

**EDEN'S DIET: CHRISTIANITY AND VEGETARIANISM  
1809 – 2009**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted to the  
University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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June 2012**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The vegetarian teachings of the Salvation Army, Quakers, the Seventh Day Adventists and other Christian groups have been largely neglected by academics. This study takes a prosopographical approach to the development of modern Christian vegetarianism across a number of Christian vegetarian sects, and some more mainstream traditions, over a period of two centuries. The method allows for important points of similarity and difference to be noted among these groups' founders and members. This research contributes particularly to radical Christian groups' place in the vegetarian movement's modern history. This study demonstrates how and why Christian vegetarianism developed in the nineteenth century and to what extent it influenced the secular vegetarian movement and wider society. It contextualizes nineteenth-century Christian vegetarianism in the wider movement of temperance, and considers why vegetarianism never made inroads into mainstream churches in the way that the temperance movement did. Finally, the study considers the pattern of Christian vegetarianism's development in four distinct periods (1809-1847, 1848-1889, 1890-1959 and 1960-2009) as well as the many principles and behaviours these sectarian groups shared such as a desire for a return to Eden or the Golden Age, dualism, purity and biblical vegetarianism.

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Joyce and Denis Ivan Calvert, who always believed in the value of education and who taught me to value it too; with my thanks.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

It has been a great privilege and pleasure to have been able to spend many hours discussing my research with my supervisor, Professor Hugh McLeod. I am indebted to him for his kindness, his patience, his many helpful suggestions, his gentle correction of any erroneous thinking and for the time and space to find the answers to the questions that I had set myself. I would also like to acknowledge the advice of Dr Nigel Scotland, formerly of the University of Gloucestershire, who supervised my MA work. I appreciate the time taken by Derek Antrobus, John Davis, John Gilheany, Dr George Hazell and Professor Julia Twigg to respond to my queries. My former colleague and the former Head of Information and Customer Services at the Vegetarian Society, Chris Olivant has been most generous in answering many queries and in forwarding information and suggested contacts to me. My thanks also go to Dr James Gregory who has been kind enough to share with me a number of references and unpublished research notes and to Professor Andrew Linzey who has provided me with several useful contacts and been so supportive of my work. I am indebted to John Gilheany's work on the Order of the Golden Age for alerting me to the importance of this organisation and to Tom Harper, an MA student at the Southwest Missouri State University, for making me aware of the existence of Hallelujah Acres. I am grateful for the assistance of a number of librarians and archivists at Cheshire County Record Library, Macclesfield Local History Library, Salford Local History Library, Manchester Central Library, the Greater Manchester County Record Office, Woodbrooke College Library and the Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain. Frances Lill, Electronic Services Manager at the British Library,

generously transcribed and posted to me Order of the Danielites' material that was too fragile to copy. Gordon Taylor, Archivist at the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, London, was particularly helpful in sending to me material that he came across many months after my visit. Lynda Baildam at Newbold Library, Bracknell was kind enough to arrange my visits and to introduce me to Dr Roland Karlmann. I am grateful to Dr Rachel Muers for welcoming me to the AHRC funded seminars at Exeter University, "Vegetarianism as Spiritual Choice", and for inviting me to participate in the colloquium as part of the same project. A number of individuals have been kind enough to supply information on their organisations, arrange visits to archive material, loaned material to me or taken the time to photocopy documents for me: Dr Deborah Jones of Catholic Concern for Animals, Samantha Chandler of the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals, Robin Lane of the Way in the Wilderness, Sophia Howard of the Followers of the Way, Margaret Southern, Margaret Carter and Alisdair Glen of Macclesfield URC Church, Lara Muth of the Swedenborgian Society, Jen Elford, Head of Research and Information Services of the Vegetarian Society, Gabriel Buist and Patricia Byrne of the Order of the Cross, Don Gwillim of the Christian Vegetarian Association UK. I appreciate being made welcome at worship services at the Order of the Cross, Kensington, Newbold College and Woodbrooke College. I owe a sincere debt of thanks to my proof readers Dr John Bennett and Jane Bliss who have provided an excellent service to me – far beyond what I could have expected or hoped. All errors or omissions are, of course, my own. Finally, my heartfelt thanks to my husband, James Hickey, for his unfailing support – personal and financial – during my PhD and in all that I choose to do.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASWA	Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals
CCA	Catholic Concern for Animals
FA-VA	Friends' Anti-Vivisection Association
FA-VS	Friends' Anti-Vivisection and Humane Society
FO	Field Officer
FoL	Fellowship of Life
FVS	Friends' Vegetarian Society
GMCRO	Greater Manchester Record Office
MCL	Manchester Central Library
QCA	Quaker Concern for Animals
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
VA	<i>Vegetarian Advocate</i>
YM	Yearly Meeting [of Religious Society of Friends]

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

Whilst there is a long standing relationship between Christianity and vegetarianism, today vegetarianism as a spiritual choice is most often associated with Eastern religions such as Buddhism or Jainism or possibly with the asceticism of the Early Church. In the modern period the practice of fasting is increasingly rare, and the Lenten observance of a meat-free diet is often practiced only by religious orders or lay people on spiritual retreats. The mainstream Christian churches seem to have left the practice of fasting behind.<sup>1</sup> However, the relationship between Christianity and vegetarianism is a long one. In the dualism of Manicheanism<sup>2</sup> and the Bogomils,<sup>3</sup> and the idea of materiality as the creation of the devil to be found in the teachings of the Cathars<sup>4</sup> and Mani, many Christians – and quasi-Christians – have found much to recommend in vegetarianism. Christian mystics Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) and Thomas Tryon<sup>5</sup> (1634-1703)

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted, however, that the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have recently reintroduced the abstinence from meat on Fridays as a requirement for all Roman Catholics. Introduced in September 2011 it is as yet too early to know whether it will be widely taken up by practicing Catholics.

<sup>2</sup> Manicheanism, (also known as Manichaeism), was founded by Mani (c.216–276 AD) who taught of a dualist struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. The body and everything connected with it was material and evil in Mani's teachings. However there were still particles of light imprisoned in the body and man could play a part in redeeming the universe. For more information see Spencer, 131-139.

<sup>3</sup> Bogomilism has its roots in Manicheanism and shared a dualist approach to materiality which was the creation of the evil one. The Bogomils ate no meat, drank no wine and disapproved of marriage. Ibid., 146-153.

<sup>4</sup> The Cathars were influenced by the Bogomils and shared a very similar world view regarding the dualism of matter and the spiritual world. Like the Bogomils they led an ascetic life eschewing meat and practicing celibacy. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Tryon, vegetarian and author, a former wool spinner and carder and later shepherd who taught himself to read and write. Tryon later became a hatter and joined the Anabaptists. From 1682 he self-published a number of advice books including work on vegetarianism and temperance. His work later influenced poet Shelley, the physician William Lambe, and the surgeon John Abernethy. See Virginia Smith, "Thomas Tryon", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

promoted the Pythagorean ideals of the “kinship of nature” and ultimately influenced Theosophy and the thought of a number of radical non-conformist sects in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Many of these ideas<sup>7</sup> were to have an influence on the writings and teachings of Christian and quasi-Christian sects in the modern period.<sup>8</sup>

Vegetarianism has seen a steady growth in interest and influence in both the UK and the USA since the 1960s but the history of modern vegetarianism has its roots, not in the counter cultural revolution of the 1960s, but in early nineteenth-century sectarian Protestantism. Sectarian Protestants have made a disproportionate contribution to British and American life in many reform movements, including vegetarianism.

Despite some recent decline in popularity, vegetarianism remains a popular food trend. Currently three per cent of adults in the UK are vegetarian and another five per cent claim to be “partly vegetarian”, defined as avoiding some types of meat or fish.<sup>9</sup> A 2008 Harris Interactive study of 5,050 respondents found that

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ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27783>, (accessed 10 June 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Pythagoras of Samos, c.570 – c.495 BC, Greek philosopher, mathematician, and founder of Pythagoreanism. Pythagoras taught that the soul was immortal and could be endlessly reincarnated in other lives – both human and animal. All life forms needed to be treated as kindred as to kill and eat any animal was equivalent to murdering one’s own relatives.

<sup>7</sup> A belief in the unity of all living things led to the popularity of vegetarianism among theosophists.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of religious affiliation in the vegetarian movement in Victorian England see James Gregory’s *Of Victorians and Vegetarians, The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-century Britain*, (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Food Standards Agency – Public Attitudes to Food survey 2009. UK wide survey of 3,219 adults Oct/Nov 2008.

"approximately 0.5%, or 1 million [U.S. adults] are vegans, who consume no animal products at all," while a significantly higher number, 3.2 percent of U.S. adults (7.3 million people) "follow a vegetarian-based diet" and 10 percent of U.S. adults, or 22.8 million people, "say they largely follow a vegetarian-inclined diet." <sup>10</sup> The accuracy of such statistics is questionable, however. Much depends upon the question being asked. Many respondents will say that their diet is "mainly vegetarian" if this is something to which they aspire or if they perceive it to be the "right" or healthy response. The rare survey that cross checks the response to the question "Are you a vegetarian?" with the follow up questions "Do you ever eat red meat/white meat/fish/crustacea/slaughter house by-products such as gelatin(e) or animal rennet found in cheese?" finds that the number of vegetarians reduces dramatically. Surveys which ask if respondents eat certain items such as red meat/white meat/fish etc., also produce fewer vegetarians than those which simply ask respondents to affirm their dietary preferences with the question "Are you/is anyone in your household a vegetarian?"

The vegetarian movement in the UK has its roots in two vegetarian groups: the Bible Christians of Salford in the North West of England, a Swedenborgian sect<sup>11</sup>, and the followers of the "sacred socialist", James Pierrepont Greaves, at the Concordium, Alcott House, Ham Common. Some Bible Christians later

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<sup>10</sup> "Vegetarianism by Country", Wikipedia entry, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism\\_by\\_country#cite\\_note-43](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism_by_country#cite_note-43), (accessed 6 June 2009).

