

CVVUK NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK newsletter, Autumn 2023



Website: <http://www.christian-vegetariansvegans.org.uk/>

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. As always we would be pleased to receive any of the following from our supporters for future newsletters:

- interesting (short) articles;
- news of any local activities you have been involved in to promote the values of CVVUK;
- information about events that might interest other CVVUK supporters; and
- miscellaneous items such as book reviews, recipes and information about useful resources

If you have anything that you would like to contribute to the next newsletter please e-mail it to us at sampsons@dsl.pipex.com by the end of February 2024

Miriam and Philip Sampson

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter comes from a variety of sources and reasonable care has been taken to convey it accurately. Please note that opinions or statements may not reflect the views held by all members of CVAUK, and we accept no responsibility for any errors which may have occurred. Content is produced for information only and is not advice.

Please Note: You can un-subscribe from receiving the CVVUK newsletter or information from CVVUK any time. Email: johnmerrickryder@gmail.com or write to 177 Dover Road, Ipswich, IP3 8JJ. Please include your full name and the date. Thank You.

New videos about vegan vicars

Daryl Booth, who operates the Sarx Christian animal welfare website, has recently produced a series of six short videos featuring interviews with a number of Anglican clergy who are vegans. One of the people interviewed is our chairman Rev John Ryder. You can find them here: <https://sarx.org.uk/multimedia/vegan-vicars-video-series/> and they are also available on YouTube.

The topics are:

- Why should Christians care about animals?
- Why should Christians challenge factory farming?
- Why do Christians have a duty to care for creation?
- What are the challenges of being a vegan vicar?
- Why I love being a vegan vicar.



They are an excellent resource with lots of possible applications. How could you use them? We would love to hear from you if you have found a good way of using these videos which we could feature in our next newsletter. Find out in the next item one way we have already used them.

Vegan diet good for the planet.....

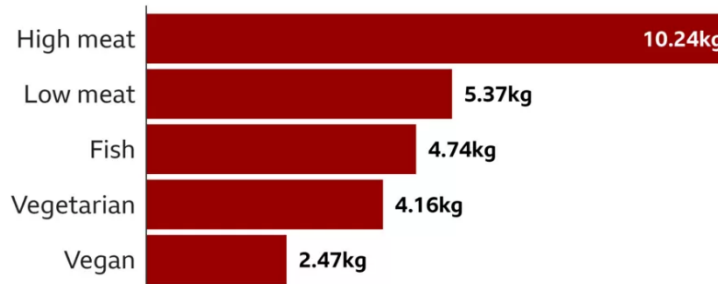
With COP28 fast approaching ways to progress towards “net zero” will be in the news again. Most of the emphasis will be on reducing the use of fossil fuels, but diet has a big role to play and this is increasingly being recognised.

A recent BBC science report suggested that eating less meat is “like taking 8 million cars off the road”: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-66238584>

It included this table:

Eating meat creates more greenhouse gases

How much carbon dioxide do different types of diet produce per person* each day?



*Based on an adult eating 2,000 calories a day

Source: LEAP Project/Nature Foods

BBC

The study, carried out by Prof Peter Scarborough at Oxford University, used data from 55,000 people in the UK and 38,000 farms located in 119 countries. A vegan diet not only resulted in 75% reduction in climate heating emissions but also used far less land and water. If we want to “save the planet” widespread adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet would make a huge difference.

Prof Peter Scarborough said: “*Our dietary choices have a big impact on the planet. Cutting down the amount of meat and dairy in your diet can make a big difference to your dietary footprint.*”

Your editors were recently involved in helping to organise a climate-focused church service in their parish, as part of the Eco-Church initiative. We showed some snippets from the new Sarx videos in which vegan vicars spoke about why they believed Christians should care for creation and how their commitment to a vegan diet contributed to that. After the service we provided a range of vegetarian and vegan recipes which people could take away and try. Nearly all the recipe sheets were taken and we are topping them up and providing some new recipes now.

Many people are keen to reduce their carbon footprint but they are wedded to familiar eating patterns and don't know how to move towards a plant-based diet. Some practical help from those of us who have been following a plant-based diet for years can really make a difference.

More information about the study mentioned above can be found here: [Vegan diet the best for the planet - new study confirms - Vegan Kind](#)

....and good for you too!

"Planet-friendly" foods may also help reduce a person's risk of death from cancer, heart disease and other chronic illnesses by 25%, researchers have said.

