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A Biblical View of Animals

A Critical Response to the Theology of Andrew Linzey.

Since Peter Singer's landmark work, *Animal Liberation*, was published in 1976, the issue of humanity's moral relationship to animals has become a hot topic.¹ Not surprisingly, Christians have begun to re-consider the issue of animal rights.² Christian Vegetarians, as they call themselves, have begun to proclaim their "humane" lifestyle as a logical extension of the redemption found in Christ. In light of the trends, I believe it is now necessary for the Church to investigate again what holy writ has to say about humanity's relationship to animals as it compares with so called "Christian Vegetarians and Christian Animal Rights Activists."

Definitions

Permit me to define some terms. Animal Rights is the belief that animals as individuals have the same rights or at least similar rights as those believed to belong to humans. These rights would include the right to life, liberty and the freedom to live their lives undisturbed by humans. This belief is in contrast to the doctrine of animal welfare which states that humans can eat, hunt, trap, fish, and ranch animals as long as the animals are treated responsibly. Vegetarians are people who refuse to eat animal flesh, but will eat and wear animal products such as cheese, milk and wool that don't require the death of the animal. Vegans, however, refuse to eat or wear any product developed

¹ One need only think about the antics of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and the rise of animal rights legislation such as what happened in Washington State (2000) and Massachusetts in 1996.

² Search done on Google.com using the key words "Christianity +Animal Rights" 11/23/02 yielded 13,600.hits.

directly or indirectly arising from animals, including products tested on animals.

Christian Vegetarians, despite some variety, believe that the Christian principle of Godly stewardship strongly supports, if not requires, the adoption of a vegetarian lifestyle. They believe vegetarianism fulfills God's will for humanity's stewardship in four essential ways. First, they argue that vegetarianism was God's original plan in creation. Second, vegetarianism, by reducing animal death models Christ's compassion for creation. Third, vegetarianism exemplifies Godly stewardship of the earth by living more simply, in that vegetarians consume fewer resources. Finally, vegetarianism manifests better individual stewardship in that vegetarianism is a healthier lifestyle.³

As you can see, the topic of Christian vegetarianism is varied and requires an assessment from both a theological and scientific standpoint. I should point out that the connections between vegetarianism and animal rights are not identical. But if you are an animal rights activist, you must be a vegetarian. However, you can be a vegetarian without being an animal rights activist.

In this presentation, I will look at the issue of animal rights through the eyes of Andrew Linzey, who is the great modern theorist of Christian Animal rights and possibly its greatest thinker. Then I will evaluate his ideas in light of Scripture.

Andrew Linzey's initial work entitled *Animal Rights: A Christian Assessment of Man's Treatment of Animals*, appeared in 1976; the same year as Peter Singer's, *Animal Liberation*.⁴ Since that time, Linzey, an Anglican Minister, has continued to present his case for a Christian view of Animal rights. Dr. Linzey's argument presents some interesting issues for the Biblical Christian. Dr. Linzey's views touch on our view of

³ Stephen R. Kaufman and Nathan Braun, *Vegetarianism as Christian Stewardship*, (Cleveland, OH: Vegetarian Advocates Press, 2002), ix.

⁴ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),21.

mankind, his role in the world, the status of animals, the extent of Christ's redeeming work and the members of the after-life. Unfortunately, Linzey's treatment of the subject is not as systematic as one would like. Since he covers a great number of issues related to animal rights ranging from vivisection to vegetarianism, I have had to narrow the scope of my analysis to his exposition and interpretation of Biblical ideas.⁵

Key Questions:

So in discussing Linzey's theology, I request that you think about two key questions: First, what is the moral status of animals? Second, can humanity morally eat animals? Kaufman and Braun in their book *Vegetarian as Christian Stewardship* state the issue quite clearly, "If eating animals is consistent with fundamental Christian principles, then there is no problem; if not then Christians should strive to abstain."^{6, 7}

Linzey's theology on animals, in a nutshell, is that God's original purpose for man and beast was to live in non-violent harmony. Neither one was to harm the other. The Fall, however, changed that relationship. But God, through Jesus Christ, seeks to redeem all and restore all including the relationship between animals and mankind. Therefore, Christians, as followers of Christ, need to care for animals and work toward restoration because cruelty is atheism.

Linzey bases his thesis on two main points, the covenant of creation and the example of Christ.

Linzey's Argument from Creation:

⁵ While not denying the potential validity of argument three and four, it should be noted that Linzey spends most of his time with argument one and two.

⁶ Stephen R. Kaufman and Nathan Braun, *Vegetarianism as Christian Stewardship*, (Cleveland, OH: Vegetarian Advocates Press, 2002), 1.