<sup>11</sup> There was an earlier attempt by the Concordists to create a vegetarian organisation but it would appear to have achieved little success.

immigrated to America and formed a sister Church in Philadelphia and an American Vegetarian Society modelled on the British Vegetarian Society. During the nineteenth century several new Christian sects had made vegetarianism a condition of membership. Among these were the Order of the Cross, the Order of the Danielites and the Order of the Golden Age, but each (with the exception of the Order of the Cross) subsequently declined. In the nineteenth century several larger Christian denominations and groups espoused the benefits of a vegetarian diet – the Seventh Day Adventists, the Quakers and the Salvation Army. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries specifically denominational Christian animal welfare and vegetarian groups were established. In the late twentieth and the early years of the twenty-first century we see the emergence of new non-denominational Christian groups such as the Christian Vegetarian Association (CVA) and Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK) and the banding together of denominational groups to form umbrella organisations espousing vegetarianism. These organisations, groups and sects form the basis of my research.

#### **a. A survey of literature**

Although studies which examine both the history and the ideology of vegetarianism exist, little has been done to examine the relationship between Christian groups espousing a vegetarian testimony and the social practice of vegetarianism in secular organisations, and scarcely any references have been made to the theology or doctrinal basis of these sectarian groups or to primary

source material from these sects such as sermons, lectures, hymns and services. The history of the “modern” vegetarian movement in England is certainly not new territory but the majority of the writers in the field of vegetarianism have either taken a historical overview, tracing the history of vegetarianism from pre-history to modern times,<sup>12</sup> or have considered the place of vegetarianism in the world’s religions.<sup>13</sup>

One of the earliest attempts to emphasise the longevity of a vegetarian tradition was made by Howard Williams.<sup>14</sup> His anthology of vegetarian personalities was first published in 1883 and has been recently republished by the University of Illinois Press. In the introduction to the Illinois imprint Carol J. Adams, Author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*<sup>15</sup> and other books on animal rights and ecofeminism, describes Williams’ work as

... a theoretician’s goldmine, a historian’s raw material, a vegetarian’s ethical confirmation, and he [Williams] hoped – and as Tolstoy and Salt and countless others demonstrated – the flesh eater’s conscience disturber. All during the time of the flowering of encyclopaedic enthusiasms, Howard Williams directed his readers toward something both ethical and practical, something that countered the meat-and-potatoes diet of the average westerner and the average professional historian.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Colin Spencer, *Heretics Feast, A History of Vegetarianism*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1993). Republished as *Vegetarianism: A History*, (London: Grub Street, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Rynn Berry, *Food for the Gods, Vegetarianism and the World’s Religions*, (New York: Pythagorean Publishers, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Howard Williams, *The Ethics of Diet: A Cantena of Authorities Deprecatory of the Habit of Flesh-Eating*, (Manchester: F. Pitman, 1883). Recently reprinted by the University of Illinois Press, (Urbana and Chicago, 2003). Howard Williams (1837–1931), writer and advocate of vegetarianism, became a vegetarian in 1872 and also an anti-vivisectionist. He was present at the founding of the Humanitarian League in 1890. See <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41000>, (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

<sup>16</sup> Williams, *The Ethics of Diet*, (University of Illinois, 2003), xxiv.

However, as with most biographical sources Williams's sketches are variable in their length and quality. His work does, however, act as a useful reference to the main protagonists that contributed to the early movement.

Another source of the early history of the vegetarian movement was the series of short articles published in the Vegetarian Society's magazine, the *Vegetarian Messenger*, to mark its fiftieth anniversary. These were eventually compiled into a book entitled *Fifty Years of Food Reform: A History of the Vegetarian Movement in England* (1898.)<sup>17</sup> Charles Walter Forward was to chronicle the history of the movement in later periods. W. E. A. Axon, a librarian, local historian and member and officer of both the Vegetarian Society and the Bible Christian Church, wrote a useful chronicle of the Bible Christian Church to celebrate its one hundredth anniversary.<sup>18</sup> Axon's close involvement with both these organisations resulted in an uncritical history of the church produced by one of its adherents, not an analytical or objective view of the Church, its personalities or achievements. Axon is quoted as saying he was

glad to have the opportunity of bearing testimony to the good work done by the early pioneers of the [vegetarian] movement and the world was indebted to the church for the great deal of improvement which had taken place during the past century.<sup>19</sup>

Axon's history has, however, clearly been an important starting point for later researchers working on the Bible Christian Church or areas connected with it. The

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<sup>17</sup> C. W. Forward, *Fifty Years of Food Reform: A History of the Vegetarian Movement in England*, (London: Ideal Publishing Union, 1898).

<sup>18</sup> W. E. A. Axon, *A History of the Bible Christian Church, 1809 – 1909*, (Manchester, 1909).

<sup>19</sup> *Salford City Reporter*, 16 October 1909. Cited in D. Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast, The Salford Bible Christian Church and the Rise of the Modern Vegetarianism*, (Salford: City of Salford Education and Leisure, 1997), 106.



inaccuracies are best demonstrated by what is briefly “glossed over” or dismissed rather than what is not included or reinterpreted. To have a rounded picture of the founder of the Bible Christian Church, the Reverend William Cowherd’s, relationship with his sometime printer and curate, Robert Hindmarsh, one would need to read Hindmarsh’s own work<sup>20</sup> and that of D. G. Goyder<sup>21</sup> as well as Axon, for example. Axon also produced two pamphlets published by the Vegetarian Society to mark the organisation’s ninetieth and one hundredth anniversaries.

*A History of the Philadelphia Bible Christian Church* was published in 1917 to mark the Church’s own centenary. In style, content and perhaps even conception it was modelled on the Salford Church’s own history. The book is a useful guide to the events and personalities of the American church but, as with Axon’s history, it is a document written from within the movement to mark the occasion and to praise the work and the people of the church. William and Joseph Metcalfe’s book *Out of the Clouds into the Light* gives more of an insight into the teachings, doctrines and theology of the American and to some extent the British Bible Christian Church as well as contributing to the work on its history.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Hindmarsh, *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church in England and American and other parts*, (London: Hodson and Son, 1861).

<sup>21</sup> David George Goyder, *A Concise History of the New Jerusalem Church; with a critical account of her defenders ...together with a biographical sketch of the life of her acknowledged apostle, the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg*, (London: Thomas Goyder, Simpkin & Marshall, 1827).

<sup>22</sup> Reverend William Metcalfe and Reverend Joseph Metcalfe, *Out of the Clouds into the Light: Seventeen Discourses on the teaching doctrines of the day in the light of Bible Christians by the Late Rev. Wm Metcalfe, MD, together with a memoir of the author by his son, Rev. Joseph Metcalfe*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1872).

Apart from these early works closely associated with the movement there has been limited research on the modern Christian roots of the vegetarian movement. Some of the later published material is slight and often inaccurate.<sup>23</sup>

Peter J. Lineham's dissertation on the English Swedenborgians provides a rewarding insight into the background to the Bible Christian Church.<sup>24</sup> Lineham's research is helpful in understanding what led the poor of Manchester to be drawn to Swedenborg's writings and how these were promulgated through the work of the Reverend Clowes and his followers. Cowherd's Church and its various controversies and schisms are also discussed in some detail as is the extent of the Cowherdite influence – something which is often not fully appreciated by other researchers in this area. Lineham's work is enlightening on the theology, wider beliefs and practices of the mainstream Swedenborgians.

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<sup>23</sup> J. L. Barkas, *The Vegetable Passion, A History of the Vegetarian State of Mind*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). Barkas's *The Vegetable Passion* makes almost no reference to the Bible Christian Church in her history of the vegetarian state of mind. Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1993) and *Vegetarianism: A History*, (London: Grub Street, 2000). The latter is a second edition with a new foreword but few changes to the text. Spencer's critically-acclaimed 1993 contribution to the history of vegetarianism achieves a wide breadth and scope, from its treatment of primates, hominids and the emergence of humans in Chapter 1 to modern farming, caring for the environment and the future in Chapter 13. However, such a wide ranging work can only ever give an overview for the interested reader. Spencer's concern lay elsewhere than with the Bible Christian teachings or other religious groups except in so far as they contributed to the overall shape of vegetarianism in history. Rynn Berry, *Food for the Gods: Vegetarianism and the World's Religions*, (New York: Pythagorean Publishers, 1988). Jon Gregerson's *Vegetarianism, A History* (California: Jain Publishing Co., 1994) contains inaccuracies and unsubstantiated statements and is a very sketchy work which lacks thoroughness in its preparation.

<sup>24</sup> Peter J. Lineham, '*The English Swedenborgians 1770 – 1840: A Study of the Social Dimensions of Sectarianism*', PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1978.

Julia Twigg's fascinating dissertation is a thorough and reflective response to this area of research.<sup>25</sup> Twigg, who broke new ground at the time of writing, provided a broad investigation which split modern vegetarianism into four periods and examined a wide range of social groups that espoused vegetarianism. Her main interest lies in the ideology of the diet, approached from a structuralist perspective, which can be seen in her published papers.<sup>26</sup> Her other interests lie with class divisions within vegetarianism, the commitment to education of the Bible Christians and their belief in the practical assistance of the poor. Vegetarianism's promotion as a "natural diet" and the effects of such a diet – meat eating was believed to dull the mind, whereas a vegetarian diet produced "superior mental powers" – is another theme addressed in Twigg's work.

Although Twigg is careful to locate her subjects and their ideology in the appropriate traditions, the impact of religion on the Vegetarian Society is not her primary purpose in writing and she does not make use of much of the particular primary source materials available to those interested in this area. However, with such a broad approach Twigg's study could not provide a detailed study of the beliefs, practices, liturgy and influence of the Christian sects of the period. There is also scope for updating her work with reference to those involved in promoting vegetarianism from 1981 to the present day.

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<sup>25</sup> Julia Twigg, "The Vegetarian Movement in England 1847 – 1981: A Study of the Structure of its Ideology", PhD thesis for the London School of Economics, 1981.