Scientists in the US found those who followed a sustainable diet of more plant-based foods - such as whole grains, fruit, vegetables and nuts - were less likely to die over the course of 30 years compared with those who ate less environmentally friendly meals.

Based on their findings, presented at Nutrition 2023 - the annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition in Boston, Massachusetts - the researchers have developed a new diet score that shows the effects of food on human health as well as the environment.

Known as the Planetary Health Diet Index (PHDI), it looks at existing evidence to give scores for foods. The index takes into account the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, bowel cancer, diabetes and stroke, as well as environmental impacts such as water use, land use, nutrient pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Linh Bui, a PhD student in the Department of Nutrition at Harvard University's TH Chan School of Public Health, said: *"We proposed a new diet score that incorporates the best current scientific evidence of food effects on both health and the environment. The results confirmed our hypothesis that a higher Planetary Health Diet score was associated with a lower risk of mortality."*

After developing their tool, the researchers used it to determine and observe the outcomes of more than 100,000 people in the US, from 1986 to 2018. More than 47,000 died during the follow-up period of more than 30 years.

The team found that higher PHDI scores were associated with a 15% lower risk of death from cancer or heart diseases, a 20% lower risk of death from neurodegenerative diseases, and a 50% lower risk of death from respiratory diseases.

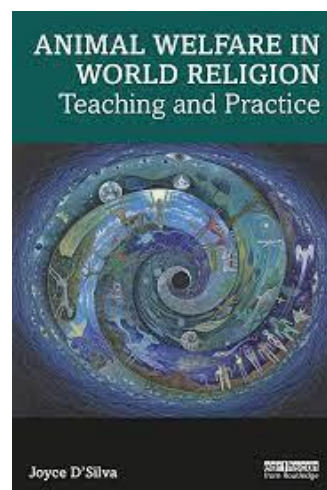
<https://apple.news/A1AafCrcaSSCLBKHFIIH7tA>

New books on animals and theology

Animal Welfare in World Religion – Teaching and Practice by Joyce D'Silva was published by Routledge earlier this year.

Joyce is a former RE teacher and former Chief Executive of Compassion in World Farming, now their Ambassador Emeritus. She was key in getting recognition of animal sentience enshrined in the European Treaties.

Her book explores what 5 major world religions taught about the care of animals. She was surprised to find compassion for animals woven throughout the teachings of all of the world's leading religions - Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism - when there is still so much



cruelty across the globe towards them. She hopes her book will help to put the welfare of animals on the agenda of faith leaders.

Over 80% of the world's population claim to belong to a faith and these faiths teach that all animals should be treated with respect and kindness. And yet, humans are responsible for huge amounts of animal suffering, in entertainment and laboratories, for example, but particularly in farming where 80 billion land-based animals and between half a billion to one billion farmed fish are raised and slaughtered every year for our consumption, most in cruel factory farm systems. How can humans reconcile their practices with the teachings of the faiths they claim to adhere to? Joyce takes up this challenge.

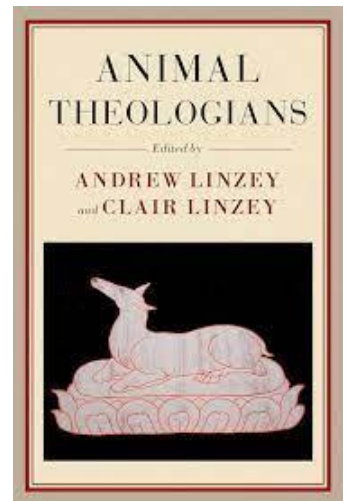
You can find a detailed review of the book here:

<https://animal-interfaith-alliance.com/2023/05/27/animal-welfare-in-world-religion-by-joyce-dsilva/>

It is available in a print edition and as an e-book.

Animal Theologians – ed. Prof Andrew and Dr Clair Linzey, published by OUP

This new book edited by the directors of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics provides an account of the major historical figures who have pioneered the emerging field of animal theology. It focuses on oft-ignored pro-animal voices within various religious traditions, including well known figures such as Michel de Montaigne, Thomas Tryon, John Wesley, John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, and Paul Tillich. It is the only work on animal theology to draw on multiple religious traditions: Jewish, Unitarian, Christian, Transcendentalist, Muslim, Hindu, Dissenting, Deist, and Quaker voices.



