie St. Etienne

Formula for the future

Whether a matter of good manners, savvy politics, or sensitivity to the misery and heartache overflowing the banks of the Mississippi River only a few blocks away, the East Tennessee-backed "Grassroots Forum on Episcopal Structures" held at St. Louis' vast Cervantes Convention Center last August never became the nasty name-calling, nose-thumbing, gripe session aimed at discrediting the church's current liberal national leadership that some had predicted.

But even so, it was clearly not just a simple effort to provide "a means for Episcopalians to gather with no strings attached and no holds barred to see and discern the will of God" as host bishop, Robert H. Tharp, modestly claimed.

Afterall, Tharp and fellow organizers — a group called the East Tennessee Initiative, Inc. (ETI) masterminded by Knoxville rector Jon Shuler — willingly went \$350,000 into the hole to pull the event off and say they are hoping to raise another \$250,000 beyond that to continue their efforts. (The reported cost of the forum was \$725,000. Registration fees for the 1,000-plus participants totalled \$225,000; \$150,000 in donations and grants came in before the event; a free-will offering raised \$25,000. Participating bishops were asked to kick in an extra \$25,000 each.)

What might those efforts be? On this point Shuler was vague, telling participants, "God had asked us to put on this convention (sic)," but that, "What we do not know is where God will [now] lead."

Judging by the tone and tenor of the St. Louis proceedings, however, ETI, at least, already has a very definite formula for the church's future in mind. A generous outpouring of deficit-busting dollars will undoubtedly help indicate if God agrees.

Bigger is better

ETI's major concern, it seems fair to say, is church growth — certainly in terms of overall denominational membership (the Alban Institute's Loren Mead showed the usual charts of declining membership statistics), but especially in the form of

monster-sized congregations. Church marketing specialist and Billy Graham Crusade advisor George Barna (whom ETI scheduled for two different plenary sessions), in fact, seemed unfamiliar with any congregational grouping under 3,000 and most comfortable when talking about those of 10,000 or more.

Likewise, Shuler, now the rector of one of the Diocese of East Tennessee's largest parishes, told a workshop audience that his growing envy of neighboring Knoxville congregations — one with 3500 active members, another with 5000 — was what had prompted his awareness of the Episcopal Church's unhealthy plight.

"We were getting littler and the others were getting bigger," he said. "Growth is in the presence of God."

But growing congregations should not be considered to be truly "bearing fruit," Barna cautioned, unless their members show evidence of being "unapologetically committed to God's word" and "more Christ-like." The only earmarks of such an increasing Christian commitment Barna supplied, however, were a lower divorce rate and a more "consistent" definition of "family." Anyone who knows the religious right's politics can probably guess the rest.

Shuler's own claim that the two critical doctrinal issues that the Episcopal Church needs to settle at its 1994 General Convention are, first, "Is Jesus Lord of this church?" and, second, "Does Scripture have authority or not?" indicated that he and Barna were on the same ideological wave length.

Think locally, act locally

The second element of ETI's formula for the church of the future is de-centralized decisionmaking. Although some in St. Louis bemoaned a national leadership that seemed out of touch with congregations, it seemed that many others would actually have preferred less, not more, national church contact. Stephen Freeman, the East Tennessee priest whose diocesan structural-reform resolution started the ETI ball rolling, said he throws letters from Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning "into the

wastebasket" because they have no "true authority."

The church's General Convention, Freeman said (after noting that he had never attended one), should meet only when called for a stated purpose because otherwise "conventions only cause trouble." If, as Shuler proposed, the local congregation were the church's "number one priority" and regional synods took over responsibility for governing most aspects of church life, a parish or regional synod wouldn't have to bother so much with incompatible concerns raised by parishes and synods who look at the world differently.

Clericalism and white patriarchy

Finally, despite the organizers' attempt to evoke a Ross Perot-like (except for the up-front money) atmosphere of a just-plain-folks movement of concerned Episcopalians, it was clear that this conference had little to do with anything like the church's grassroots. At least half of those registered were clergy, including 33 bishops, three of whom led workshops and two of whom preached at forum worship services. Middle-aged and older white men (four out of five plenary speakers, 19 out of 27 workshop speakers, and most of those leading worship) got most of the speaking parts. As for people of color, it looked like most of those present could have fit comfortably into a single school bus — a total of only three non-whites were on the roster of speakers.