<sup>26</sup> Julia Twigg, "Food for Thought: Purity and Vegetarianism", *Religion* 9, Spring 1978, 13-35 and "Vegetarianism and the Means of Meat" in A. Murcott ed., *The Sociology of Food and Eating*, (Aldershot: Gower, 1983). Structuralist theory considers that there is a system of relationships that form the structure of the society in which we live such as social structure and social functions. Secular organisations such as the vegetarian societies are one such social structure as are Christian vegetarian groups.

In his *Man and the Natural World* Keith Thomas's thesis is that the "modern" concern with man's relationship with the environment and animals began in the early modern period.<sup>27</sup> He believes changes occurred between 1500 and 1800, at all levels of society, that questioned long held values about "man's place in nature" and "redefined the relationship of man to other species". The section of his work on "meat or mercy?" considers shifting attitudes in vegetarianism and provides a context for the Cowherdite Bible Christians. He also notes that the American "branch" of the Bible Christians was to influence Sylvester Graham (1794 – 1851) who was influential in dietary reform in American and whose lasting legacy was Graham flour (and the Graham Cracker). Thomas's research provides a useful background to the changing thought, attitudes and values of the eighteenth century which led to vegetarianism being taken up by Cowherd and his followers in the early nineteenth century.

Daniel Sacks's *Whitebread Protestants* includes an interesting chapter entitled "Eating as a Christian Should: Moral Food" which examines how American Christians in the nineteenth century decided to reduce the quantity and types of their foods to reduce overindulgence and rich food in their diet for the sake of their souls.<sup>28</sup> In the 1960s there emerged a strand within mainstream Protestantism which was concerned about world poverty and sought to feed the hungry by making different food choices. Sacks claims the publication of Frances Moore Lappé's work in 1971 greatly influenced some Christians, including "mainline"

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<sup>27</sup> Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World, Changing Attitudes in England in 1500 – 1800*, (London: Allen Lane, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Sacks, *Whitebread Protestants, Food and Religion in American Culture*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

Protestant communities, to reduce the quantity of meat and animal products in their diets in order to feed the hungry.<sup>29</sup> Moore Lappé's bestselling book has sold over three million copies and was ground-breaking in its suggestion that world food scarcity was not caused by a 'lack' of food but by ineffective food policy. It was the first major book to critique grain-fed meat production as wasteful and a contributor to global food scarcity. Sacks's interest, however, is purely with the mainstream Protestant tradition and he does not consider the place of exclusively vegetarian Christian sects or their influence on the movement or the wider community.

Sune Borkfelt's paper describes the development of ideas that led to the founding of the Vegetarian Society in 1847.<sup>30</sup> Her thesis is that:

... when the Vegetarian Society was founded in 1847, all the basic elements of the ethical and religious arguments that have been used in the modern vegetarian movement had already been part of the debate.<sup>31</sup>

In subsequent chapters she examines Thomas Tryon,<sup>32</sup> theology and the enlightenment, radical and romantics and finally 1847 and the modern vegetarian movement. This thoughtful essay succeeds in proving its thesis. Borkfelt places William Cowherd and the Bible Christians in the context of many works on vegetarianism at the time both theological and mystical (such as Swedenborg's)

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<sup>29</sup> Frances Moore Lappé, *Diet for a Small Planet*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Sune Borkfelt, "Cause and Effect: The Development of Ethical and Religious Arguments for Vegetarianism in Great Britain before 1847", paper submitted to English Dept of University of Aarhus, Denmark, June 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Tryon (1634 – 1703), a devout Christian, influenced by the works of the German mystic Jacob Boehme.

and more secular ones such as Joseph Ritson<sup>33</sup> and Lewis Gompertz.<sup>34</sup> She notes that the early vegetarians' views contributed to the many themes of the Vegetarian Society at its founding, however,

the religious doctrines that were so influential with the Vegetarian Society, at its founding and in the decades that followed, have far from remained the most influential early arguments for vegetarianism. Rather, it has been the radicals and the poets of the romantic period that have made converts, especially Shelley.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly the Concordium and Bible Christians were central to the establishment of the Vegetarian Society and its early success. The Vegetarian Society was the secular arm of the Bible Christian Church but their involvement was significant. Clearly religious arguments for vegetarianism are only responsible for a minority of converts to the vegetarian diet today. Shelley was certainly influential, in the same way as celebrities following a vegetarian diet might be today, but that influence has also waned with the centuries too. It could be argued that humanitarianism has remained the most persuasive of the early arguments for vegetarianism.

In conclusion, Borkfelt acknowledges that the religious arguments for vegetarianism in the twentieth century were not dissimilar to those in the early nineteenth century:

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<sup>33</sup> Joseph Ritson (1752 – 1803), writer and critic published *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, as a Moral Duty* (1802).

<sup>34</sup> Lewis Gompertz (d. 1861), Jewish inventor and philosopher author of *Moral Inquiries on the Situation of Man and Brutes*. (Printed by Richard Taylor, 1824).

<sup>35</sup> Borkfelt, "Cause and Effect", Chapter 4, 1. <http://home.worldonline.dk/~borkfelt/vaerker/4.html>. (accessed 12 December 2001).

Indeed, not many Christians today abstain from animal flesh out of a kind of religious asceticism, as Thomas Tryon did. Rather, today the Christian arguments for vegetarianism in the twentieth century have merged with the other ethical and humanitarian arguments to an even greater degree than they did with Cowherd's Bible Christians in the early nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup>

James Gregory's thesis<sup>37</sup> and subsequent monograph<sup>38</sup> are among the more recent works on vegetarianism and make a valuable contribution to the field. Gregory's research attempts to create a complete picture of Victorian vegetarianism and its wider associations. This covers health reform, animal welfare, religion, what he describes as "anti-everythingarianism", Owenites, Chartism, regional vegetarianism and food reform in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. He also examines vegetarian restaurants and food stores, the working class and the Labour Movement, women and food reform, the vegetarian press and fictional responses to vegetarianism. Each of these is a fascinating topic in its own right and worthy of more attention than it is possible for Gregory to give them in his dissertation. His chapter on "Vegetarianism and Religion" has a bias towards an examination of the relationship between vegetarianism and spiritualism and the occult. Among many appendices, Gregory includes a "Biographical Index of Victorian Vegetarians and Food Reformers". Although this says little of some of the major figures and a great deal of some relative unknowns, it will still provide a very useful starting point for future researchers. Although limited by a dearth of available primary source material, Gregory also attempts an interesting analysis of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Chapter 5, 1. . <http://home.worldonline.dk/~borkfelt/vaerker/4.html>. (accessed 12 December 2001).

<sup>37</sup> James Gregory "The Vegetarian Movement in Britain c.1840 – 1901. A Study of its development, personnel, and wider connections", PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*.

the religious affiliations for early members of the Vegetarian Society. He disagrees with Twigg's assertion that the Vegetarian Society used less Christian propaganda from the 1870s and says that "The movement, despite new religious influences, continued to have a Christian tone."<sup>39</sup> My own research has reached a similar conclusion.<sup>40</sup>

Whilst the background to the change of attitudes towards animals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been discussed by some writers and there have been considerations of the history of the Victorian vegetarian movement, until comparatively recently little secondary source material was available on the recent history of the movement. However, the past five years has seen a flurry of activity in the area of vegetarian history. One book that attempts to bring the history of vegetarianism into the present century is Rod Preece's *Sins of the Flesh, A History of Ethical Vegetarian Thought*.<sup>41</sup> Preece, like Spencer, covers the whole swathe of history from humans in prehistory to the twentieth century. He believes that his work differs from that of Spencer in that he sees Spencer's work as much a history of food and of philosophy and historical-cultural attitudes in general, as of attitudes that relate to vegetarianism and animal ethics in particular. Preece sees his own work as concerned with the ethical dimensions of vegetarianism. Although he explores the ethical dimension more fully than Spencer could and contributes some interesting chapters on, for example, "militant advocates" [of vegetarianism],

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>40</sup> Samantha Jane Calvert, "The Beefsteak Chapel, An examination of the Reverend William Cowherd's Bible Christian Church and its influence on the Modern Vegetarian Movement in England, 1809 – 1932", MA thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2004, 47.

<sup>41</sup> Rod Preece, *Sins of the Flesh, A History of Ethical Vegetarian Thought*, (Vancouver: UBC Press 2008).



his discussion of the Victorians, Edwardians and the Vegetarian Society is necessarily brief and focuses on major vegetarian personalities of the period. The discussion of vegetarians and vegans in the twentieth-century considers the growth of animal rights in the 1960s and the foundation of the Vegan Society, and the chapter on North America considers the work of twentieth century campaigning groups such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and the political American Vegetarian Party. However, the material marshalled to support Preece's thesis on ethical vegetarianism contains little not previously discussed by Spencer or, in the case of the American movement by the Iacobbos.<sup>42</sup>

Tristram Stuart's excellent study *The Bloodless Revolution, Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of India* also contributes to vegetarian history by considering the influence of India on British vegetarianism. Stuart's thesis is that Indian philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has resonance in present day western life, and influences how we think about nature and why we are "told to eat fresh vegetables and avoid too much meat".<sup>43</sup> Stuart makes a convincing case that the Eastern influence on a small number of western thinkers had a considerable effect on British culture. However, his work addresses Christian vegetarianism only in so far as it has been influenced by India. A chapter is devoted to the writings and philosophy of John Zephaniah Holwell (1711-1798), the author of a number of historical and political works on India, who became a scholar of the religion of the Hindus and conceived his own syncretic inspired faith

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<sup>42</sup> Karen Iacobbo and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America, A History*, (Conneticut: Praeger, 2004) and *Vegetarians and Vegans in America Today*, (Conneticut: Praeger, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution, Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of India*, (London: Harper Press, 2006), xxvi.