"This insightful anthology is a treasure trove of often hidden gems. This parade of writings, from the early pioneers to the most current thought leaders, offers a library of resources for all who wish to deepen their understanding of animal theology." - **Paul J. Kirbas, President and Paul Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture, Graduate Theological Foundation**

This book is also available in print or as an e-book. Full details here:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/animal-theologians-9780197655559?cc=gb&lang=en&#>

Use Your Voice to Highlight Animal Suffering

Parliamentary elections will be happening next year. Spokespersons for the various parties are talking about their policies but we have heard very little about animal welfare. Those of us who care about the suffering of other creatures could use our voices to communicate this to politicians. Following are some links to access politicians to whom we can express our concerns:

To find your MP:

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP> for name, email and address.

There are also Parliamentary Animal Welfare groups who would have wider connections:

There is the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare <https://apgaw.org> (e-mail facility on website)

The following political parties have their own groups dealing with animal welfare issues:

Conservatives: www.conservativeanimalwelfarefoundation.org

Labour: www.labouranimalwelfaresociety.org.uk

Green Party: <https://gap.greenparty.org.uk>

It is interesting to look at the party policies put forward for the 2019 general election:

	Brexit Party	Conservative	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrats
End Live Exports	No	Probably*	Yes	Yes	No
Ban Cages	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partly
Prevent Low Welfare Imports	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Subsidies For Welfare	No	Yes	Probably	Yes	Probably
Ban Routine Antibiotics	No	No	Yes	No	No
Method of Production Labelling	No	No	Yes	No	No
Recognise Sentience	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

(Source: CIWF)

**NB - a bill to end live animal exports was in fact included in last month's King's speech, so the Conservative government has now committed to acting on this.*

If you are connected with an animal welfare organisation that is not already encouraging its supporters to lobby the political parties, you could pass on these details so that they can tell politicians that animal welfare issues will influence how they vote.

It would be great if supporters send their own thoughts and comments to MPs but if you are pressed for time, please feel free to use the following template and amend as you see fit.

Sample Letter

To The Rt Hon

I am a supporter of CVVUK (Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK) because I believe animals are sentient beings and I wish to avoid the cruelty of factory farming and slaughter.

Animal suffering is very important to me and your party's policies that influence this will be a consideration when I come to vote.

I look forward to hearing more about your and your party's policies on animal welfare in the run up to the general election.

Yours sincerely,

CIWF - Compassion in World Farming has done more than any other organisation to raise the standards of welfare for animals trapped in the horrors of factory farming. It may seem incongruous that vegans and vegetarians become involved in issues of livestock farming. However CVVUK supports all actions that minimise animal suffering and many of us started off as meat-eaters before becoming vegetarian and then many choosing to become vegan. The first step of this journey may be to become aware of the widespread suffering of farm animals in intensive farming. CIWF has many campaigns that we can support, at present the following are pressing concerns:

- end of cages
- live exports
- fish
- honest labelling
- save our antibiotics
- animal sentience
- farming policy and pandemics
- trade and animal welfare

COMPASSION
in world farming



If you wish to support any or all of the campaigns you can sign the petitions by accessing the following link: <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/our-campaigns/>

The CIWF website gives detailed information on the cruel practices it is trying to counter in various areas of farming. The topic of UK trade provides an overview of Government power to maintain or lower welfare standards since leaving the European Union. CIWF investigates the legislative procedures that have taken place to forge the Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) and draws this conclusion: *"In sum, despite pledging to protect UK animal welfare standards in trade deals, the Government has repeatedly refused to introduce legal protection for animals, farmers, and consumers against lower standard imports, and resisted thorough, meaningful scrutiny of FTAs."*

We are fortunate to have a democratic vote and we must let politicians of all parties know that there are citizens who care about their fellow creatures and how they suffer and that this will be an important consideration when we come to cast our vote.

Brenda Ryder

Easy vegan spreads

The easily available vegan cheese often has very little food value. There are plenty of spreads one can make with time, a well equipped kitchen and the right ingredients, but one or more of the above are not always available. From surprise guests to needing a tasty healthy snack (with at least some protein!) or while in minimally equipped self-catering holiday let far from a supermarket, here are some ideas to serve on bread, toast or crackers with readily available inexpensive ingredients and no equipment needed.

Pea Spread. Mix together the contents of a tin of mushy peas, with one and a half teaspoons of marmite. Either a finely chopped onion or chives - fresh or dried can be added. Mix in a tablespoon or two of oats to thicken, and leave for an hour. Keeps well.

Guacamole. Sold as a dip but very good as a spread, sprinkled with toasted almond flakes for crunch and protein. Make your own by mashing a ripe avocado with olive oil and lime or lemon juice, adding chopped onion and/or chilli powder to taste.