⁷ There is also a third issue of the moral significance of animal suffering which impacts issues, such as hunting. The question can be posed, "Can man morally cause animal suffering through killing animals due to the need to control animal damage or through hunting?"

Linzey's creation argument assaults two key ideas of those who hold to the superiority and special-ness of man and the nature of man's dominion. First, he argues that Christianity's long love affair with anthropocentrism, the belief that man is the center of all moral inquiry, stems from "...an exaggerated interpretation... of Genesis 2,....".⁸ He argues that while Scripture speaks of humanity's special role, it also speaks of the many commonalties humans have with animals. As Linzey sees it, all these commonalties can be subsumed under the umbrella of "Covenant".⁹ Covenant speaks of community. Both humanity and animals are part of a community as they both partake of life that belongs to and results from the spirit (*ruach*) of God. Linzey points to the phrase *Nephesh* as indicative of this shared reality.¹⁰ Linzey continues by pointing out that mankind's creation was no more special than that of the animals since both were formed out of the ground (Genesis 2:19) and share the same blessing as animals, namely to be fruitful and multiply¹¹. As he says, humanity is a creature of God just like the animals and this reality makes us fellow creatures. All of us were created for Christ (Col 1:16).¹² Therefore, he says, it is illegitimate to argue that animals were made just for human use.¹³ On the basis of Genesis 1:29 with Genesis 9:3, Linzey contends that God originally planned Adam and Eve to be vegetarians so mankind's rulership was to be servant based and also non-violent. Since Adam and Eve were to be vegetarians, Linzey concludes that dominion was to be of tending the garden for not only the benefit of humans but for the benefit of the animal creation as well.

⁸ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),55.

⁹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),30ff.

¹⁰ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),30.

¹¹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),31.

¹² Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),55.

¹³ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),54f.

Linzey's Argument from Christ:

Linzey also argues that Christ's example provides principles which lead one to reject anthropocentrism and support animal rights or, as he calls it, the concept of Theos-rights (which suggests God has given these rights to animals).¹⁴ In Christ, says Linzey, we have power expressed in humility. As representatives of Christ we are to minister to the "least of these."¹⁵ As Christ gave of himself sacrificially for the Universe (*kosmos*), we too are to give sacrificially; the greater for the lesser.¹⁶ Christ presents a moral example of working on behalf of the poor and weak. In light of this principle, Linzey believes that Christians are to fight for the rights of animals.¹⁷ He strenuously contends that God's will is a redeemed creation free from parasitism, namely living off of animal flesh.¹⁸ Christ reconciled the world and by that Linzey understands to include the animal creation too.¹⁹ He even suggests, albeit quietly, that Christ died to reconcile animals and

¹⁴ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),24.

¹⁵ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),44.

¹⁶ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),54f.

¹⁷ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),70f.

¹⁸ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),76.

¹⁹ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),68-70. Linzey relies on a few passages that are difficult to interpret such as Col. 1:20 (and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (NASB)); Eph 1:10¹⁹ (with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him (NASB)); and Romans 8:19ff. (Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),157. Verses are cited on this page of notes. Linzey mistakenly cites the verse as Rom 8:28f (see footnote 37 on p. 157)) Linzey's contention that Romans 8:19 refers to human and animal groaning and he is not alone. (Linzey is not alone in holding that Christ is going to reconcile animate and inanimate creation. See H. Wayne House, " The Doctrine of Salvation in Colossians" *BSac* 151:603 (Jul 94), 334. Leland Ryken et. al. General Editors, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), 31. Gerald F. Hawthorne et. al. General Editors, *Dictionary OF PAUL AND HIS LETTERS* (DOWNER'S GROVE, INTER-VARSITY

all creation to himself.²⁰ Linzey even goes so far as to say that working to relieve nature from suffering and futility is the most fundamental liberation of all. Through Christ we are to help create the peaceable kingdom as prophesied in Isaiah 65:24ff. Finally, Christ, as the Logos, means that he was creatively involved in the making of animals and is thus concerned for them as various parables suggest.

Linzey's Response to Objections:

Linzey knows that objections are on the horizon and seeks to defuse them before they develop too much momentum. He focuses on three primary objections namely, Genesis 9, the Old Testament Sacrificial System and Christ's behavior of eating fish.