John Gilheany's *Familiar Strangers, The Church and the Vegetarian Movement in Britain (1809 – 2009)*<sup>44</sup> is another history of the vegetarian movement, and a number of Christian vegetarian groups and individuals, as well as some of their major critics. Although some of the more obscure Christian sects such as the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Danielites are discussed, others, such as the Order of the Cross, a group that survives to this day, receive scant attention. The more mainstream groups such as the Quakers and the Seventh-day Adventists are similarly overlooked. Despite the subtitle of 'the Church and the vegetarian movement' this is not a history of the Established Church nor a history of several denominations but an examination of Christianity in its widest sense as many of the individuals and religious organisations would have been considered heretical by mainstream Christians. Some of the material presented replicates that which Gilheany had already made available online such as the chapter on the Order of the Danielites. There is little attempt to place this work in the context of other research. The section on Catholicism, for example, makes no reference to Deborah M. Jones's work on the moral status of animals.<sup>45</sup> Gilheany's work lacks structure and a clear thesis but it is well-researched and the footnotes are particularly thorough; they include useful references to abstruse journals and papers. Gilheany has thoroughly delved into the primary source material and produced a monograph that has much to recommend it to researchers in relevant and related areas and to those with a more general interest in the history of vegetarianism and animal welfare or rights. Although weak on contextualisation

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<sup>44</sup> John M. Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers, The Church and the Vegetarian Movement in Britain (1809 – 2009)*, (Cardiff: Ascendant Press, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Deborah M. Jones, *The School of Compassion, A Roman Catholic Theology of Animals*, (Hereford: Gracewing, 2009).

this is a thorough piece of primary research and even the specialist will find something of interest in the citations or some obscure journal reference. Gilheany has also created an interesting collection of Christian vegetarian extracts from the nineteenth century onwards at his blog Christian vegetarianism – an archive at <http://christianvegetarianarchive.blogspot.co.uk/>. The collection includes extracts, articles, tracts, copies of sermons and obituaries taken from vegetarian journals. This blog also provides links to other sites of interest to researchers in this area such as Gilheany's website on the Order of the Golden Age at <http://ordergoldenage.co.uk/> as well as other Christian vegetarian sites such as the Christian Vegetarian Association UK and the Fellowship of Life.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project “Vegetarianism as Spiritual Choice in Historical and Contemporary Theology” at Exeter University aimed to contribute contemporary understanding of vegetarianism and dietary choice by developing a theology of food based on the Christian traditions of fasting in medieval monasticism and Christian feasts and to demonstrate that these traditions are relevant to present day Christians.

The project produced two notable texts: *Eating and Believing, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology*<sup>46</sup> and *Theology on the Menu, Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet*.<sup>47</sup> *Eating and Believing* is the published proceedings of a colloquium at Exeter and considers Biblical and historical

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<sup>46</sup> *Eating and Believing, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology*, Rachel Muers and David Grumett (eds.), (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> David Grumett and Rachel Muers, *Theology on the Menu, Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

theology, fasting in antiquity, philosophical perspectives on vegetarianism and contemporary cultural and theological responses. Part 3 considers the origins of modern vegetarianism, as James Gregory examines religion in Victorian Britain,<sup>48</sup> while I consider the main themes in the theology and practice of modern Christian vegetarians.<sup>49</sup> This collection considers the link between people's food choices and their religious beliefs. What we eat in the twenty-first century is matter of much ethical debate but these decisions can also be informed by centuries of Christian thought and practice. By setting vegetarianism in a historical context of Christian practice *Eating and Believing* demonstrates how the theological significance of dietary practice may be reconceived by modern Christians. *Eating and Believing* draws on a wide range of scholarship biblical, theological, historical, classical and sociological to discuss the significance the food choices we make.

*Theology on the Menu* is a historical and theological investigation of “practices and reasons for practices”<sup>50</sup> in the area of asceticism and meat. Specific references to Bible Christians, the Order of the Cross, The Universal Life and Veg4Lent reference my own published work and add little to the historical discussion. However, *Theology on the Menu*'s key contribution is to clarify the place of fasting and abstention from meat in the period from the Early Church to the present. This is a history of which many people within the churches are unaware, as food practices such as fasting and food rules and taboos are seen to belong to other

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<sup>48</sup> James Gregory, “A Lutheranism of the Table”: Religion and the Victorian Vegetarians” in *Eating and Believing, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology*, 135 – 153.

<sup>49</sup> Samantha Jane Calvert, “Ours is the Food that Eden Knew”: Themes in the Theology and Practice of Modern Christian Vegetarians” in *Eating and Believing, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology*, 123-135.

<sup>50</sup> David Grumett and Rachel Muers (eds.), *Theology on the Menu*, ix

faiths and not to be a feature of Christianity. Grumett and Muers aim to recover this lost historical context to provide a meaningful discussion of Christian diet in order to highlight what an understanding of past practices can bring to the theological agenda today. *Theology on the Menu* is the first detailed examination of the significance of Christian attitudes to food. It is a wide ranging study of the theology and practice of Christian foodways from antiquity to the contemporary period.

As well as these more general texts on the history and theology of vegetarianism, there are also several specific texts relating to various groups which are worthy of note. On the Bible Christians Antrobus's *A Guiltless Feast* is a detailed social history of the sect and its influence on the Vegetarian Society.<sup>51</sup> This is a useful history of the Church and its interaction with the modern vegetarian movement in the UK and USA. *A Guiltless Feast* sets out, in Antrobus's own words, to be a "little essay in local history" but achieves a detailed investigation into the history of the vegetarianism movement and the role that the Bible Christian Church played in it. Antrobus relies heavily on W. E. A. Axon's history of the Church, charting the history of both the Church and the Vegetarian Society and providing appendices of officers of the Vegetarian Society during the lifetime of the Bible Christian Church, Salford with their connections with vegetarianism and the Vegetarian Society.

Deborah M. Jones's *School of Compassion* digs deeply into Catholic tradition to find a more animal friendly Catholic approach whilst still acknowledging that the

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<sup>51</sup> Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*.

dominant Catholic voices over the centuries have been negative about the status of animals.<sup>52</sup> Her book includes an incredibly detailed examination of the paragraphs in the Catechism which relate to animals, and the work concludes with a consideration of how this school of compassion towards animals could be incorporated into modern Catholic faith and practice. Catholic tradition has been perceived as highly anthropocentric. Jones explains that as the Catholic Church does not take on new theologies it is important to show not a new or original idea but “those elements of tradition, biblically based, and consistent with precedence, but seen in a new light and with a new emphasis” that may offer a coherent pro-animal theology within Catholicism.<sup>53</sup>

Particularly useful in the consideration of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) movement is Ronald Numbers’ *Prophetess of Health*,<sup>54</sup> a thorough examination of the influence of Ellen G. White on the health teachings of the Seventh Day Adventists. The SDA movement’s response to this book is equally valuable in giving balance to an understanding of the life and work of White.<sup>55</sup>

Research on other reform movements closely associated with vegetarianism has also contributed to an understanding of the history of Christian vegetarianism. Vegetarianism was often considered a higher form of temperance in the Victorian period – so much so that a vegetarian was assumed to be temperate or teetotal.

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<sup>52</sup> Deborah M. Jones, *The School of Compassion*.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health, A Study of Ellen G. White*, (Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> The Staff of the Ellen G. White Estate, *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health*, (Washington DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976).

Work in the area of temperance and teetotalism has informed this study and comparisons between the two, often intertwined, movements are drawn throughout the thesis. Of particular value are Brian Harrison's authoritative contribution *Drink and the Victorians*<sup>56</sup> and Matthew Hilton's *Smoking in British Popular Culture*<sup>57</sup> provides a helpful context for the Victorian anti-tobacco movement that many vegetarians supported.

Some of the primary research material cited in the bibliography relates to my MA work on the Bible Christian Church and the Order of the Cross. As this work has been previously examined it is not repeated in this thesis. However, the primary source material informed this dissertation as the chapters on the Order of the Cross and the Bible Christian Church comprise summaries of this work and material and any new research conducted during my PhD. This primary source material is discussed in the thesis and included in the bibliography because it informed the work that appears in the thesis and also because I believe it may be helpful to other researchers in this area.

## **b. Scope and focus of the thesis**

My research considers the relationship between modern Christian vegetarian sects and mainstream groups that promoted vegetarianism to their flock and the secular vegetarian movement. I aim to show that there is a distinctive modern

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<sup>56</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians, The Temperance Question in England, 1815 – 1872*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

<sup>57</sup> Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British popular culture 1800 – 2000*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

Christian vegetarian tradition outside monasticism and that the tradition is surprisingly coherent throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Modern Christian vegetarians played a part in the creation of secular vegetarian societies and sometimes functioned as auxiliary vegetarian societies within a Christian context.

There has been little research on the connection between modern Christianity and the vegetarian movement. The only work to specifically address this area is John Gilheany's *Familiar Strangers* but his work does not address the Quakers, Order of the Cross or the Salvation Army.<sup>58</sup> Whilst there have been studies of the vegetarian movement in nineteenth century Britain, such as Twigg's<sup>59</sup> and Gregory's,<sup>60</sup> both mentioned earlier, these say little about the specifically Christian aspects of vegetarianism. Much of the published work on religion and vegetarianism and the history of vegetarianism reflect more on the traditional associations of vegetarianism with the "religions of the East". Scant attention has been paid to the founders of these Christian vegetarian sects or denominations that promoted the vegetarian diet, or to their writings and influences and to their theology and practice. It is this lack of research on Christian vegetarianism that this thesis attempts to address.

Christian vegetarianism in the UK appears to have developed in four main stages: the first beginning in the early nineteenth century and culminating in 1847 with the

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<sup>58</sup> John M. Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers, the Church and the Vegetarian Movement in Britain (1809 – 2009)*, (Cardiff: Ascendant Press, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement".

<sup>60</sup> Gregory, "Vegetarian Movement in Britain".



founding of the Vegetarian Society; the second in the late nineteenth century; and the third in the early twentieth century and the fourth from the 1960s. At each stage vegetarianism has been influenced by other important ideas in society; as Julia Twigg suggests, vegetarianism “rides upon the back of a series of other cultural movements”.<sup>61</sup> However, the social location and religious connotations of vegetarianism have changed with each phase.