Hummus. Again sold as a dip, but can be used as a spread. Top each bite-sized piece with half a walnut, and/or an olive cut in half.

Peanut butter. On its own not that special, but (of the right sort) quite healthy, with plenty of protein. It can be made into a tasty savoury spread with the addition of prepared mustard. (This also improves the texture.) Mix to taste, but I suggest starting with a good teaspoon of mustard to a tablespoon of peanut butter.

Send us your ideas for your favourite spreads that we can share in the next newsletter.

Waste not, want not!

John Ryder writes: This is an old war-time and post-war saying that was drummed into me by my parents, and is as appropriate now as ever, both with inflation and for the environment.

Something we have tried: When one buys a lettuce the outer leaves are often not usable as salad leaves, either as slightly wilted or too tough, but they are too good to throw out. We have found tearing/cutting them up they can make good "spinach", the thinner greener bits cooking up like spinach, the thicker white bits retaining a pleasant crunch.

Has anyone else got suggestions for reducing food waster that they would like to share in the next newsletter?

Recipe - Caponata pasta

Sometimes all you want to cook for dinner is a quick pasta dish, but you fancy something with more interesting flavours than usual. This quick and easy caponata pasta recipe from BBC Good Food might fit the bill. It has a sweet and sour tang and it takes just 20 minutes!

To increase the protein content you could stir in some tofu cubes before serving.



Preparation and cooking time : **Prep:**2 mins **Cook:**18 mins **Easy Serves 4**

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp olive oil (or use the oil from your chargrilled veg, see below)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 250g chargrilled Mediterranean veg (peppers and aubergines, if possible) from a jar, pot or deli counter, drained if in oil (you can use this oil in place of the olive oil) and roughly chopped
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp small capers
- 2 tbsp raisins
- 250g rigatoni, penne or another short pasta shape
- bunch basil leaves, picked
- vegan parmesan alternative, shaved, to serve

Method

- **STEP 1** - Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion for 8-10 mins until starting to caramelise (or for longer if you have time – the sweeter the better). Add the garlic for the final 2 mins of cooking time.
- **STEP 2** - Tip in the mixed veg, tomatoes, capers and raisins. Season well and simmer, uncovered, for 10 mins, or until you have a rich sauce.
- **STEP 3** -Meanwhile, boil the kettle. Pour the kettleful of water into a large pan with a little salt and bring back to the boil. Add the pasta and cook until tender with a little bite, then drain, reserving some of the pasta water. Tip the pasta into the sauce, adding a splash of pasta water if it needs loosening. Scatter with the basil leaves and parmesan, if you like, and serve straight from the pan

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/caponata-pasta#commentsFeed>

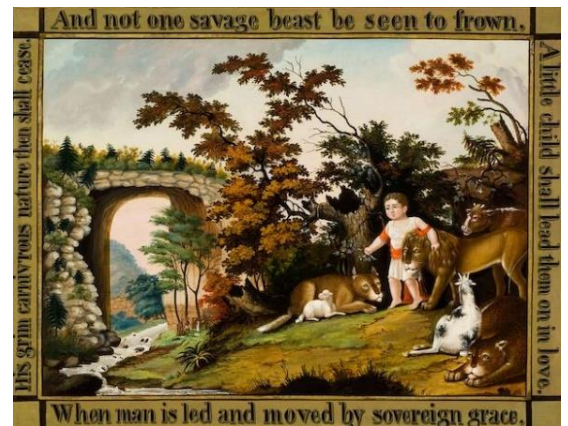
If you want to try making your own authentic Sicilian caponata, rather than using ingredients from a jar, you will find a recipe here: <https://www.olivemagazine.com/recipes/vegan/sicilian-caponata/>

And finally..... A Place for Praise and Gratification

The Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology regularly publishes a themed online magazine and the July issue was on the subject of food and place. CVVUK member Dr Philip Sampson contributed this article:

“There is,” says the proverb, “a place for everything and everything in its place.” In 1675, John Hacket, Bishop of Lichfield, elaborated: “The Lord hath set everything in its place and order.” So, what place did God give food?