Atlanta's Nan Peete, the only woman and the only person of color slated to address a plenary session, was scheduled to speak opposite the second plenary session offered by family-systems expert Rabbi Edwin H. Friedman, the conference's most famous presenter. Her message, that the church needs to reflect an increasingly diverse population, was echoed only by three other speakers — the two other black speakers and Washington's suffragan bishop, Jane Dixon. (Was it just an unfortunate coincidence that in his first plenary Friedman celebrated Christopher Columbus as the type of leader needed to "unstuck" a system like the church?)

Peete also claimed that any church restructuring or reform should be dictated by the justice-oriented mission outlined in the baptismal covenant — to which ETI's Shuler defensively responded, "I could have given that talk." Strangely enough, however, he never did.

— Julie A. Wortman

No outcasts in the church?

by Deirdre Good

[Ed. note: Deirdre Good, a tenured lay faculty member of New York's General Theological Seminary (GTS), has filed a complaint against the seminary with the city's Human Rights Commission alleging housing and employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and marital status. GTS is calling this a church matter. A court battle is expected.]

Across the nation, non-celibate lesbians and gay men are members in good standing of the Episcopal Church. Openly gay and lesbian clergy ordained since 1979 live in committed relationships in church-owned or subsidized property. Occasional bursts of publicity notwithstanding, the national church has agreed to tolerate this state of affairs. So why not continue a policy of silent consent? Because there is no guaranteed protection for such persons in this Church.

I was appointed to GTS' faculty in 1986. A condition of employment is that all faculty live at the seminary. My personal life took place outside the seminary walls. Within the seminary, I lived alone.

Gradually and painfully, I realized that this disjointed pattern exemplified the second-class status that GTS has long afforded its known gay and lesbian students and faculty. Did anyone tell me I had to live this way? No. There were no public discussions of sexuality. Gay and lesbian persons were invisible.

In the summer of 1992 I recognized that I could no longer accept this second-class designation. I met a woman with whom I wanted to live in a committed relationship, openly, responsibly and with integrity.

In February 1993 I informed the seminary administration of my domestic partnership. In April, the dean told me to leave seminary housing on the basis of a statement in *The Community Life Handbook* that prohibits unmarried couples living together in seminary housing.

Under threat of eviction, my partner and I told our story to our parish, the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, and to the New York chapter of Integrity — communities which offer us support and require accountability. In response, gay and lesbian people from GTS told their own stories. Some lived openly in relationship but were officially ignored by faculty and administration; others feared coming out even to next-door neighbors. Some lived together in seminary housing, defying discovery; others maintained two apartments, or paid for a room they never used.

This situation mirrors the ambivalence of the national church. Gay and lesbian people are affirmed as children of God in some resolutions (1976: A69; 1982: B61a; 1985: D082s; 1988: D100a), but others state that the only appropriate form of genital sexual expression is in marriage (1979: A53s; 1991: A104sa). Celibacy is a vocation to which a few, specially-graced people are called. It is not a condition implicit in the physiognomy of an entire class of people.

I have always believed seminary to be a place of welcome for the whole of one's life. A person coming to seminary may leave a profession or a house, but must not sacrifice identity to get here. It is a place to support, not destroy, personal integrity. In seminary, intelligence or performance cannot overshadow the attempt to live out caring for each other in faithfulness and truth.

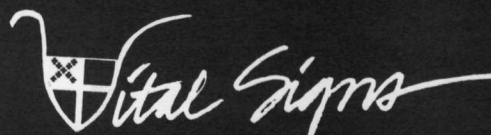
Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning's oft-quoted assertion, "In the Episcopal Church there will be no outcasts," distills what we as a church like to believe about our inclusiveness, but is it true? It is in my parish, but at the seminary where I work I become the outcast the minute I admit that it is not

good for me to live alone.

And where does a child of the church turn when cast out? In this case, there was only one place: to the agency administered by Mayor David Dinkins (an Episcopalian on whom GTS has conferred an honorary degree) to uphold a civil rights act fought for by New York's former bishop, Paul Moore.

In a talk to Integrity/N.Y. this past July, GTS dean and president, former South Dakota bishop Craig Anderson, called for the church to be "a mediating agency between the megastructures of government and the people they oppress." Ironically, while the church has called for full civil rights for gay and lesbian people (1976: A71; 1982: B61a), it is the government that has granted those full civil rights. While the church has called upon law enforcement agencies of this country to prosecute perpetrators of violence against gay and lesbian persons (1988: D100a), it is to the city government that I must look for protection from the violence of eviction. As one Connecticut priest said to the rector who reversed a job offer upon discovering the priest's committed gay relationship, "In this state, the church is the only institution that can oppress me and get away with it."