The Christian groups are discussed under the chapter heading dates for when vegetarianism first became a concern for the group. This may be from the date of its founding but this is often not the case. The history of the Quakers, greatly precedes the nineteenth century when an anti-vivisection society was established. Similarly the material in these sections may sometimes extend beyond the dates of the chapter. Sometimes material from earlier or later periods is relevant to the section, for example, in order to show the tradition of the group regarding animal welfare. This does not negate the structure chapters and the overwhelming majority of the material discussed in the sections is appropriate to the chapter dates.

This study examines the modern period in vegetarianism from 1809, when the Reverend William Cowherd first preached the doctrine from his Salford pulpit, to 2009 the year that would have seen the Bible Christian Church’s bi-centenary. It builds on my previous MA work in this area for the University of Gloucestershire on

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<sup>61</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 59.

the Bible Christian Church and the Order of the Cross.<sup>62</sup> The material on the Bible Christian Church presented here represents research undertaken during my PhD studies on the social location of vegetarianism in nineteenth century Salford and the Order of the Cross chapter mostly summarises my MA work. Other chapters are of varying length largely determined by their relevance to my overall argument and, in the case of some of the more recently founded groups, owing to the lack of primary source material.

This is not a study of all the significant individuals who have contributed to the debate on vegetarianism, Christian or secular. This research is predominantly restricted to groups of Christian vegetarians and their relationship with the vegetarian movement in Britain. Although many individual ministers and Christians published pamphlets and books on the subject or contributed to public debate, this study is restricted to those individuals whose teachings have produced at least a small band of followers. In producing a doctrine that others thought sufficiently worthy to follow, these individuals have demonstrated some impact on at least a small group of people and through them potentially on many others. Although many Christian vegetarians did not intend to found a sect or a church, followers usually seek to do so where they find something of value. The smaller groups often made vegetarianism a condition of membership of equal importance to belief in the religious doctrines of the group. The larger and more

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<sup>62</sup> Samantha Jane Calvert, "The Beefsteak Chapel: the Reverend William Cowherd's Bible Christian Church, Salford and its influence on the modern vegetarian movement in England, 1809-1932", MA thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2004 and "On Behalf of the Creatures", independent study for the MA Religion and Society, University of Gloucestershire, 2002. This research formed the basis of "A Taste of Eden: Modern Christianity and Vegetarianism", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol.58., No.3, (Cambridge University Press, July 2007).

mainstream groups considered here promoted vegetarianism to their membership so effectively that many followers became vegetarian.

Many of the Christians noted in this research would not be defined as Christians by Roman Catholic or Anglican tenets of faith. Indeed, several such groups would be considered heretical, with heterodox soteriology, rejecting, as they do, the established view of the death and resurrection of Christ. After much reflection, I decided that this was a study of those individuals who considered themselves Christians, applying the label to themselves and their teachings and practice. To do otherwise becomes a study in itself. Most people would think of Quakers as Christians but some practising Quakers describe themselves as Muslim, Jewish and even atheistic. I have endeavoured to make a thorough examination of the beliefs of each group so that it can be readily seen where they split from orthodox Christian creeds. Similarly, this is also a study of those groups of Christians who defined themselves and their communities as vegetarian regardless of the choice of language and definition used. Some were what would now be called vegans, others were ovo-lacto-vegetarians and some Pythagorean, anti-kreophagian, fruitarian or simply those of a “vegetable diet”. This is also not a study of strictly defined ‘churches’, ‘denominations’ or ‘sects’. The Order of the Golden Age, the Order of the Danielites and Hallelujah Acres were, and are in the case of Hallelujah Acres, neither churches nor sects but groups to which individuals who largely continued, or continue for Hallelujah Acres, to worship in their own Christian traditions were affiliated. These groups run alongside their members’ own churches and support the Christian vegetarian views of their membership.

Some of the later groups such as Quaker Concern for Animals, Catholic Concern for Animals and the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals were primarily Christian animal welfare organisations and not vegetarian groups. The Friends animal welfare group inspired the Friends Vegetarian Society and Catholic Concern for Animals and the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals discuss vegetarianism in their journals. These groups are also neither sects nor churches but are special interest groups within their specific traditions that aim to influence their own traditions in favour of the welfare of animals.

I originally intended to examine not just the British Christian vegetarian groups but also those from America, but it became clear from my research that there were more Christian vegetarian groups in the UK than I had initially believed, and that these groups provided more primary research material than might have been expected. As a result, this focus of this study is predominantly British. Part III is based on some material for seminar papers and briefly examines the transatlantic relationship between the Bible Christian Churches and their influence on the British and American vegetarian movements. It also considers how the influence of Sylvester Graham led to a Christian vegetarian tradition in the USA which has focussed on human health rather than humanitarianism as the main reason for advocating the vegetarian diet. Although there are a number of studies of the history of British and American vegetarianism this difference in emphasis is not noted and no attempt to discuss the differing heritage that has brought this about has previously been made.

This study concentrates on the history, theology and practice of Christian vegetarian groups and utilises primary source material to consider the place of vegetarianism and, to a lesser extent animal welfare, in these groups. Although this is not a study of nineteenth century animal welfarism some of the nineteenth century groups studied, for example the Quakers, were initially concerned with animal welfarism and their vegetarian concerns can be traced to their earlier concerns for animal welfare and vivisection. This study does not attempt a general, secular, history of the vegetarian movement which has to a great extent already been done with some success by a number of authors. This is also not a theological study of the ethics of flesh eating or the rights of animals, although such issues are important to this study.

Whilst the Christian vegetarian groups are considered in separate chapters they are presented in four time periods that reflect the development of Christian vegetarian history. Each chapter is preceded by a discussion of the major issues for this period and where the groups are located within this broader context.

Whilst a number of approaches could have been taken in presenting the material, this chapter scheme allows a full discussion of the sources relative to each group and a consideration of the wider context of the group, how it related to other changes in society and the allied social reform movements of temperance and teetotalism.

### **c. Methodology**

The core research for this thesis is based on the primary sources available in the various archives and libraries relating to each group or sect. Primary source material was usually available for each of the groups considered for this research, usually in the form of newsletters or journals, occasionally in the form of hymn or prayer books and sometimes entire published volumes based on the founders' teachings. Many of these sources have not been considered by previous researchers, either because the sect in question has not previously been the subject of scholarly research, such as the Order of the Cross, or because the research was concerned with some other aspect of vegetarianism and not, exclusively with its Christian links and influences.

Most sects or groups were concerned with the welfare and rights of animals which sometimes led them to publish pamphlets or journals on animal welfare. As a result this study also considers animal welfare or animal rights primary source material, particularly where the concern for vegetarianism seemed to grow out of an earlier concern for animal welfare, as among the Quakers.

The variety and quantity of primary source material varies significantly from group to group. Whilst journals and a few key documents of the Order of the Danielites have survived, there were no minutes or manuscript material. This is also the case for the Order of the Golden Age. Only published material is available on the Order of the Cross as any manuscript material, if it exists, is closely guarded by

the sect's trustees and is not available to researchers. The correspondence of W. E. A. Axon, and his son Ernest Axon, to be found at the Manchester Central Library offers insight into the lives of later Bible Christians and the demise of the Church. The minutes and annual reports of the Quakers' Anti-vivisection Society and later the Friends' Vegetarian Society are held at Friends House in London. The Salvation Army journals and regulations at the Salvation Army archive in London provide an insight into the place of vegetarianism in later nineteenth and early twentieth-century Salvationism. The published work of Ellen G. White along with Seventh Day Adventist journals provided the source material for a discussion of White's teachings on vegetarianism.

Whilst it would have been possible to undertake some research into the level of, reasons for, and attitudes towards, vegetarianism among contemporary Seventh Day Adventists and Quakers, this is impossible for the majority of the groups studied as they are no longer extant or are introversionist sects who would not welcome such research. However, there is a significant amount of material available on the internet on those groups which are still extant and contact was made with secretaries and other leading figures within the organisations in order to obtain clarification, the loan of materials and additional information where it was required. Questionnaires of the membership might have given a wider perspective but matters of time precluded this and it must wait for a future project.

Among the unpublished Bible Christian sources to be found at the Salford Local History Library<sup>63</sup> are Baptismal and Burial Registers of Christ Church and the Brotherton Scrapbooks contain newspaper cuttings on politics and Brotherton's career, some containing references to the Bible Christian Church and vegetarianism. As there is no biography or "Life" of Joseph Brotherton, academics have made little use of these scrapbooks. Brotherton's Commonplace Book can be found at the Manchester Central Library and contains more newspaper cuttings, jotted notes and thoughts of Brotherton in his own hand on a variety of topics including vegetarianism.<sup>64</sup> The Greater Manchester Record Office also holds some of the Minute Books of the Bible Christian Church.<sup>65</sup> Sadly only the minute books of the last days of the Church have survived and these are catalogued with the minute books and other material connected with the Vegetarian Society and the London Vegetarian Society.<sup>66</sup> They were presumably given to the Record Office in the same bundle of documents as the Vegetarian Society material. There are no references to vegetarianism as a matter of policy in these minutes and the only time vegetarianism is mentioned is in connection with requests from the Society for the use of the Church's facilities for meetings and social functions. Other Vegetarian Society minute books are kept at the Society's offices in Altrincham in Cheshire, along with membership books from its early days.

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<sup>63</sup> A building which has links to the Bible Christian Church as it was created as one of the first public municipal lending libraries and museums in the country due to the efforts of Joseph Brotherton

<sup>64</sup> Manchester City Library (MCL), BRMS 091 – B78, 1811

<sup>65</sup> Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO), Minute Books of the Bible Christian Church, 11 Oct 1918 – 16 Dec 1932, G24/5.

<sup>66</sup> GMCRO, Minutes of the Vegetarian Society, G24/1/1/1-17.