*It depends upon the food. The culinary place for every seed-bearing plant and every fruit-bearing tree starts in Eden (Gen 1:29–30). For John Calvin, the vegan diet of Eden was “abundantly sufficient for the highest gratification,” “a liberal abundance which should leave nothing wanting to a sweet and pleasant life.” The promised land is the vegetarian place of abundance: grapes, pomegranates and figs (Num 13:23); the kingdom of God is the place for a bloodless feast – after all, the lamb is to lie down **with** the wolf, not **within** the wolf (Isa 11:6–9; 65:25).*



*The place of animals is not on a plate, but to praise and disclose their great creator, to sing out in praise and joy. (1) The church has sung out these truths most weeks for many centuries. From Thomas Ken’s (1674) “Doxology” (“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; **praise Him, all creatures here below**”), to Kari Jobe’s “Revelation Song” in which we join all creation in singing praise to the King of kings.*

Our family had little of this in mind when we first began to move to a plant-based diet some fifty years ago. It was not because we were especially aware that the purpose of creation is to praise and declare God; (2) nor for epicurean reasons of “the highest gratification,” as Calvin put it. Discovering the pleasures of a plant-based diet, and insight into the biblical meaning of creation came later. Rather, it was because we had learned that our dietary choices were directly contributing to the malnutrition suffered by many in the developing world. For us, it made no sense to campaign for social justice while undermining our message with our actions. Moreover, to us, a change of diet seemed a small effort for the improved nutrition of malnourished children. Only later did we find it hard to sing with integrity one of the many songs based on Psalm 148, from Thomas Ken to Kari Jobe, while knowing we would go home and eat the choir.

But look around you. The world is no longer an Eden, or even a promised land; and God gave animals to Noah to eat.

Our fallen world is without doubt a place of dietary scarcity, suffering and death. Since the flood, fleshpots have sometimes been necessary for survival in this sinful world. It was, observed the Calvinist, Thomas Adams in 1629, “sin that made us butchers, and taught the master to eat the servant.” Yet, God is merciful to his animals, and constrains our cruelty. Noah was commanded to ensure the animal was dead before butchery began (Gen 9:4), outlawing the practice of cooking an animal while yet alive. The Mosaic covenant declared “unclean” (inedible) those animals whose

slaughter entails intense agonies: swine, crustaceans, cetaceans, cephalopods ... Even “clean” (edible) animals may not be slaughtered or eaten if they bear the scars of abuse or mutilation (Lev 11; etc.). By contrast, modern factory farming relies on mutilation and abounds in abuse. Solomon in all his wisdom, warned that animal cruelty is wickedness, incompatible with a righteous life (Prov 12:10). We also have New Testament witness. Jesus relies upon his heavenly Father’s known care for sparrows to demonstrate his care for us (Matt 10:29). His reputation for making “easy” yokes that do not chafe and cause pain, reassures us that discipleship is a place of care (Matt 11:28–30). Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). In view of this trinitarian witness, it is unsurprising that many of our evangelical forebears took a dim view of cruelty. Westminster divine, George Walker (1641), calls it “a kind of scorn and contempt of the workmanship of God our creator.”

In today’s world, we don’t just eat the choir, we first hand over God’s creatures to an industry known for its cruelty. Calvin asked why God bothers to care about birds (Deut 22:6–7; Matt 10:29). He answers that he “meant to express the better, how greatly He abhors all cruelty.... Birds may seem of no value to us, but God will tolerate no cruelty to them.” Yet we tolerate it; indeed, we pay for it. In the modern meat industry, chickens are routinely scalded to death, cattle are skinned and dismembered alive. (3)

How the demons must rejoice at the sights of such butchery; how they must enjoy the cries of pain. An animal created to praise God has been reduced to screaming, quivering flesh; its agonies disclose nothing of the God of love; much about ourselves. From its violent, sinful origin (Gen 6:11–13; 9:3–4), to the cruel wickedness of industrial farms, the place of meat has always been bloody.

We live in a place where it is entirely possible to live healthily without supplementing our diet with flesh; indeed, research indicates that the low-cruelty diet of Eden is actually healthier – as one might expect of God’s plan for us.

In the wilderness places we reject God, and lust after fleshpots. God provides until we are gorged, until it comes out of our nostrils; and we bury those who lusted in their graves of desire. (4) Carnist lust kills.

The British may be an island nation, but we are no island, entire of ourselves. The place we give meat has an unsustainable global impact. It industrialises hideous cruelties, is a major source of greenhouse gases, pollutes land and sea, contributes to malnutrition in developing countries, causes ill health, is associated with antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and generates new zoonotic diseases. Does God have a place for such ruinous food in Britain today?

(Illustration - Edward Hicks, Peaceable Kingdom of the Branch)

Follow this link to find the original article with footnotes and suggested further reading, together with other items in Issue 7 of *The Big Picture* magazine: [A Place for Praise and Gratification](#)

Dr Philip Sampson is the author of *Animal Ethics and the Nonconformist Conscience* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).