



Mission- Annotated Bibliography

What impact does a Christian approach to the ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare have on our theology of Mission?

The following paper explores some themes from various books and sources which consider the impact of an awareness of the welfare of animals on Christian missiology, using the 5 Marks of Mission as a framework.

♣ To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

Key Question:

- **Is the Good News of the Kingdom of God only relevant to human beings, or does it also good news for animals and the whole of creation?**

Sources:

- Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) (available on Moodle [here](#)).

From 'Eucharistic Table Manners' (chapter 5)

"Jesus is not a Gnostic teacher who visits earth to impart a few special, body-despising teachings to a select few. Rather, he is the eternally existent One who from the beginning has been at work ordering creation from the inside, making it an intelligible whole capable of membership and life. Everything has its logos, what we can call its principle of intelligibility and its ability to live in cooperative relationship with others. But the relationships can become disordered and degraded. When we observe suffering and pain of so much created life, we can understand why Paul would say that creatures currently exist in a state of futility and bondage (Romans 8:18-23). For a variety of reasons (many of them having to do with human destructiveness), they are not able to realize their logos or live in the ways God intended for them." (p146)

"Creatures are currently living a deficient form of life. What they need is the healing and strengthening of memberships, a healing in which the church, understood as the continuation on earth of Christ's practices or way of being, has a vital role to play. When this healing takes place, a healing that is glimpsed at the Eucharistic table in the eating that people do, relationships are transformed so that they witness to true life.

This way of speaking about Jesus suggests it is a serious distortion to confine his ministry and significance to the salvation of selected, individual postmortem souls.... (Colossians 1:15-20)...Jesus' life is here claimed to be about the transformation of *all life* and the reparation of creation's many memberships. Where life is broken, degraded, or hungry, Jesus repairs life, showing it to us as reconciled, protected, and fed." (p147)

- Clough, David. *On Animals. Volume One, Systematic Theology*. (London: T & T Clark, 2012) (available on Moodle [here](#)).

“If the argument of this final part of the book is correct, it makes no more sense to exclude God’s other-than-human animals from redemption, than it does to exclude them from God’s great works of creation and reconciliation. Those theological accounts that have attempted to make redemption an exclusively human enterprise seem in this context to be oddly partial, preoccupied with the human condition, inattentive to the breadth of biblical witness and – for no good theological reasons – neglectful of the other creatures that God had reason to make part of the astonishing diversity of creation. The Christian hope must therefore be that the bodies of other-than-human animals are not disposable parts of the current world order, but will be resurrected with human bodies in the new creation. Such a vision of the redeemed bodies of animals – human and other-than-human – should encourage Christians to appreciate that their relationships with other animals in the present is a particular and pressing concern, and therefore requires the ethical reflection that will be the topic of the second volume of this work.” (p171-2)

- Oliver, Simon. ‘The Gift of Creation’. In General Synod of the Church of England, *Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030. Theological Perspectives (2021)* (available online [here](#)).

“The kingdom is not a political and cultural structure. It is a creation kingdom in which an original peace, devoid of exploitation, is re-established. This can be reaffirmed by understanding the intrinsic meaning and value of every creature as a gift to itself which mediates the divine goodness...The Gospel is therefore Good News for creation, not simply humanity.”

♣ To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

Key Questions:

- **What kind of Church should Christians strive to build?**
- **How are human relationships with non-human animals shaping the nature of the community of the Church?**
- **Is the relationship between human and non-human animals, and with the created order more widely, a key catechetical need in teaching and nurturing new believers?**

Sources:

- Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) (available on Moodle [here](#)).