The Manchester City Library holds a collection of letters to W. E. A. Axon from other Bible Christians.<sup>67</sup> In the same file is the correspondence of Axon's son with members of the Vegetarian Society at the end of the Church's days. This correspondence reveals much about the status of the "vegetarian church" at that time and of the Vegetarian Society's view of the Church's theology and practice. This material, to the best of my knowledge, had not been referred to by other researchers prior to my MA dissertation on the Bible Christian Church. The same library also holds information on Christ Church, Every Street, in Manchester (Dr James Scholefield's church) which provides transcripts of gravestones and the registers of the same chapel.<sup>68</sup> Transcripts of gravestones can also be found at the Manchester City Library for Christ Church, Hulme, another of the Bible Christian chapels. Amongst the published primary sources on the Bible Christian Church are newspaper accounts of the local history of the Salford area and references to the Church. There are also responses to "Notes & Queries" items in the local press regarding Cowherd and his Church, coverage of events in the church such as banquets and the celebration of the Centenary of the Church in Salford.

Other published sources include Joseph Brotherton's tract on temperance, *First Teetotal Tract on Abstinence from Intoxicating Liquor*<sup>69</sup> and *Letters on Religious*

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<sup>67</sup> MCL BRMS 091 – B78, 1811. Axon was a member and officer of the Bible Christian Church and the Vegetarian Society as well as a local historian and the historian of both the Vegetarian Society and the Bible Christian Church.

<sup>68</sup> MCL M74/2.

<sup>69</sup> *First Teetotal Tract on Abstinence from Intoxicating Liquor*, first published 1821, "Onward" Publishing Office, Manchester and London, 1896.

*Subjects*<sup>70</sup> which are held at Manchester City Library. Martha Brotherton, Joseph Brotherton's wife, published a vegetarian cookery book, although the introduction making a theological case for the diet was penned by Joseph himself.<sup>71</sup> The Reverend James Clark's published items include a sermon and a lecture.<sup>72</sup> William Cowherd's posthumously published *Facts Authentic in Science and Religion* providing an insight into Cowherd's wide ranging influences.<sup>73</sup> *The Report of the Conference* which founded Cowherd's schismatic church in 1809 is of particular interest as the document is clearly the work of Cowherd and gives an insight into the theology of the new church.<sup>74</sup> The hymn books of Cowherd's Church have also survived and vary little between the various editions.<sup>75</sup> There are only perhaps three or four "vegetarian" hymns in each edition. These include Litanies and services for rites of passage, shedding light on the theology and practice of the Church. Other contemporary reports such as newspaper accounts provide a balance to this picture, reporting on Robert Hindmarsh and other detractors of the Church.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> A Bible Christian, *Letters on Religious Subjects*, Nos. 1–16, Manchester 1840–1841.

<sup>71</sup> A Lady (Martha Brotherton), *Vegetable Cookery: with an introduction recommending abstinence from animal food and intoxicating liquors*, (London: Effingham Wilson, 1833).

<sup>72</sup> James Clark (1830-1905) came from a Bolton-le-Moors labouring family, rejected meat in 1851 and joined the Bible Christian Church in 1853. He was minister of the Bible Christian Church in Salford from 1858 until his death. See Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 96-97.

<sup>73</sup> Reverend William Cowherd, *Facts Authentic in Science and Religion: Designed to illustrate a new translation of the Bible*, (Salford, Manchester: Academy Press, 1818 – 1820).

<sup>74</sup> *Report of the Conference Held June 28, 29 and 30 and July 1<sup>st</sup> 1809, Manchester*, (Manchester: printed by C. Wheeler and son, 1809).

<sup>75</sup> Reverend William Cowherd, *Select Hymns for Christian Worship*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1800, 5<sup>th</sup> edition 1818, 8<sup>th</sup> edition 1898.

<sup>76</sup> Hindmarsh was an important figure in the history of the mainstream Swedenborgian Church. He wrote a history of the New Church entitled *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church in England and American and other parts*, (London: Hodson and Son, 1861) which makes reference to Cowherd's congregation. D G Goyder, *A Concise History of the New Jerusalem Church; with a critical account of her defenders ...*, (London: Thomas Goyder, Simpkin & Marshall, 1827) also offers an insight into Cowherd's church by one of his critics.

The history of the British Vegetarian Society, unlike its American counterpart, has been unbroken since its founding in 1847. This is due in no small part to the interest which the Bible Christians of Salford took in the fledgling organisation in its early years. As a result the Society, still based in the North West as a legacy of its Bible Christian roots, has a library which contains almost all of the bound copies of its journal which has been published under various titles since 1848. The Society also holds the bound volumes of the London Vegetarian Society journals, which was formed following a schism from the main society, and, despite its name, was a national organisation in competition with the original society. At the beginning of the twentieth century the two organisations joined forces to become again one national Vegetarian Society but retained their offices in London and Manchester. The London office was closed and sold in the 1980s and the records transferred to its Altrincham “headquarters”. The Society’s magazines and files also contain a number of short histories of the Society written to celebrate landmarks in the history of the organisation.<sup>77</sup>

The Order of the Cross was founded in 1908 by the Reverend John Todd Ferrier, a former Congregational minister. Ferrier’s writings run to some forty volumes and many smaller pamphlets. Key works include *The Master: His Life and Teachings* and *The Logia or Sayings of the Master*. The Order no longer publishes its magazine, *The Herald of the Cross*, but bound, back copies can be purchased.

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<sup>77</sup> For example W.E. A. Axon and Ernest Axon, *One hundred years of the Vegetarian Society*, (Manchester: The Vegetarian Society Manchester, 1938) and *Ninety years of the Vegetarian Society*, (Manchester: The Vegetarian Society, 1938). The most recent was written on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vegetarian Society in 1997.

The majority of Ferrier's work is in print although Ferrier's earlier work on *The Inner Meaning of the Food Reform Movement* and some of the earlier *Heralds* are not. The Order claims to have no personal papers and no biography or "Life" of Ferrier exists; the Order believe Ferrier wanted attention focused on his work and not his life. Biographical fragments and information on Ferrier's earlier ministry can be found in the records of the Congregationalist Church in Macclesfield where he was the pastor for a time, in press reports of Ferrier's arrival and departure from that church and in histories of the Macclesfield Church and other local histories. Other information on Ferrier can be obtained from the account given in the journals of the Followers of the Way, who broke away from the Order in 1974 under the leadership of Antony J. F. Bates. The Followers of the Way espouse the teachings of both Ferrier and Bates.

Not all of the material in the bibliography relating to the Bible Christians and the Order of the Cross appears in this thesis but it has all formed part of the background of my research and has therefore informed this work even though it may not be cited here. It is also included to inform readers of what material is available and where it might be found.

The minutes and annual reports of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society and the early minutes and annual reports of the Friends' Vegetarian Society are held at the Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain, London. Woodbrooke Library, Birmingham holds a number of pamphlets on animal welfare and

vegetarian issues. The books of advices and discipline and journals of *The Friend* have also been examined.

Following the failure of the Adventist/Millerite prophecy that became known as The Great Disappointment of 1844, Ellen G. White helped found the Seventh Day Adventists America.<sup>78</sup> White claimed to have received divinely inspired visions or revelations. Her nutritional messages are part of this ministry – her texts on health include *The Ministry of Healing*, *Counsels on Health*, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* and *Temperance*. Journals of the Seventh Day Adventists and the publications of the Ellen G. White Foundation are other useful studies.

Two nineteenth-century Christian vegetarian groups, the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Danielites, both produced regular journals as well as additional pamphlets and recipe books. Hymns and the service for the initiation of new members of the Order of the Danielites have also survived and give an indication of the extent to which vegetarianism influenced the group. The Salvation Army's journals and Orders for Officers provide the majority of the Army's primary source material regarding the promotion of vegetarianism.

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<sup>78</sup> Followers of the Baptist preacher William Miller (Millerites) expected Jesus Christ's return on 22 October 1844 based on Miller's interpretations of the prophecies in the book of Daniel (chapters 8 and 9, especially Dan. 8:14 "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"). When Jesus did not appear, October 22, 1844, became known as the Great Disappointment.

#### **d. Main themes**

There are a number of themes and several distinct routes to Christian vegetarianism. These themes are not mutually exclusive, however, and some groups are influenced by more than one strand of thought. Some themes, however, are apparent to a greater or lesser extent among all the groups.<sup>79</sup>

Almost all Christian sects which specify vegetarianism as a condition of membership, or who strongly recommend it to their membership, have a humanitarian concern for the suffering and slaughter of animals. This may only be a minor theme in their discourse on vegetarianism, but it is almost always present.

The vegetarian historian Rynn Berry notes that “It is characteristic of religions that promote a vegetarian diet that they also have a theory of reincarnation.”<sup>80</sup> Berry there writes of the Order of the Cross, and notes the Order is no exception: its membership is entirely vegetarian and the Order teaches reincarnation. Whilst amongst many Eastern faiths vegetarianism and reincarnation may go hand in hand, the Order is an exception among Christian vegetarian sects, most of whom are quite orthodox on life after death. Re-incarnation is a more marginal theme, generally expressed by mystic sects with greater Eastern or Theosophical influences and prone to a reinterpretation or rewriting of the gospels.

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<sup>79</sup> The majority of the material in this section, “Main themes”, has been previously published in Rachel Muers and David Grumett (eds.), *Eating and Believing, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2008. See Samantha Jane Calvert, “‘Ours is the Food that Eden Knew’: Themes in the Theology and Practice of Modern Christian Vegetarians”, 123-135.

<sup>80</sup> Rynn Berry, *Food for the Gods, Vegetarianism and the World's Religions*, (New York: Pythagorean Publishers, 1988), 304.

Julia Twigg comments that during the late nineteenth century religious influences such as the religion of nature, liberal Christianity, American transcendentalism and the religion of socialism were becoming increasingly popular. Twigg considers that

The adoption of Indian spirituality or the religion of socialism was experienced as a release into a world of lightness and freedom ... it was part of a wider late-nineteenth century cult of simplicity of religion; liberal Christianity especially had rejected the anxieties and difficulties of the previous decades and emphasised a spirit of acceptance of taking what one could from Christianity.<sup>81</sup>

Dualistic teachings can be found in many Christian vegetarian sects. In contemporary Christian vegetarian sectarian teachings dualism is usually the distinction between the physical and the spiritual. The physical body and/or the material world is seen as evil and corrupted by the sins of the world whereas the mind is spiritual and pure. In the Manichean tradition flesh is evil and the rejection of flesh food is the rejection of all materiality and corruption. This idea of subduing the flesh and favouring the spiritual through fasting, or Friday fasting, can be found in later monastic traditions but is rarely found among lay people in the mainstream churches.