The road sign says, "The Episcopal Church welcomes you." But when "you" is a gay or lesbian person, the church's welcome is capricious, often disapproving tolerance rather than unconditional acceptance. Tolerance does not begin to satisfy the Gospel mandate to love one another as God loves us. God loves me by creating me as a lesbian, by setting me in the community of the church and by calling me into relationship with another woman for, as the Book of Common Prayer puts it, our "mutual joy; help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity." It is time for the church to affirm with unequivocal protection this love of God.



Fur, conscience and native economies

by Marianne Arbogast

Last year, the Lynx Educational Trust for Animal Welfare published a book entitled *Cruelty and the Christian Conscience*, which included the names of 41 U.K. Anglican bishops who had made the Lynx pledge never to buy or wear fur. The Anglican bishops of northern Canada responded with a letter of protest, defending trapping as necessary to the Inuit, Cree, Dene, and other Arctic communities. The conflict revived a troubling question: Is the fur debate a choice between animal rights and the rights of indigenous peoples?

"The most serious threat to wildlife today is not from aboriginal hunters and trappers," the Canadian bishops wrote. "It is the increasing destruction of wildlife habitats by major industrial projects. The aboriginal peoples have been in the vanguard of the struggle to protect wildlife and ecosystems in northern Canada."

In the harsh north, the conservation ethic of indigenous hunters is a physical and spiritual necessity.

"We've been here thousands of years. We live off the land — without any game, we cannot survive," says Trimble Gilbert, an Athabaskan Episcopalian priest who has also served as chief of his community in Arctic Village, Alaska. He describes his lifelong diet as "fish, meat, crackers, tea and sugar. God provides us with food — the animals we live with. We just can't shoot the animals for noth-

ing. We don't even fish for sport: we just take what we need."

Indigenous hunters have traditionally used every part of an animal, including the fur, which provides lightweight, life-saving protection against Arctic winters.

But with the incursion of European fur traders into Canada several centuries ago, native hunters were drawn into a larger economy, selling furs for cash to support a changing lifestyle. And in the past 30 years, the Canadian government's offer of education, health care, and other services has brought people of all the tribes into towns.

"The hunter now has housing," says Edward Gilpin of the Cree Trappers Association. "He pays for rent, electricity, water, and television."

Wage jobs are still scarce in the far north, where the costs of developing and maintaining business are formidable.

In a 1986 joint statement defending the fur trade, the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Northern Canada reported that the combined seal hunt income of the

population of four Inuit villages had dropped more than 90 percent between 1982 and 1983, to slightly over \$10,000 total. Richard Miracle, a Mohawk who works as a consultant to governments and native groups on subsistence economy issues, cites a loss of about 80 percent in hunting income to Canada's indigenous peoples from 1988 to 1992.

"The anti-fur crusaders basically de-

stroyed their livelihood," says Curt Ejesiak, a young Inuit engineer who works with the Inuit Taprisat of Canada, a political organization set up to resolve land and resource issues with the government. "A lot of these people have no other skills, and don't speak English. In many northern communities the unemployment is 50 to 60 percent, with social assistance [welfare] the only alternative."

"Social assistance destroys their culture and traditional values such as sharing," Miracle says.

But while many lament the loss of fur income to struggling communities, there are others who question whether it was ever a good thing.

Paul Hollingsworth, a Guelph, Ont. Ojibwa artist who helped found a 3,000-member native group called Native/Animal Brotherhood, challenges the view that trapping for the fur trade is a native tradition.

"When the white settlers came, their systems were imposed on people living here," Hollingsworth says. "We were forced into a way of life that was not ours. Europeans gave the fashion fur trade to native people. Now that white people are changing their mind about the whole thing,

[some native people are] complaining. But the problem isn't the fickle whims of fashion; the problem is our getting involved in it.

Is the fur debate a choice between animal rights and the rights of indigenous peoples?

"Respect for Mother Earth and other creatures on it" is central to native spiritualities, he points out. "A lot of native cultures had rites or ceremonies that thanked animals or asked their permission before taking their lives, and explained why. The fashion fur trade flies completely in the face of that. It's taking a lot of lives for very little benefit. Rather than taking one moose and making a coat,

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*. Ariel Miller, assistant editor of *Interchange*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Southeastern Ohio, contributed to this report.

they take 40 minks and make a coat. It's completely wasteful of life, merely for a fashion item there is no need for."

In 1985, the government of Canada — whose GNP is augmented by \$600 million to \$1 billion annually by the fur industry — commissioned a study entitled *Defense of the Fur Trade*. The paper suggested that "dramatic counter-action" was necessary to fight the anti-fur movement, and proposed that this action "could be based on contradictory emotional themes of interest to the same target publics, e.g., preservation of indigenous cultures." Advertising was developed around this theme.