Linzey sees Genesis 9 as God's condescension to humanity. He says God accommodated the violence in the world by allowing mankind to eat meat.²¹ He believes the prohibition against eating blood signifies that God owned the life. The life of the animal belonged to Him and that animal killers were accountable to God for their actions. At its root, Linzey does not believe mankind has a right to kill animals. Linzey believes man was only allowed to kill out of necessity. Linzey says, the covenant shows us that humanity and animals are morally related. For evidence, Linzey cites Exod. 23:5 "helping the laden ass"; Dt. 25:4 "Don't muzzle the ox" and Ex 20:8-11 "letting animals rest on the

PRESS, 1993), 322.). A priori, I have no problem thinking that all created things on earth figuratively groan under the penalty of sin brought on by man's sin both in Adam and presently. What is interesting is that the killing of animals isn't mentioned as the fundamental expression of the problem as to why creation is groaning. However, a closer look at kti,sewj may lead us in a different direction. John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew-1 Corinthians, vol. 4. Acts-1 Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979), 156-7 says that the all creatures refers to gentiles or the heathen world. Certainly Lightfoot isn't the last word but I find it interesting that a fully human understanding of all creation is posited here.

²⁰ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),98.

²¹ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),127f.

Sabbath" and even with Jonah 4:11 "the animals of Nineveh" as demonstrating God's concern with animals and humans and that they are morally related.²² Therefore, since killing of animals is no longer really necessary to live, we must avoid it.

Perhaps the biggest objection to his theory is presented by the Old Testament Sacrificial system. Linzey looks at Genesis 8:20-22 with particular amazement. Linzey wonders how God could love animals and yet savor their deaths?²³ He believes the solution lies in rejecting the common notion that sacrifice is destroying something valuable (preferably something living) to God to placate His wrath. Instead, Linzey thinks that sacrifice is better conceived as giving something to God. The death of the animal is not in focus. Linzey quotes Eric Mascall's statement "There is no suggestion that God is glorified by the destruction of his creature, for if it could be literally destroyed there would be nothing left for him to accept and transform." Linzey continues by saying that sacrifice is the idea of freeing the animal's life to be with God. As if feeling the need to further bolster his argument he cites Isaiah 1:11 noting that God was tired of Judah's sacrifices. Elsewhere Linzey highlights that underneath all the pro-sacrificial language, Israel had a minority who recognized that sacrifice wasn't the answer to remove sin.²⁴

To the objection, "What about Christ eating fish?" Linzey responds that discipleship is not merely imitation. Linzey explains that Jesus had to exist in a particular setting and as such, couldn't resolve or engage every problem which faced him such as the role of women, veganism or home-rule. Christ was in fact limited.²⁵ Linzey continues citing Ephesians 1:9ff., that the meaning of Christ's work implicated cosmic

²² Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),31.

²³ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),104.

²⁴ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),105.

²⁵ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),87.

reconciliation. Perhaps Linzey's unstated belief here is that the Church would eventually come to know the implications of Christ's reconciliation in all its cosmic dimensions. Nevertheless, Linzey believes that Christ's sacrifice gives us the hermeneutic to understand how all human-creation relationships should be structured, namely for the greater to give of himself for the lesser.²⁶

Concluding Summary of Linzey's Views:

From the arguments just listed, Linzey and many like him believe that Christians are to work towards creating a peaceable kingdom (Isa 11:6-9). Christians are to be vegetarian as this minimizes animal death. The killing of animals must be avoided even if the animal's activity becomes inconvenient, costly or even potentially infectious to humans.²⁷ Humans are allowed to kill animals for self-defense. Linzey also believes that farmers can kill animals to protect crops, an idea he sees as an extension of self-preservation, but only when the farmer has tried to mitigate the problem through non-lethal means.²⁸

Critical Assessment & Evaluation of Linzey's Views:

General Criticisms:

I think Dr. Linzey provides a number of admirable points in his work. First, I appreciate the lack of rancor in his writings. He carefully cautions animal rights zealots not to become too preoccupied with their own righteous cause.²⁹ He states we are all sinners and we need to hold to the humility needed to dialogue with people to convince

²⁶ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),106.

²⁷ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),43.

²⁸ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),130-132.

²⁹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),101f.

them of the truth. As an animal killer who has received plenty of hate-mail³⁰, I can assure you I wish more people would take his advice. Second, I agree with Linzey that all animals belong to God and as such need to be treated with the respect appropriate of God's property. I am also glad for Linzey's desire to follow Christ even if I think his understanding of Christ is inadequate.