From ‘Eucharistic Table Manners’ (chapter 5)

“If Jesus Christ is life in all its truth and fullness, then the Eucharist is central because it is the place where we are fed by him to live the life he makes possible. At the Eucharist we receive the nurture and training we need to become people who participate in his healing and reconciling ways with the world. Eating Jesus is the ritual act that has the potential to

transform eating in general so that it can be hospitable at its core and lead to a communion of life.” (p149)

“To “remember Jesus” in their eating was not simply to recall a past event. It was to call on Jesus and invite him to transform what they were doing together. Jesus’ presence at the meal could thus be an “effective” presence that challenged and corrected their eating practices. Eating, in other words, was the occasion in which Christ’s followers could witness to his ongoing presence in the world. To remember Jesus is to join in a re-remembering of a world dismembered by sin.” (p150)

“Persons who feed on Jesus are challenged to relate to others in a new way. Rather than engaging them primarily in utilitarian terms, absorbing them to suit personal need and satisfaction, eaters of Jesus are invited to extend his ministries of attention and welcome, feeding and forgiving, and healing and reconciliation. These are ministries that require us to remember others and keep them in our hearts and minds. Remembering Jesus, in other words, inspires us to remember others. Eaters of Jesus thus become hosts to the world who consider, respect, and serve the integrity of those who co-abide with them.” (p157)

♣ To respond to human need by loving service

While this section explicitly states that it is *human need* which Christian mission is called to respond to, we may ask why human need alone is identified here? However, as the section below on the Unjust Structure of Society shows, animal agriculture has significant impacts on human need.

Sources

Adam, Margaret B., David L. Clough, and David Grumett. ‘A Christian Case for Farmed Animal Welfare’, *Animals*, 9, no. 12: 1116 (2019) (available online [here](#)).

“Christianity’s heritage of animal advocacy offers a steady stream of faithful people whose lives exhibit their scriptural interpretation about relationships with animals. The church tells and retells stories about biblical characters and pre-modern saints, often with extravagant embellishment, the better to illustrate the exceptional holiness of the figures. While there may be scant historical evidence about some of these saints themselves, vast numbers of people across centuries celebrate them and the faithfulness their stories illustrate. Many of the saints had special relationships with animals and were able to communicate with them, share home and food with them, heal them, protect and rescue them. Others were protected and rescued by friendly animals. Many did not eat meat; some only ate herbs and honey. Together, these stories and their popularity present a body of evidence that, across centuries, Christianity has recognized as exceedingly holy Christians who lived closely with animals in ways that reflect the creation stories and anticipate images of the peaceable kingdom.” (p5-6)

“In the United Kingdom during the nineteenth century, Christians played a key role in putting animal welfare on the moral, social, legal, and political agendas by founding what became the RSPCA. They were motivated by earlier theological accounts of the Christian significance of animals and by the belief that Christian faith should inform the way society

was ordered. The latter informed Christian campaigns on other social issues in the same period, such as for the abolition of the slave trade.” (p6)

- Linzey, Andrew. *Animal Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1994) (not currently on Moodle) “The uniqueness of humanity consists in its ability to become the servant species. To exercise its full humanity as co-participants and co-workers with God in the redemption of the world. This view challenges the traditional notions that the world was made simply for human use or pleasure, that its purpose consists in serving the human species, or that the world exists largely in an instrumentalist relationship to human beings. Only the most tenacious adherence to the possibility of God may be sufficient to redeem us from our own profoundly arrogant humanistic conceptions of our place in the universe.” (p57)

♣ To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

Understanding the unjust structures of society is hugely complex, and there are many factors to consider. David Clough’s Volume II of *On Animals* explores in great detail many aspects of how human beings’ interactions with Animals constitute and contribute to these unjust structures, both for human and non-human animals. The section on the use of animals for food (chapter 2) explores species-specific impacts on animals and fish in different farming systems in some detail. The following quotations explore some of the impacts of animal agriculture on humans, followed by a concluding paragraph which brings together some perspectives on the ways in which using animals for foods may be seen in from a Christian viewpoint as contributing to unjust structures in society.

Sources

- Clough, David L. *On Animals. Volume II, Theological Ethics*. (London: T & T Clark, 2018) (available on Moodle [here](#)).