"The decision to use native peoples to defend the fur trade was a very cynical public relations ploy by the Canadian government and the fur trade," says Carol McKenna of the Lynx Educational Trust, who worked on enlisting the bishops' support of their campaign. "If someone is going to hunt and trap some animals to eat and wear their skins, I don't know of anyone who would try to stop that. What we're trying to defeat is the international fur trade, which is about killing wild animals for fashion."

Native trappers represent a very small part of the industry, McKenna says.

"Of the 40 million animals killed for their fur each year worldwide, some 30 million are killed on fur farms. Ten million of these are killed in Denmark — a very wealthy country in the European community. These animals spend their entire lives in tiny wire cages."

Of the 10 million animals who are killed in traps, more than half are trapped in the United States, she says. Less than 1 million are killed by Canadian trappers, about half of whom are native.

McKenna cites Canadian government statistics from 1979 — a boon year — which show that 77 percent of trappers earned an average income of less than \$1,000. Fewer than five percent listed



Most fur today comes from animals raised on fur factory farms.

courtesy PETA

trapping as a main occupation.

"Blaming anti-fur campaigners for the situation native communities are in is taking attention away from the real cruelty of the huge numbers of animals killed for fashion," she says.

It is also diverting attention from the real needs of those communities, says Hollingsworth. He notes that the Canadian government, while financing fur advertising, has made recent major cutbacks in educational benefits and communications development for native communities.

"In some communities the suicide rate is incredibly high, and the alcoholism, and they say, 'Look, the fur trade's gone, and the small communities have always relied on sealing.' But the suicide and alcoholism rate are also high in communities that *didn't* rely on sealing. It's the lousy conditions that native people are forced to live in; reserves are little pockets of third world countries."

Native leaders can be reluctant to question the fur trade for a number of reasons, he believes.

One is reliance on government funding. According to Hollingsworth, an organization called Indigenous Survival International (which defends the right to hunt and sell fur) lost one-third of their financial support from the Canadian government when they took a position against the leghold trap — a device banned in 64 countries on grounds of cruelty, but still widely used in North America.

Also, native land claims are honored in Canada only on the basis of economic use. "We can't just say, 'This has always been our land,'" Hollingsworth says. "It's not enough that people live there. Trapping and hunting are almost the only economic use they accept."

While Hollingsworth is sympathetic to the feeling that something is better than nothing, he believes the fashion fur trade is an essentially exploitative system — for animals and humans alike.

"The large fur companies and the government make the money," he says. "Native people are at the supply end of it. Native bands have to develop a more diverse economy."

TW

Learning to be guests

by Mary Lee B. Simpson

With grace and serenity he glided by me, within arm's reach, eyeing me with that endearing smile and exuding love, frivolity and unconditional acceptance.

My heart said give him a hug. My mind said no — my touch could damage his delicate skin. Despite my pounding heart, I felt an overwhelming peace, an all-will-be-well knowing. Then my lungs shouted that this encounter with a spotted dolphin had to end and I headed for air.

I was in 18 to 25 feet of smooth, clear, aquamarine water somewhere off the coast of the Bahamas to play with these angels of the sea, known throughout time and the world over for their powers of healing, compassion for humans, and sophisticated communication.

I had read how dolphins have helped humans in physical, mental and emotional distress, and about the research being conducted to learn more about their abilities and behavior patterns.

I had paid money years ago for our family to be entertained by them at the sea worlds of this country. Through dirty windows we gazed at dolphins as they existed for our pleasure in sanitized tanks. Only recently I learned that 53 percent of dolphins die during their first nine months of captivity.

No guarantees came with this trip, the crew told the 28 of us at the outset. We

were the dolphins' guests in their habitat. We were there to interact — not interfere — with them. The dolphins might appear and then again they might not. And if they did come, they might play with us for three hours or they might swim by for a hasty hello.

The week would be a waiting game,



Lloyd Orr

and a memorable lesson in patience.

While we waited we started getting to know one another. Among the passengers were a young free-lance underwater photographer from Tokyo, whose exquisite camera gear and snorkeling fashions matched her marine life artistry; a Methodist minister who works with youth gangs and who has a malignant brain tumor; two intensive care nurses from Florida and California; a newly pregnant veterinarian and her husband and mother; a Brooklyn native traveling by herself for the first time since her divorce; an inde-

pendently wealthy woman who slept with her crystals on the top deck so she could watch for UFOs; a Canadian woman with a business that "helps people's dreams come true," and her clients; two sisters from Idaho who teach and write books together; a North Carolina couple and their four-year-old daughter, Divinity.