Regrettably there is much in Linzey's work that, in my opinion, fails to be faithful to God's revealed Word and to our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, Linzey simply fails to think as a Biblical Christian. He would have done better to have focused less on Church Tradition and more on all the relevant Scriptures. In the two books that I focus on, Linzey ignored Paul's statement in 1 Tim 4:3 warning us about people telling us to abstain from certain foods.³¹ This verse alone is enough to debunk Linzey's argument, for principles cannot overtake explicit teaching on a subject. Of course, I haven't even mentioned Mark 7:19 and Romans 14:1-2. Linzey's accommodation argument for why God allowed meat eating after the flood also fails to wrestle with the lack of restrictions regarding the eating of meat. For example, if God truly felt the killing of animals was wrong as in the case of divorce, wouldn't or shouldn't God have presented more rules around the killing of animals? In fact, other than the "clean animal" dietary restrictions there is precious little regarding the treatment of wild game, especially in light of the fact that Israelites hunted.³² Essentially, there are two rules, namely, the blood must be

³⁰ Just visit my website at <http://www.wildlifedamagecontrol.com/politics.htm> for links to the pages of hate mail I have posted there.

³¹ **brw/ma** the word used for food in 1 Tim 4:3 is clearly used to refer to fish in Luke 9:13 see also 1 Cor 8:13 where it is used with **kre,aj "meat"**. Ralph Earle "1 Timothy" *The Expositors Bible Commentary with the NIV*, vol. 12 Frank E. Gaebelin ed. et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 372. Says "Paul declared that nothing is to be rejected "apobleton" thrown away-- occurs only here in the N.T. -if it is received with thanksgiving."

³² Tom C. Rakow, *Hunting & The Bible: A Scripture Safari*, The Biblical Art of Hunting Series, Vol. 1. (Silver Lake, MN: Rock Dove Pub., 1997).

drained (Lev. 17:13-14)³³ and you cannot take the mother bird with her eggs (Dt.22:6). I think at this point it is apparent that Linzey, like so many modern theologians, tend to take a single concept and then read all of Scripture through the lens of that concept or simply ignore passages that contradict that concept. However, I think Linzey's argument is more fundamentally flawed. So I decided to take a look at the reasoning of his strongest arguments.

Critique of Linzey's view of the Covenant of Creation

Genesis does provide foundational perspectives on the relationship between humanity and animals. But while Linzey is correct that there are commonalties between animals and humans³⁴, he has overstated the extent of these commonalties. For example, man's creation was different from that of animals. Genesis 2 specifically tells us that God breathed the breath of life into Adam. There is also greater intimacy involved in the narration of man's creation as compared to that of the animals. Both creatures were created out of the ground but only one we are told was formed out of the ground. In fact, Linzey has stretched the biblical evidence to suggest that we are essentially bigger brothers to the animals.³⁵ Linzey has overlooked how Genesis provides us with a number of distinctions between animals and humans and that these are not just differences in number but differences in kind.

³³ There is some debate over the exact reason why God required the blood to be drained here are a couple of ideas. (Please note that I do not suggest that these options are necessarily exclusive). . J.R. Hyland, *The Slaughter of the Terrified Beasts*, (Sarasota, FL: Viatoris Ministries, 1988), 31, suggests that the reason for the blood restriction was to ensure that the animal was truly dead. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 1. *The Pentateuch*, Trans. James Martin, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 410 see a cultic reason, namely that God didn't want the blood that was used for expiation of sin to be eaten.

³⁴ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),38. Linzey says, he is nervous with the idea that humans have divinely appointed power over animals.

³⁵ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),46.

Consider Genesis 1:26. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." NAS

The verse begins with some cryptic words³⁶ about man being made in the image of God. The more classic phrase, "in the image of God, is used in following verse.³⁷

(~yhiêl {a/ ~l,c,äB})) This phrase occurs only twice in the O.T. here and in Genesis 9:6 (The NT has 1 Cor 11:7 & Jms 3:9). In both situations, the phrase is used to emphasize the importance of humans.³⁸ Linzey neglects to really wrestle with the issue and significance of being made in the image of God. Clearly Genesis sees something different with humans as compared to animals. For at no time are animals called "creatures made in the image of God." (Cf. Psa. 8) Second, God developed a relationship with man but He doesn't appear to have established one with animals.³⁹ I don't think a counter argument from the laconic nature of the text would have merit given the lack of God-animal relationships in the rest of Scripture. Third, perhaps more important for our purposes, as it deals with behavior more than status, are the following words translated

³⁶ ~l,c, "image" and tWmD> "likeness". While they appear to be references to physical shape it is obvious that something else is meant here.

³⁷ I take my comments here as a mere truism. Even a brief search of any theological library will present a researcher with a wealth of writing trying to explain the meaning of the phrase "image of God".