As Twigg has already noted, this contrasts with the concept of the body in modern vegetarianism, which places an emphasis on health, vitality and well-being:

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<sup>81</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement" 88.

Vegetarians are the pioneers of sunbathing, walking in the mountains, yoga. They glorify bodily health and at times interpret salvation in terms of it. Health becomes a concept imbued with religious awe.<sup>82</sup>

Twigg feels that it is crucial to an understanding of the vegetarian movement to appreciate that it offers a “this-worldly form of salvation in terms of the body”.<sup>83</sup> Although she discusses the secular vegetarian movement, this interpretation can also be applied to modern Christian vegetarian sects. The healthy vegetarian physical form is evidence of the “rightness” and “naturalness” of the diet ordained by God for man: if one follows the correct teachings on diet and lifestyle, one will not suffer the ravages of illness and premature mortality. Such longevity and good health thus becomes an outward symbol or “badge of honour” of the spiritual heirs of this dietetic wisdom. In vegetarian terms meat is often described as polluting to the body and “dead”, whereas vegetarian food is viewed as “living food”. These descriptions are taken even further by the raw food movement which views any cooked food as “dead” and only raw food as having healthful properties. The concept of purity was closely linked in the nineteenth century with other campaigns for physical purity such as the anti-tobacco movement and teetotalism.<sup>84</sup> “Gnosticism was implicit in much of Swedenborgianism”, according to Lineham,<sup>85</sup> who concludes that the concept that “the flesh was evil was fully developed” in Cowherdite theology,<sup>86</sup> and notes that the Bible Christians “saw the death of Jesus as a symbol of the destruction of man’s body so that his spirit could be set free”.<sup>87</sup> These beliefs influenced Cowherd’s teachings on vegetarianism and temperance;

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<sup>82</sup> Julia Twigg, “Food for Thought, Purity and Vegetarianism”, *Religion*, Volume 9, Spring 1979, 22-23.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Julia Twigg, “Vegetarian movement”, 88.

<sup>85</sup> Lineham, “The English Swedenborgians”, 309.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 298.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.



Cowherd “thought that meat eating and the drinking of intoxicating liquor excited man’s animal nature and prevented him from recovering his infinite nature”.<sup>88</sup> This belief is a strong tradition in vegetarianism - both secular and Christian - of meat as “stimulating” or “exciting” to the body and the temperament. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the consumption of flesh foods was sometimes held responsible for inflaming the desire for alcohol, carnal desires and war, which were best suppressed by vegetarianism.

Ellen G. White believed that flesh food was harmful to man because it was too stimulating:

Flesh Food also is harmful. Its naturally stimulating effect should be a sufficient argument against its use; ... It tends to irritate the nerves and to excite the passions, thus giving the balance of power to the lower propensities.<sup>89</sup>

Flesh foods were also seen as likely to encourage other base instincts. White and Sylvester Graham shared a concern that the consumption of animal flesh led to masturbation in young people. This Graham considered harmful because “Frequent sexual activity, including masturbation, irritated, and therefore debilitated, the body, making it vulnerable to disease”.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>89</sup> Ellen G. White, “Education”, 1903, cited in *God’s Nutritionist*, (ed. Robert Cohen), (New York: Square One Publishers, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> “Graham’s Lecture to Young Men”, *The Graham Journal of Health and Longevity* 2, (7 July 1838): 237-238, cited in Karen Iacobbo and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 65.

Throughout history vegetarians have regularly linked their diet with gentleness and pacifism and meat consumption with violence. There is a long-standing view in the vegetarian movement that

The eating of animals is an ingestion of animal nature. Blood ... is associated with the living essence of the animal, so that in eating it we feed our animal nature, and this is the source of a certain ambivalence, for dominant culture prizes the characteristics of red bloodedness – strength, aggression, sexuality, passion – but in a qualified way.<sup>91</sup>

To eat animals is to take on their characteristics and to engender aggression.

Vegetarians in the nineteenth century were often active in the Peace movement.

Christians with pacifist beliefs, such as the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), also expressed concern for the unnecessary violence towards animals, leading to the creation of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society and the Friends' Vegetarian Society.

Many of those most involved in the secular vegetarian movements also gave their energies to the organised pacifist societies. Christian vegetarian groups which were, or are, pacifist include the Bible Christian Church, the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Cross. World War II saw the end of vegetarians' claims that war would be at an end if only man would abstain from flesh eating and animal slaughter. Spencer notes that:

Hitler's vegetarianism proved the fallibility, without any shadow of doubt, of one claim which vegetarianism had boldly made since ancient times: that if eating meat

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<sup>91</sup> Twigg, "Food for Thought, Purity and Vegetarianism", 20.

led to aggression, the converse was also true, and vegetarians were therefore peace-loving, gentle people.<sup>92</sup>

Another common theme in Christian vegetarian circles is the idea that the consumption of flesh creates a barrier between man and God that prevents better understanding or communication. This sometimes relates to ideas of meat as impure or polluting to the body, and therefore to the spiritual side of man, or that meat consumption is a symbol of Fallen Man and a sign that he has not fully developed spiritually to be able to make the correct choices in diet. The spiritualists, occultists and Theosophists of the Victorian period had a strong association with vegetarianism. Spiritualists believed vegetarianism was beneficial to mediums: the consumption of flesh was believed to impinge on their abilities. Similarly the Christian mystics Anna Bonus Kingsford and Edward Maitland both stressed the importance of vegetarianism in allowing the receipt of messages and visions. Maitland believed that meat eating was the cause of our failing to reach our true natures: "since only when man is purely nourished can he attain clearness and fullness of spiritual perception."<sup>93</sup>

There is a strong relationship between humanitarian and vegetarian movements in the nineteenth century. It was certainly the case that vegetarians saw their diet as part of the humanitarian movement:

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<sup>92</sup> Spencer, *Vegetarianism, A History*, 287. However, it should be noted that Hitler's vegetarianism, his commitment to the diet and his reasons for vegetarianism are still disputed by historians, biographers and vegetarians. See Spencer 283-287.

<sup>93</sup> Edward Maitland, *The Story of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland and the New Gospel of Interpretation*, (Birmingham: The Ruskin Press, 1905), 29.

As a Humanitarian Society, we are pledged to plead the cause of the weak, defenceless and oppressed, and therefore we are combating cruelty, tyranny, and injustice wherever we find it and see an opportunity of protesting against iniquity in such forms.<sup>94</sup>

When the name of the vegetarian society was debated in 1878 'humanitarian' was one of the suggested names.<sup>95</sup> It became the term used for the newly formed Humanitarian League in 1891. The Humanitarian League campaigned for a package of concerns that included animal welfare concerns such as vivisection and the campaign against blood sports as well as anthropocentric concerns such as the reformation of the Poor Laws. The Humanitarian League contained many well-known vegetarians such as Lewis Gompertz, Henry S. Salt and Josiah Oldfield. The League had a 'humane diet' department that debated and classified the cruelties of the meat industry rather than mandating an exclusively vegetarian diet. However, the relationship between vegetarianism and other human causes was well established before the advent of the Humanitarian League. Throughout the nineteenth century vegetarians were actively involved in the anti-capital punishment movement. Josiah Oldfield was president of the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment. As well as having strong links with the temperance movement many vegetarians and many Christian vegetarian groups such as the Bible Christians, the Order of the Golden Age, the Order of the Cross and the Quakers were also pacifist and actively involved in the pacifist movement. The Concordium unsuccessfully addressed the London Peace Society convention regarding diet and war in 1843 and members of the Vegetarian Society attended the Paris Peace Congress in 1849.

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<sup>94</sup> The Provost of the Order of the Golden Age, S. H. Beard, writing in the *Herald of the Golden Age*, January 1897, 20.

<sup>95</sup> *Dietetic Reformer*, 1878, 226.

The concept of physical puritanism is also relevant to the understanding of Christian vegetarianism in the nineteenth century. Vegetarianism was often linked by its detractors with Victorian 'quackery'. As part of a hygienic regimen it was seen as an alternative to 'allopathy'. As a movement vegetarianism was often linked by its supporters with interests such as temperance, teetotalism, hydropathy, herbalism/botany and homeopathy. The chemist and friend of Emerson, Samuel Brown's, essay in the Westminster Review in 1852 associated vegetarianism with the concept of 'physical puritanism'.<sup>96</sup> It was, he declared, the age of 'physiological reformers' and he noted the support of radicals such as Owenites and Chartists for the reformed diet and alternative health care. Many such radicals saw reform as extending beyond the social and political to physical regeneration of the body through natural treatments.

Some themes found in modern Christian vegetarianism have been common to all periods, but others seem to be peculiar to a particular period or zeitgeist. Humanitarian concerns are as much an issue for contemporary Christian vegetarians as for their nineteenth and early twentieth century counterparts.

Yet another common theme is a concern for human health. Groups which have continued into the twenty-first century often, though not always, stress the benefits of a vegetarian diet to the health and longevity of mankind. This is a particular

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<sup>96</sup> Samuel Brown, *Lectures on the Atomic Theory and Essays Scientific and Literary*, Volume II (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co and London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.), 1858

concern of Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventists and to the Reverend George Malkmus of Hallelujah Acres. This may indicate that our post-modern obsession with health, longevity and the reduction in ageing makes vegetarianism for health reasons a particularly attractive message. However, other groups, both mainstream and sectarian, stress the importance of animal welfare and compassion rather than the benefit to human health (though the latter may be mentioned in support of a compassionate diet). These include the Quakers and the Order of the Cross. Christian vegetarian groups today rarely claim vegetarianism will subdue the passions; the idea seems lost to contemporary Christian vegetarians, who are more likely to claim that their diet enhances health and vitality. Such ideas of abstinence and purity are not generally prized by society today and may go some way to explaining why these ideas are not current.