Lloyd Orr, a crew member who has swum with and photographed dolphins for six years, told anecdotes about the dolphins.

We heard how they love to play the hide-and-seek game under the boat (we did that a couple of times) and the let's-see-how-far-away-from-the-boat-we-can-get-these-swimmers competition. Orr told us about a group of Olympic swimmers who had gone dangerously far away from the boat when a thunderstorm rapidly approached. As a crew member was preparing to take out the dinghy to retrieve them, the swimmers started heading home.

"We're glad to see you finally decided to return," Orr told them as they clambered aboard, while the dolphins leapt with delight in the waters off the boat's stern.

"We didn't know we were coming back," they replied. "We were just following the dolphins."

Our lesson in patience came not only from the dolphins but also from our human partners in play.

For the first two days, the dolphins teased us with frequent, brief appearances.

"Do not be anxious. Let the dolphins come to us," the crew members repeated over and over. And yet, for two days, each time dolphins approached, the more intense passengers scrambled to get overboard and charge after them.

Mary Lee B. Simpson is editor of *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, newspaper of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

"If I were a dolphin and saw a pack of thrashing, berserk humans chasing me, I'd run away, too," I wrote in my journal.

During our wait, some passengers joined the woman-who-makes-dreams-come-true in singing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat": "Come, come play with us, dolphins every day. Then we'll easily meet our goals, in each and every way."

It's so sad, I noted in my journal, how we humans insist on exploiting these loving creatures even in their home. We can't control them here with aquariums, man-made lagoons, fenced-off pens, nets or dietary rewards. So we try to control them with our songs and our wills. Why can't we accept their presence as a gift and let them be?

On the third day our patience was rewarded. This time (and subsequently others) eight or 10 dolphins were present, and they lingered. It's impossible to know

how long.

For when I slipped into the dolphins' world, I was transported into another realm where only freedom existed. Time and space and self dissolved, the heavens and seas united, all of life connected. I was spellbound by their alleluias of clicks and groans as they communicated with one another. I was mesmerized by their underwater ballet. In elegant synchronization, couples and trios turned pirouettes downward, undulated among us with dignity and panache, then with a flick of their flukes headed heavenward.

Watching mothers dance with their babies and seeing foursomes gleefully body-surfing five-foot swells brought tears of happiness to my eyes. With other swimmers I dived and swirled, futilely

trying to mimic the dolphins' choreography.

At one point, three dolphins encircled my Methodist friend. One came forward and rammed her three times on her forehead. She sensed no aggression, felt no fear.

Once home, tests show that her tumor has not grown. And her headaches are less frequent and less severe. Did the dolphins "see" her tumor? Did their energy somehow affect the progress of the disease?

My memories of dancing with the dolphins bring a smile to my soul. Except when I swim laps in a neighborhood pool. Then I weep. I feel the confinement of the cement walls and floor, and I know what hell is to a dolphin.

TV

Entertainment or exploitation?

The capture and confinement of animals for human entertainment is an exploitive practice, many animal advocates argue.

"Dolphins do not travel to the aquarium door and ask to be let in," testified Nancy Dave Hicks of the Animal Protection Institute of America in a 1990 public hearing on the use of captive marine mammals (*Mainstream*, Winter 1990). "They are hunted down in their ocean homes by people who herd them together using fast boats with powerful engines. They are pursued until fatigue allows them to be encircled with nets along with their family groups. Then they are separated from their kinfolk according to their desirability to their captors. Juvenile females are the ones most often dragged from the water in



courtesy PETA

which they are adapted to live and hoisted into stretchers to be further tested and evaluated. Some of the encircled animals die of drowning in the entangling nets and others die of shock."

The use of animals in circuses is an-

other area of concern. Circus animals spend most of their time traveling in small cages in railway cars, trucks and ships. They are trained through punishment to perform in unnatural ways. Bears have their paws burned to make them stand on their hind legs. Elephants are beaten, chained, and forced to stand on their heads.

Henry Ringling North, a former circus owner, writes that "it is not usually a pretty sight to see the big cats trained ... When he (the trainer) starts off, they are all chained to their pedestals, and ropes are put around their necks to choke them down and make them obey. All sorts of other brutalities are used to force them to respect the trainer and learn their tricks. They work from fear."

Rodeos, horse and dog racing, cock fighting, and carriage horse rides are other ways in which animals are often abused in the name of entertainment.

Questioning animal experimentation

by Marjorie Cramer

In many people's minds, the question of whether or not animal experimentation should be permitted in a civilized society is a very simple one: if it benefits human health it is permissible because human beings are more valuable than animals of other species. Period.