³⁸ A cursory look at *HALOT's* view of the word for image supports my view. Ludwig Koehler And Walter Baumgartner Subsequently Revised By Walter Baumgartner And Johann Jakob Stamm et.al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Translated And Edited M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden, The Netherlands:BRILL, 1994-2000) CD-ROM Edition entry 8011.

³⁹ James Oliver Busell: *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962,1978), 139. He says that man being created in the image of God (not in the image of the beast) means that man was created for fellowship with God.

"rule" **hd'r'**. and "subdue" **vb;K'**. The verb "to rule" occurs 22 times in the Old Testament and in every case the idea of "authority over" is found with the connotation of authority in the face of opposition. It is also a word never used with animals doing the ruling. In other words, **hd'r'**. is a term of the power to compel obedience.⁴⁰ Verse 28 continues this rulership theme. While containing the verb **hd'r'**., it now adds a new verb **vb;K'**. "subdue". In every other use in the Old Testament the word carries the idea of placing another entity in a servant role and again referring to humans only (cf. Micah 7:19 where God will 'subdue' our iniquity). Military usage predominates and it does so prior to any reference to the Fall. This fact is even more significant when, **lvom.** "to rule", which occurs in the same context, could have been used (see Gen 1;18).⁴¹ Fourth, Linzey seems to not understand that Adam and Eve's transgression of God's law is even more egregious as God commanded them to rule the animal kingdom. It could be insinuated that Adam and Eve were too kind to the Serpent. They should have expelled the Serpent from the comfort and protection of the Garden. Dare one say that the Serpent should have been killed for blasphemy?⁴²

⁴⁰ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, vol. 1. *The Pentateuch*, Trans. James Martin, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 152, suggest that man's original rulership was less forceful than after Genesis 9:1-7. Animals served willingly and man had power over creation which was lost after the fall. Of course the question is why God had to wait till the flood to express the fact that man was to be feared by the animal kingdom. Could it be that God wanted animals to fear Noah and his sons so as to give them a fighting chance to reproduce? Otherwise wouldn't these same animals have been imprinted and thereby tamed by Noah?

⁴¹ Robert D. Culver, "*MASHAL III*" ed. R. Laird Harris et. al, *TWOT* vol. 1 p. 534-5. *Mashal* has a much broader range of meaning from dominion to management.

⁴² I wish to thank Dr. Meredith Kline for the inspiration for this argument.

Linzey wants to make **hd'r'** mean "to rule" in the sense of serving.⁴³ Linzey argues that the traditional reading of the word **hd'r'** has been rejected by "Scholars" for three reasons. 1. Man is given control over creation and the power to use it but he is not given absolute power over it. He cannot have despotic rule. His authority is to mimic the morality of God. 2. Man is to be king in the sense of king in God's service⁴⁴ and 3. Man is commanded to be a vegetarian. Thus his power was limited to being a vegetarian.

Let me address each of these issues in turn. The first and second principle do not negate the traditional meaning of *radah*. All of creation was given to humanity under God's authority. The point of Genesis is not to mean that Mankind was to an absolute despot. Rather it was to show the extent of power mankind had over Creation, a power given by an omnipotent God. The third point is really Linzey's central one.

First, I want to point out that God never says "Don't eat animals nor does he say don't kill animals." I believe that Adam and Eve were probably vegetarians but this is on the basis of Genesis 9:3 and reading backwards, something that Linzey fails to do with the 1 Timothy passages. Nevertheless, even if they were vegetarians, it is still possible that Adam and Eve had to express lethal dominion over animals in order to protect their crops. While Linzey believes killing animals for crop protection is legitimate, he does think it should be rare. His theology also brings him to believe that humanity needs to

⁴³ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),25f. See also Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),34.

⁴⁴ Linzey says that man had authority over animals as designated by the naming of the animals. However, he says, man also named eve so he was meant to live in harmony with the created order. Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 25f. I would agree however, he has made a category mistake as Adam never married an animal. So it is very likely that Adams authority over the animals was of a different order than his authority over his mate.

modify its behavior for the sake of the animals and their homes.⁴⁵ The problem is how one thinks Adam and Eve would have done this sort of animal rights calculus given that every child being born would mean more animals would lose their homes and feeding grounds? Even a non-cursed creation would still result in the death's of animals and the loss of their homes as human population expanded and consumed more resources and habitat. Even if my understanding here is wrong, Linzey has failed to recognize that we can't go back to the Garden.