“The most immediate and direct human effects of the intensive farming of animals are on those who work in the industry. Work in slaughterhouses and meat processing plants is usually unskilled, low paid, low status, and unpleasant, with high staff turnover and high injury rates. Farm work often shares many of these features. As a result, the industry often recruits the poorest workers, who in many contexts are migrants. The intersection between intensively farmed animals, meat products, race, immigration, and exploitation of workers is vividly portrayed in Eric Schlosser’s 2001 book *Fast Food Nation...*” (p54-5)

“The drive for companies to supply meat at ever cheaper prices creates working conditions which are intolerable, as is made clear by annual employee turnover rates of 60-140 per cent, or even higher. The work also inflicts demonstrable psychological harm on workers, including forms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and sociological research has shown that the areas nearby slaughterhouses have higher arrest rates for violent crimes, rape and sex offenses. The intersectionality of the exploitation of human workers in relation to poverty, migrant status, race and gender alongside the exploitation of non-human

animals is striking... The intensive farming of non-human animals and large-scale production of products deriving from them seems to be inevitably accompanied by exploitative conditions for the most vulnerable human workers.” (p55-6)

“The second notable human impact of farming animals for meat concerns the effect it has on global food and water supplies. Much of the available resources of our planet are currently devoted to the production of animal food products. Grazing land for domesticated animals occupies one quarter of the land area of the earth, a 600 per cent increase since 1800, and the novel practice of feeding grain to livestock, dating only from the 1950s, now requires an additional one-third of global crop land. The FAO projects that 2,475 million tonnes of cereals will be used in the year 2014–15. Of this total, 1,108 million tonnes will be consumed by humans, and 877 million tonnes will be used as feed for domesticated animals. This means that humans consume only 45 per cent of the cereal crops we grow, and we now feed 35 per cent to non-human animals. Raising livestock now requires 78 per cent of all available agricultural land, 30 per cent of the earth’s surface.” (p56)

“Current practices of raising farmed animals, therefore, both inflict a wide range of suffering and stress on the animals farmed and – far from being necessary for human survival – threaten human food and water security, are responsible for substantial greenhouse gas emissions, cause local and global environmental problems from pollution, and pose substantial risks to human health. A Christian recognition of other animals as fellow creatures of God, recipients of the reconciling peace between all things effected in Jesus Christ, and participants in the new creation in which all creatures will enjoy the freedom of the children of God, is incompatible with the intensive farming of animals. Therefore, Christians have strong faith-based reasons to avoid cooperating with the systems that treat other animals in these ways.” (p66-7)

- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. (London: SCM Press, 1992) (not currently on Moodle).

““Violence committed by people against other people, and by human beings against weaker creatures, is sin, and a crime against life. Violence always has two sides: on the one side is the person who commits the act, and on the other is his victim. On the one side the master sets himself up as superior, on the other the slave is humiliated. On the one side the exploiter wins, on the other the exploited person loses.

An act of violence destroys life on both sides, but in different ways - on the one hand through the evil committed, on the other through the suffering. The person who commits the act becomes inhumane and unjust, the victim is dehumanized and deprived of his or her rights.” (p132)

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, (Vatican encyclical, 2015) (available online [here](#)).

“This sister (Mother Earth) now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.” (clause 2, first parenthesis added).

- Linzey, Andrew. *Animal Theology*. (London: SCM Press, 1994) (not currently on Moodle)

“The divine right of humans may be an idea whose time has gone. That humans should use their power in defence of the weak, especially the weak of other species, and that humans should actively seek the liberation of all beings capable of knowing their oppression and suffering may be an idea whose time has come.” (p75)

♣ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

This fifth mark of mission is perhaps the most obvious one which relates to a Christian Ethic of Farmed Animal Welfare, and sources which relate to this theme are more extensive. However, the key questions here are:

- **Do animals matter because they are part of creation, or because they have inherent worth in themselves?**
- **Is there ever a tension between care for creation and care for individual animals, and if so what could be a Christian response to this tension?**

Sources

- Clough, David L. *On Animals. Volume II, Theological Ethics*. (London: T & T Clark, 2018) (available on Moodle [here](#)).