In my years of training, I certainly believed this to be true. I believed it, in fact, until my two young daughters started asking me difficult questions about how I could justify animal experiments in view of the suffering involved. At first I took the dogmatic approach. After all, I had done animal experiments myself and thus had a lot invested in believing they were necessary. But I realized that my children deserved the most honest answers that I could give, and so I started to read and study critically.

I discovered that if one examines the question carefully, it is not simple at all. It has at least two parts: Does animal experimentation benefit human health, and is it morally right?

The claim that virtually every major advance in the past 100 years has come from animal studies has been made so many times that many people believe it without questioning.

A very common claim is that our life expectancy has been increased because

of the discovery of vaccines and antibiotics. But a substantial body of Public Health literature makes it clear that at most, 3.5 percent of the total decline in mortality since 1900 can be ascribed to medical measures. Rather, it is due to public health measures such as improved sanitation and better living conditions. The impact of vaccines and antibiotics was in fact quite small.

The physicians who make up the Medical Research Modernization Committee have undertaken studies to determine how often the data gained from animal experiments are actually used by doctors in understanding or treating illnesses.

What they have found is quite startling: Animal experiments have been of very little, if any help, in understanding or treating humans, and the historical record has been distorted and often falsified to give credit to animal experiments that, in most cases, simply dramatized findings from clinical studies.

Our experience with AIDS illustrates all of these points. All of the information we have to date about AIDS has been gained from studies of people. The causative agent, mode of transmission, ability of the virus to mutate and clinical picture have all been learned by studying people with AIDS. As soon as scientists identified the virus which causes AIDS, we knew that there was, at least theoretically, the possibility of making a vaccine.

Yet years later, after chimpanzees had been experimentally infected with a virus which was only partly related to the AIDS virus, experimenters at Tulane Univer-

sity announced in the press that a vaccine to prevent AIDS was theoretically possible. It might look to the public as though animal experiments had played a very important role in our understanding of the disease, but in reality, the animal experiments had been used to dramatize what we already knew.

The Tulane chimpanzees illustrate another fact that is essential to any discussion of animal experimentation. They were infected with a virus which was *related* to the AIDS virus but which was in many ways quite different. No animal species except the human becomes sick from infection with the AIDS virus. Thus any conclusions drawn from the chimpanzee studies would have to be made by inference and analogy and would not really be scientific at all. We would need human clinical data in order to understand the similarities and differences between the infection in chimpanzees and AIDS infection in humans.

There are powerful groups that have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. These include the experimenters themselves, who would be out of a job should animal experimentation cease; the people who make cages, restraining devices, laboratory equipment and food for experimental animals; and the universities which sponsor animal experiments and rely on a portion of the substantial grants to cover their overhead.

While expensive animal studies continue, funding is diverted from research that would truly serve human needs. And it is important to be aware that we are talking about burning, starving, mutilating and addicting animals. "Biomedical research" is a term that was coined in the early part of this century by experimenters to replace their original term "vivisection," — from the Latin words meaning cutting up a living animal. Perhaps the latter reflected the truth too well. **TW**

Marjorie Cramer is a surgeon working in New York City. She is a member of the Medical Research Modernization Committee and the Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine.

Good news for animals?

by J. Massyngbaerde Ford

Good News for Animals? edited by Charles Pinches and Jay B. McDaniel, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993.

This book comprises the proceedings of a conference held at Duke Divinity School, Raleigh, N.C., in 1990. Outstanding scholars were chosen for the presentations: G.L. Frear, Jr., R. R. Reuther, W.C. French, L.S. Jung, S. Hauerwas and J. Berkman, J.B. McDaniel, G.L. Comstock, A. Linzey, C.J. Adams, Theodore Walker, J.B. Cobb, Jr., Charles Pinches, Tom Regan and R.M. Clughston.