Critique of Linzey's Understanding of Sacrifice

Linzey's arguments concerning animal sacrifice strain the imagination.⁴⁶ Linzey reduces the nature of the death involved in sacrifice and instead appeals to some strange notion that the basic idea of sacrifice was not destruction but rather giving the animal to God.⁴⁷ First, he boldly denies that Christ's sacrifice required blood and that it was necessary to turn back God's wrath. Let me quote him, "The Sacrifice of Christ was not a propitiation demanded of Christ by an angry God. On the contrary, it was the free offering to God the Father in the cause of love for fellow creatures. It is the sacrifice of love freely given, and not the sacrifice of blood required, that is the distinctly Christian

⁴⁵ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 141. He even goes so far as to say, "We have to wonder whether God's right is served by the ever increasing numbers of human beings that every day lay *exclusive* claim to more and more of this *common* earth." (Italics his).

⁴⁶ A brief comparison of Roland DeVaux's section on Sacrifice in his book *Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions*, vol. 2. (N.Y: McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1965), 414ff shows that Linzey has overlooked a great deal of information on Israelite sacrificial theology and practice. He also ignores the possibility that God could create something to be destroyed. If so then the destruction of an animal or tree or something else is part of its purpose. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1974,1984) p. 426 mentions a theology by V. Taylor that sounds very similar to the one used by Linzey. Essentially Ladd quotes James Denney by saying, "...blood in separation from the flesh does not mean life but death,..." p.426.

⁴⁷ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),104.

understanding of this matter." ⁴⁸ How Linzey responds to Hebrews 9:22's citation of Lev 17:11 one can only speculate. Second, Linzey overlooks the fact that sacrifices were to cost the penitent something. Israel existed in an agricultural economy. Killing of livestock required one to lose economic power and security. It could truly express the penalty of sin and the cost of rectifying the situation. Third, Linzey's argument that Christ's sacrifice, being the greater for the lesser constitutes a model for humans to sacrifice their energies for animals stands as a principle without Biblical warrant.⁴⁹ Finally, Linzey has allowed himself, despite his understanding to the contrary, to consider the theory that prophets condemned the ritual of sacrifice. ⁵⁰ He doesn't even take the time to notice that if his understanding of Isaiah is correct then, Isaiah must have been a tortured soul. As Isaiah predicts that the Egyptians will eventually worship the true God and will sacrifice (Isa 19:21 *zebach*). Why would Isaiah, an alleged critic of sacrifice, proclaim that Egypt would begin sacrificing? Even Isaiah 34:6 has the Lord sacrificing the peoples of Edom.⁵¹ So either Isaiah forgot what he wrote some several chapters earlier or Isaiah didn't write it, or some other speculative theory. In the final analysis, Linzey takes a theory and ignores all contrary evidence to it.

On a side note, I got tired of Linzey's belief that Isaiah's lion laying with the lamb statement in Isa 11:6-10, heralds a time when God will stop animal predation which

⁴⁸ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),110.

⁴⁹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 43ff.

⁵⁰ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 41. What is ironic here is how Linzey cites a scholar who points out that the prophets were condemning empty ritualism.

⁵¹ Herbert Wolf, :"*Zebah*" Theological Word Book of the Old Testament, vol. 1, R. Laird Harris, ed. et. al. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 235, says *zebah* means slaughter here. While I don't reject the idea of slaughter, I wonder if the term *zebah* was used to emphasize that God would make his peace through death. Cf. p.233 which notes that the noun *zebah* is used frequently with peace offerings.

justifies human predation.⁵² He ignores the reasonable possibility that Isaiah is proclaiming a day when predators, the bane of herdsman and shepherds, will be eliminated and that Mankind will again gain its proper place as servant king of the earth. These Isaiah passages that talk about a new kingdom are all written from the human perspective. The benefits apply to the humans not to the animals, unless you are a prey species.

Critique of Linzey's Argument from Christ

Turning to Christ, Linzey is certainly correct when he says that following Christ doesn't mean becoming exactly like Christ in every way. After all, Christ didn't call everyone to suffer the shame of martyrdom. But what Linzey seems to overlook is that we have no concrete example of Christ ever giving in a sacrificial way to animals during His earthly ministry. In fact, Christ's behavior towards animals provides an example of lordship that is diametrically opposed to what Linzey wishes to suggest.⁵³ In other words, humanity's common origin with animals doesn't seem to make Jesus change his behavior toward the animal kingdom.⁵⁴ First, Christ kills fish for the sole purpose of demonstrating his power and possibly enriching the disciples (Luke 5). Second, Christ commands the disciples to fish in order to obtain tax money (Mt 17:27). What is more telling to me is not whether the fish died. (I had one critic suggest the disciples threw the fish back). Rather the important fact is that Christ would permit the fish to suffer the pain/stress of being hooked and removed from its natural environment simply so to remove a coin and pay a tax (In effect the disciples were "Market Hunters". Wouldn't it have been better and

⁵² Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),33.