“The third major impact of raising livestock beyond the impact on the animals themselves is the impact it has on the global and local environment, with severe impacts on wild animals. FAO figures on the contribution of livestock to global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) have been disputed: their 2006 estimate was 18 per cent of all GHG emissions, which they subsequently revised down to 14.5 per cent, but critics have argued the figure should be as low as 8 per cent or as high as 51 per cent. Whatever the correct figure in this range, it is clear that the expansion of farming of animals for food is a significant part of the cause of anthropogenic climate change. A 2014 report for the Royal Institute of International Affairs estimates that per unit of protein, greenhouse gas

emissions from beef production are 150 times that of soy products, ‘and even the least emissions-intensive meat products – pork and chicken – produce 20–25 times more’. Farming of animals also has a significant direct impact on global biodiversity: the FAO estimates that ‘70% of previous forested land in the Amazon is occupied by pastures, and feedcrops cover a large part of the remainder’. In 1900 the biomass of domesticated animals exceeded that of all wild mammals by three times; by 2000 a four-fold increase in domesticated animals and a halving of the numbers of wild animals meant that the biomass of domesticated animals was 24 times that of wild mammals. Deforestation, the degrading and fragmentation of habitats, desertification, the introduction of alien species with associated diseases, and pollution are all causes of reductions of biodiversity and contribute to the extinction of wild animals. Animal farming also has significant local impacts, especially where it is intensive. Concentrations of manure release ammonia, and discharge from manure lagoons created by pig farms and feedlots can escape into water supplies causing pollution and bacterial poisoning.” (p57-8)

The Gift of Creation and the Five Marks of Mission

The following is Simon Oliver’s conclusion of his paper on ‘the gift of creation’, exploring the idea of creation as gift. It is used as part of the Church of England’s 2021 paper on the journey to Net Zero, and so is not specifically about animals, but about creation in general, however the work gives a helpful theological exploration of creatures as gift, of intrinsic value due to their createdness by God. He relates these ideas to the Five Marks of Mission. They are quoted here in full together, rather than inserting them into the sections above, in order to see how the work hangs together. The full article ([link below](#)) gives details of his theological backing for these perspectives and is well worth reading in full.

- Oliver, Simon. ‘The Gift of Creation’. In *Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030. Theological Perspectives, Revision 0, October 2021*. (General Synod of the Church of England, 2021), p5-9 (available online [here](#)).

“The Marks of Mission.

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

The kingdom is not a political and cultural structure. It is a creation kingdom in which an original peace, devoid of exploitation, is re-established. This can be reaffirmed by understanding the intrinsic meaning and value of every creature as a gift to itself which mediates the divine goodness. Moreover, creation is a single gift (it is one) composed of an infinite variety of gifted creatures.

For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:16-17

The Gospel is therefore Good News for creation, not simply humanity.

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

To teach and baptise new believers is to teach them that their life is gift twice given. This inaugurates them into a pattern of relationships – a *koinonia* – which is the Church, the community of the gifted (Acts 2.1-13; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4.11). Within that pattern of relationships, only one is wholly definitive for every person: their relationship with God, their creator. Nevertheless, the Church is catholic in the sense that it draws all creation into this economy of gift exchange. A crucial ethical question arises for every baptised Christian: what do we give to creation, as well as receive from creation?

To respond to human need by loving service

If God's creation is fundamentally an economy of gift exchange which is made visible in the sacramental life of the Church, the response of the baptised Christian must be to ask 'to what will I give myself?' This may include giving oneself in loving service to nurturing the gift of the environment as an aspect of the Church itself.

To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

The Christian doctrine of creation resists the classic modern dualism of culture (the human domain of freedom and creativity) and nature (the non-human domain of instinct and determination). The power of this dualism should not be underestimated: it structures the modern university into the disciplines of culture (the Humanities), the disciplines of nature (the natural sciences) and those which sit uncomfortably in the middle (the social sciences). The domains of nature and culture, which so often blend (is global warming a natural or cultural phenomenon?), are inextricably bound together in the category of 'creation'. The transformation of unjust structures and the challenge to violence cannot be restricted to the human cultural or political domain. Such transformation and the challenge to violence must reach every aspect of creation, including the natural environment.

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Creation's 'integrity' refers to its integral unity. We cannot deal with the environmental crisis piecemeal. The call to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth is a challenge to the very form and structure of human life, not simply an aspect of human society." p9