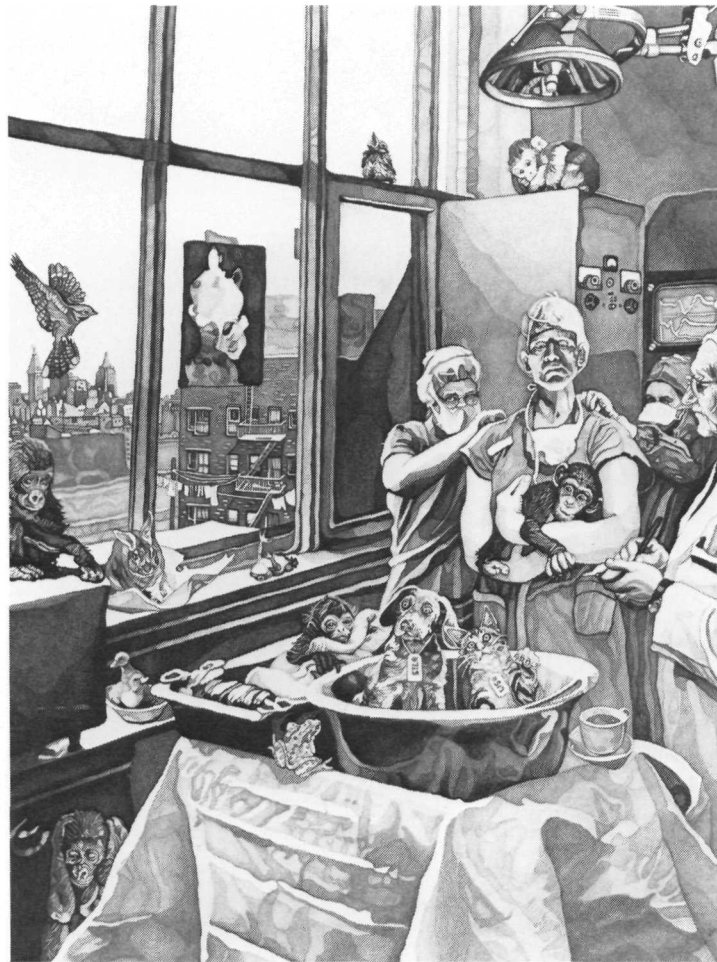
The book addresses four questions:

1) What has been said about animals in the past? Included in this section are the Bible, anthropology, eco-feminism, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Cartesian philosophy and behavioral psychology.

2) What is being said about animals today? This discusses whether animals are strangers, friends or kin and suggests a creative-inclusive reading of the Biblical story.

3) Should Christians eat animals? This

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Lab, from *Endangered Species*, HarperSanFrancisco

Dierdre Luzwick

comprises three arguments for vegetarianism considered from the point of view of love for animals, concern for the environment and economics and avoidance of violence. This section obliged the reviewer to consider vegetarianism very seriously for herself.

4) How should Christians respond to current concerns for animals? This describes the African-American approach to creation; the abuse of animals in the interests of economics; the danger of anthropocentrism, and the theology and philosophy of animal rights.

The book concludes with two essential appendices: the state of animal life in the world today (useful and appalling

statistics are given) and the report entitled "Liberating Life" submitted to the World Council of Churches meeting in Annecy, France.

This book is fascinating, informative and challenging. At times it makes the reader lachrymose. It is an excellent resource for study groups in schools, colleges and parishes.

TW

book review

Two years ago Ellen VandeVisse and Kay Wentzel trekked 4,500 miles in their beat-up station wagon from their Alaskan country home to Augusta, Michigan. They came to a place of fields, hills, pine forests, and a pristine lake — land which was later to become the Lodge at Yarrow, a holistic health and retreat center. The Lodge at Yarrow design, following a “timeless way of building” developed by architect Christopher Alexander, required an intimate knowledge of the animals, plants, and matter on the land, so that the structures would not be isolated, but part of the web of nature. When the two women heard of this vision, they wanted to be, literally, the trail blazers for the project.

At home, VandeVisse and Wentzel do a patchwork of things to earn a living. VandeVisse is an organic vegetable grower who sells her produce by subscription. Wentzel, a winter park ranger for the Girl Scouts, cares for log buildings on a lake where there is no phone or electricity. Together, they founded the Good Earth Garden School, where they facilitate experiential workshops.

When they arrived in Michigan, the women set up camp by a stream — their only source of water for cooking and cleaning. The sun, the moon, and a few candles gave them light. They pitched their tent, rolled down their sleeping bags, and became the sole human inhabitants of 350 acres.

“Humans have a very special place in nature — we just don’t know it yet, so we abuse it.”

— Ellen VandeVisse



Kay Wentzel and Ellen VandeVisse

Weaving a human path

by Ginger Hentz

Each day they stomped up hills and trudged through swamps, feeling their way, making trails that were in concert with the trees, the wind and the fauna. Trails connected different plant communities, woods, fields, and animal habitats. The women wove paths carefully through the trillium and gave a wide berth of respect around a warren of baby foxes. Nary a tree was downed. VandeVisse and Wentzel were convinced of the spiritual potential of the land, since it would not be put to consumer use, hunted, or invaded by noisy, intrusive machines.

When they weren’t sure if they should use the deer paths for a trail, they asked the deer.