⁵³ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),17.

⁵⁴ Contra Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),10-11.

more moral (from Linzey's perspective) if the Lord created the money out of thin air? Even if someone argued that Christ wanted to rescue the fish from the suffering of having a coin in its mouth, why isn't that idea more front and center in the story? Third, Christ rides a horse even though he could have easily have walked (Mt 21:1-5). In Luke 5:14 Christ also commanded a recently healed leper to kill animals to fulfill the sacrificial requirements of Leviticus 14:30ff. Now Linzey argues that Christ had to be a redeemer in a particular historical context and so was unable to deal with every issue. But isn't this dangerously close to asserting that Christ couldn't perfectly live up to God's ideal's?⁵⁵ And if Christ couldn't live up to those ideals, hasn't Linzey insinuated that Christ sinned? Or are we to suggest that God's moral law changes? Isn't it one thing for Christ not to deal with every aspect of oppression and liberation, and another for Christ to participate in the oppression that he was supposed to ameliorate?⁵⁶ I mean Christ didn't own slaves but he did oppress animals.

Perhaps more difficult an issue to address is Linzey's suggestion that the doctrine of reconciliation extends beyond humanity. Here, we wade into very murky water as the New Testament doesn't directly speak of Christ offering salvation to animals.⁵⁷ Linzey's

⁵⁵ See Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 101 where Linzey says, "Even the Son of Man appears to accept his own part in the fallenness of the world....No human being can live free of evil."

⁵⁶ Contra Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),132-7. Linzey in these pages discusses four basic ideas of handling the difficult problem of Jesus and his use of animals. Linzey prefers the one which suggests that Jesus had to kill fish due to necessity as Galilee didn't provide enough protein. It should come as no surprise that Linzey provides absolutely no evidence for this contention. J.H. Patterson, "Galilee" *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Part I Aaron-Golan. J.D. Douglas ed. et.al. (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House, 1980), 537. Patterson says that Lower Galilee, where most of the Gospel narratives took place, has considerable stretches of feral land. It exported olive oil, cereals and fish from Galille. I should also point out it could produce swine see Luke 8.

⁵⁷ Contra Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995),10-12;96-9. Linzey really stresses theological concepts beyond their original context. And in a Barthian sort of way, Christ the creator of all, becomes the redeemer of all, the all including animal kingdom. Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),33-4. One may think that

use of Scripture to prove that animals have some sort of eternal importance are weak at best. He argues that "flesh" denotes not only humanity's shared physical nature with animals but also our spiritual significance. Citing Genesis 9:15 Linzey contends that humans are integrally related to animals. He then moves and says that the all flesh in Isaiah refers to animals and humans worshipping God (Isa 66:23;40:5). He seems to forget that words mean different things in different contexts and the contexts of these passages refer to humans. The context of Genesis clearly includes animals as does Lev. 17:14. But the contexts of many others suggest a human referent not animal and human referent. Otherwise, if Linzey's view is correct, then we will have to see Genesis 6:12 as referring to the sinfulness of animals. His citation of Joel 2:28 use of "all flesh" as including animals flies in the face of the actual context. To suggest that animals benefit from the outpouring of God's Spirit doesn't prove his claim that we are spiritually related (Joel 2:22).⁵⁸ Rather it shows more clearly that when God blesses people the animals will also benefit. He cites Ecclesiastes 3:19-22 to prove that animals have spirits.⁵⁹ Even giving him this argument it doesn't prove that the animal spirit is of the same kind as human. Ecclesiastes was clearly written to ridicule the human point of view of life. Humans die as animals do but it isn't to prove the nature of the after-life for animals. If Ecclesiastes does then we should look at verse 22 which finishes saying "...For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?" Do we really think that Solomon had animals in mind?

perhaps Linzey toned down his rhetoric in *Animal Theology* (the later book), but the thoughts are still there in this book.

⁵⁸ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 78-9.

⁵⁹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987), 78-9.

Linzey's Use of Vague Terms

Aside from what I perceive to be Linzey's exegetical and theological failings, I also believe that Linzey's work, like all animal rights work, neglects to properly define terms. Linzey uses terms like abuse, animal cruelty and violence to refer to the simple acts of killing animals, sport hunting and meat eating.⁶⁰ In effect, Linzey uses terms that are so vague they diminish the idea of cruelty. For if as many animal rights activists subtly suggest, that killing of animals is by definition cruelty then we have in effect made Jesus Christ a participant in cruelty and thereby besmirched His character.

A Outline Proposal for a Biblical View of Animals

So what sort of synthesis can emerge if we take all of Scripture into account? I believe the true answer lies not in utilitarianism (do what you want with animals) or Linzey's "Animal rights view of animals. Rather it lies in accepting our "dominion responsibilities."⁶¹

First, animals as all creation, belong ultimately to God. Mankind is to treat God's property as God's property. This means that God's property is to be treated the way God wants it treated. To treat something above or below its station would be to make it an idol on the one hand and worthless on the other. Linzey failed to make the Biblical case that God wants His children to avoid eating meat and the required necessity of killing the animal to obtain that meat. In essence he has overstated the Biblical concern for animal

⁶⁰ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994,1995). Sometimes Linzey just uses the terms without defining them at all pp.16-17. Other times cruelty is understood as sport hunting which is defined as "wanton killing" p. 123. Killing animals is called violence p. 129. See p. 38 in Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987) where Linzey seems incapable or unwilling to accept that mankind can kill animals and still value them.

⁶¹ My position is remarkably similar to the concept of stewardship that Linzey assails in *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1987),86ff. Except that I believe God does care about animal suffering but that the suffering is not a paramount concern. Perhaps creation groans because it realizes that its suffering does not glorify God where in the sinless Garden it did.

welfare by a long shot. The basic needs of animals should be met when they are in our control.⁶² However, this meeting of their basic needs doesn't deny our fundamental privilege to kill and eat them as we see fit in our call to serve God's Kingdom.⁶³ Second, God distinguishes the relative value of animals from humans. Several instances have already been cited but I would like to add another. God was specific with saving Noah and his family through the righteousness of Noah. The assumption being, God would have saved more if others were righteous. With animals, God simply saved a representative portion of the various kinds and destroyed the rest. Clearly God treats animals as groups but people as individuals and groups.⁶⁴ In other words, humans have the inherent right to kill animals but they don't have the inherent right to exterminate species. Individual animals don't have the necessary right to life. But species do. Thus humans are to provide proper animal management. Third, creation bears a heavy burden under the curse which was caused by mankind.⁶⁵ However to suggest that humans can simply turn back the clock to the Garden or fast forward to the *eschaton* causes Linzey's theology to suffer from being an over-realized one. Like the Corinthians who pushed for celibate marriages, Linzey wants a non-meat eating humanity. Linzey has in effect placed a burden on Christians that Christ didn't give (cf. Mt 15:11). Linzey has elevated a

⁶² See humanitarian concern for animal's needs in Mt. 12:11; Lk 13:15; 14:5

⁶³ Mk 2:22 refers to animal hides used in wineskins.

⁶⁴ The "you are more valuable than the sparrow" story of Mt. 10:29f/Lk 12:6ff underscores my point. God cares about the individual but in no way the same way as he cares about the individual human. Rather God takes a shepherding role. He cares about all the sheep individually but this doesn't stop the shepherd from eating one of them.

⁶⁵ H.H. Esser "Creation,". Colin Brown, ed., *NIDNTT* vol. 1, 378-387. Page 385 says, "Man is the goal of creation. Therefore, the state of creation is determined by him. All created things look to man as their hope as their hope is in man to alleviate the suffering caused by him. All creation is dependent on the restoration of the right relationship between God and his representative in the created world. This can only occur with God's intervention.

preference to be a moral ideal and in so doing questions the character of Christ who didn't meet this standard.

While these are all great platitudes, can we derive concrete principles on animal use? I think we can. First, following Christ, we may eat meat. To the issue of animal suffering, I think Christ's acceptance of fishing with nets provides a useful rubric by which to investigate the issue. I believe it is apparent that fish suffer in nets through being crushed, suffocated or both. Despite the pain fish underwent, Christ never condemned fishing.⁶⁶ I believe the following principle can be derived from this, namely that God has granted humanity the right to use those means to capture animals for food etc. that is economically efficient while considering animal pain. In other words, if there was another economically feasible way to capture fish that caused less suffering for fish, I believe Christ would have taken it. Therefore, Christians are permitted to not only eat animals, they may hunt them as well.

The End, Stephen Vantassel.

⁶⁶ I also think that Luke 15:27 "fatted calf" also provides some insight. If we look at Prov. 15:17 as the stall fed calf, isn't it possible that the fatted calf was a stall fed calf? While the calf certainly didn't suffer the degradations of the alleged actions of modern veal manufacturing, certainly the calf was treated a certain way to develop tender meat. See R.A. Stewart, "Cattle," *New Bible Dictionary Illustrated*. Vol. 1, J.D. Douglas, ed. et. al (Downers Grove, ILL: IVP, 1980),155.