They chose not to use sprays against the mosquitoes and deer flies. “It has DEET in it. Not good for the air, the birds. We must be good stewards and not see ourselves as separate from these little

creatures,” they would say with a smile.

When it came time to clean up the old chicken coop to transform it into the welcome center, they left the spiders and their webs filled with eggs hanging from every rafter because, after all, “they are just trying to raise their families here.”

VandeVisse brought books so they would know every wild flower, every weird-looking bug, every kind of bird.

They showed visitors where turtles had labored to lay their eggs, only to be lost to some hungry predator who left telltale markings in the earth.

“Turtles are really one of our favorites,” Wentzel would say. “There are no turtles or snakes in Alaska, and very few frogs.”

The trail marking went on all summer long. Trails were created by sound, smell,

*Witnesses,
the quick and the dead*

Ginger Hentz is the founder of the Womyn’s Concern Center in Battle Creek, Mich., and a freelance writer.

and touch. Special attention was given to the places where buildings would be — how to start and weave back to these places. And when they weren't sure if they should use the deer paths for a trail, they stopped and did the most natural thing: They asked the deer. They believe the deer understood that Yarrow would a place for the uplifting of human consciousness, and gave their consent.

The gentle-spirited VandeVisse speaks of the world being filled with Devas — beings of light ("or angels if you are more comfortable with that"). She contends that one need only ask nature for what one needs. "What do I need to know right now?" was her frequent question of the universe, and she always received an answer.

"Oh, thank you for showing yourself to me!" VandeVisse would say gleefully to a beautiful bird landing at her feet.

The women worked for minimal wages charting the Yarrow land.

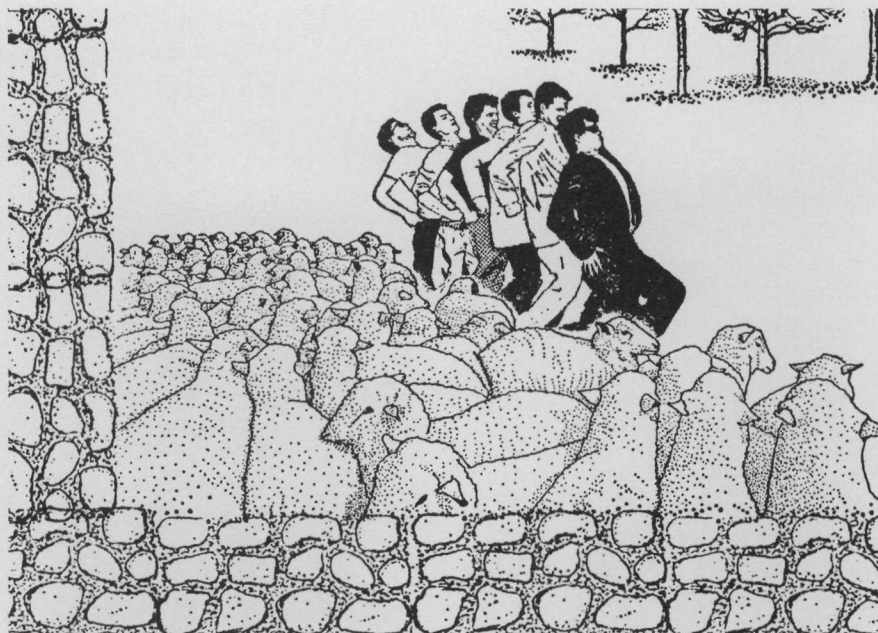
"The fun was helping people to connect and cooperate with the land," VandeVisse says. "Humans have a very special place in nature — we just don't know it yet, so we abuse it. The promise of the garden has never been broken. God was not joking." TW

Welcome to *The Witness*!

Each month we mail complimentary copies of *The Witness* to people we believe might subscribe. Knowing that people receive more literature than they can read, we keep our articles short and provocative. *The Witness* addresses different themes each month, and includes art, poetry, book reviews and profiles.

For 75 years *The Witness* has published articles addressing theological concerns as well as critiquing social issues from a faith perspective.

The magazine is owned by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company but is an independent journal with an ecumenical readership.



Sheep by Yes! Pigs Can Fly, Jackson, Wy.; stone wall by Image Encore, Franklin, Mich.; conga line by Stamp Happy, Hermosa Beach, Calif.

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To encourage readers to give *The Witness* as a Christmas gift, we will drop the price to \$15 and send donors a custom-made, rubber-stamped Advent calendar!

Designed by managing editor Julie A. Wortman, the calendars are price-

less, ironic and faithful. The theme for 1993 is *For we like sheep ...*

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