The ideas most persuasive among Christian vegetarian groups in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were humanitarianism and a desire for the return of Eden or the Golden Age. The scriptural text most frequently quoted by Christian vegetarians today is Genesis 1:29. As already discussed, most Christian vegetarian groups have a concern for animal welfare/rights and a desire for the return of Eden or the Golden Age, which they believe can be partly expressed by Christians' return to God's original diet for mankind.

It might be suggested that the idea of the Edenic diet requires a literal reading of Genesis, which was increasingly unpopular in the nineteenth century. However, many Christian vegetarian groups discussed here were, and are, anything but fundamentalist. Allegorical readings of the gospels are often the order of the day for these groups in order to explain references to meat consumption in the Bible, and re-interpretation and sometimes re-writing of the gospels occurs. Modern-day prophets' revelations on matters of diet are often given at least as great an authority as the Bible itself. Accepting that Genesis is allegorical still allows Christian vegetarian groups to draw attention to the essential message that God's original plan for man was a frugivorous diet. Many Christian vegetarian groups, have in common the desire to bring man closer to God through what a Bible Christian hymn-writer W. E. A. Axon referred to as the "Food that Eden knew/Ere our first parents fell".<sup>97</sup>

#### **e. Definitions**

The term "vegetarian" came into use in the 1840s, and recent research by John Davis<sup>98</sup> has identified that all early published references to the term came from those connected with the Concordium at Ham Common – the followers of the "sacred socialist" James Pierrepont Greaves. The Concordists followed a strict diet that was entirely free of animal products such as eggs and milk – a diet that from 1944 would be described as "vegan" – and Concordists avoided wearing woollen clothing too (as do many present day vegans). In 1847 at the founding of

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<sup>97</sup> Reverend William Cowherd, *Select Hymns for Christian Worship*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, 1898.

<sup>98</sup> The historical advisor to the International Vegetarian Union and a current trustee of the Vegetarian Society.

the Vegetarian Society the term “vegetarian” was adopted, but its meaning included the consumption of eggs and milk, probably because the Bible Christians, who were well represented at the founding meetings, included these articles in their diet.

In a list of extracts from printed journals from 1842 – 48, the International Vegetarian Union History Internet group has used Google books to identify all early uses of the word vegetarian. According to Davis’s research, Google books has 2000 titles published between 1842 – 46 which use the phrase “vegetable diet” and just eight use the phrase “vegetarian”. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) gives the earliest source of the word “vegetarian” as from 1839 in F. A. Kemble’s *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation 1838 – 1839*: “If I had had to be my own cook, I should inevitably become a vegetarian ...”<sup>99</sup> The sentence is not quoted in full in the OED but continues, “... probably indeed return to my green and salad days”. However, this journal was not published until 1863 by which time the term vegetarian was in common use. The phrase may have been added in at a later date either by the author or an editor. It is not known whether the original manuscript has survived. Even if this is indeed the first use of the term vegetarian it may well be that Fanny Kemble had heard the term because of her correspondence with someone who was connected with the Alcott House Concordium. As Davis notes, Kemble was born in England, returned to England often and corresponded throughout her lifetime with members of reform movements in England. She may well have heard the term “vegetarian” from

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<sup>99</sup> Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation 1838-1839*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 251



people with connections to Alcott House by 1839. In particular, Davis suggests that the common link between the Boston transcendentalists, James Pierrepont Greaves and Alcott House and Fanny Kemble, might well be Harriet Martineau. Martineau, like Kemble, was an abolitionist and was in America from 1834-1836 and saw much of Fanny Kemble. She claimed to have read Kemble's earlier journal and advised her to remove some thirty pages. This demonstrates both the relationship between the two women and that Kemble's journals were being edited at later stages.

Other than Kemble's journal the first published use of the term "vegetarian" that has survived is from the Alcott House Concordium's journal *The Healthian* in December 1841.<sup>100</sup> There are three uses in this issue and it is clear from the context that the readers at this time were expected to be familiar with the term as there is no attempt to explain it. Although the word "vegetarian" is used there are also many more references to "vegetable diet" and "vegetable food" suggesting that term in this period was only used to describe a person who followed a vegetable diet. It was not used as an adjective in the early years. It is also clear from the pages of *The Healthian* that the Concordium's definition of the "vegetable diet" or a "vegetarian" did not include the consumption of any animal products. An exchange of letters in *New Age; Concordium Gazette and Temperance Advocate*, in 1843 between the editor and "an enquirer" from Liverpool who was seeking advice on alternatives to animal and cooked foods such "tea, coffee, butter, eggs,

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<sup>100</sup> *The Healthian*, April and part of May 1842. This is the consolidated annual volume that was published by W. Strange, London, for Alcott House. The printed individual issues were printed by the Concordists at Alcott House.

milk,&c.,”. The enquirer is clearly aware of the Concordium’s diet which excluded all animal products, tea, coffee and most cooked foods. The editor suggests a list of cooked and uncooked items “which are prepared and used without infringing in any manner upon the freedom and life of the animal race” and finally suggests “For pie-crusts, use mashed potatoes, or yeast, instead of butter or lard.”<sup>101</sup> It is clear that in this period that “vegetarian” was what would most commonly be called vegan today – a diet free of all animal products. The use of the word to describe a diet that is merely free of flesh rather than all animal products does not take place until the Concordium combines forces with the Salford Bible Christians and “vegetarian” is chosen to describe the new society in 1847. The food served at the meetings to establish this new society included eggs and dairy products and the definition of vegetarian required for membership of the Society was that one did not eat fish, flesh or fowl: “The objects of the Society are, to induce habits of abstinence from the flesh of animals as food.” John Davis sees this move as the result of the relative power of the Bible Christians in the new society:

The move to ovo-lacto came from the BCC [Bible Christian Church] which had no connection with Alcott House until early 1847 - the two probably had very limited contact before that - and the BCC had *not* been using the word 'vegetarian'. However, with Alcott House struggling, the BCC took a primary role in the new society, and had the heavyweight political and financial clout to get their version formalised.<sup>102</sup>

It seems equally possible that Oldham and the Corcordists who had experienced the failure of not only their community and the community at Fruitlands, but also

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<sup>101</sup> *New Age; Concordium Gazette and Temperance Advocate*, No.5, Vol. 1, 3 June, 1843.

<sup>102</sup> “Extracts from some journals 1842-48 – the earliest known uses of the word “vegetarian”, <http://www.ivu.org/history/vegetarian.html>, accessed, 6 March 2012

such projects as the British and Foreign Society for the Promotion of Humanity and Abstinence from Animal Food, might be taking a pragmatic view and hoping that a less restrictive definition would bring strength in numbers. Clearly Oldham was willing to supply dairy products at the Physiological Conference at Alcott House. This concession suggests that the Concordists felt that ovo-lacto-vegetarians were part of a wider community of people who were avoiding the flesh of animals. In the world outside of these two vegetarian communities the term vegetarian was employed to describe all things relating to the vegetable diet.

From *Punch* we see,

When we noticed, a week or two ago, a banquet of vegetables, we were not aware that a great Vegetarian Movement was going on, with a vegetarian press, a vegetarian society, a vegetarian boarding-house, a vegetarian school, two or three vegetarian hotels, a vegetarian Life Insurance Office, vegetarian letter-paper, vegetarian pens, vegetarian wafers, and vegetarian envelopes.<sup>103</sup>

In 1850, *The British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical review* or quarterly journal of practical medicine and surgery noted the discrepancy between what it saw as the principles and practices of vegetarians. They concluded that only those avoiding all animal foods (including eggs and dairy products) could truly be considered to be vegetarians as eggs and dairy were "... nothing else than the substitution of one form of Animal food for another."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *Punch*, London, 1848, Vol. XIV, 182.

<sup>104</sup> *British and foreign medico-chirurgical review* Vol. VI, July-October 1850, London (July issue), 76.

The confusion, or perhaps there was no confusion but merely a continuing difference of opinion, continued for some time. The vegetarian doctor Anna Kingsford wrote in *Dreams and Dream Stories* in 1886, “For the past fifteen years I have been an abstainer from flesh-meats. Not a vegetarian, because during the whole of that period I have used such animal produce as butter, cheese, eggs, and milk”.<sup>105</sup> For Kingsford the word vegetarian clearly describes a vegan or animal product free diet. This is perhaps particularly significant as Kingsford became Vice President of the Vegetarian Society around 1880 and, as we have seen, the Society held a rather different definition of vegetarianism from 1847.

The energy of the Concordists contributed to the founding of the Vegetarian Society but by 1847 the community was already in decline and would not last much longer. It was the other Christian sect, the Cowherdite Bible Christians who were to sustain the Vegetarian Society through its early years.

Other terms in common parlance in the nineteenth century that often described a meat-free diet were “fruitarian”, “food reform” and “dietetic reform”, the latter two by vegetarians who wanted to avoid the association with eating solely vegetables. However, these terms were also used by those involved in other aspects of food reform, such as campaigns against food adulteration and in support of what food reformers considered purer and more natural food, such as wholemeal bread. Today the term fruitarian usually refers to a very strict “raw food” diet that permits

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<sup>105</sup> Anna Bonus Kingsford, *Dreams and Dream Stories*, (London: George Redway, 1888), Preface.

only that which the plant bears – fruit that can be picked without uprooting a plant. However, fruitarianism in the nineteenth century was merely a synonym for vegetarianism. The Order of the Golden Age's journals often speak of fruitarianism but this is not a vegan, raw food or fruitarian diet as it would be understood by the late twentieth century. In 1944 a breakaway group of Vegetarian Society members formed a new group to represent their strict diet which did not include animal products such as milk and eggs. These vegetarians had found the Vegetarian Society of the day unwilling to promote their stricter vegetarian diet in its journals, and accordingly created a Vegan Society. The name chosen for the fledgling society was a contraction of the word "vegetarian" because it was perceived to have grown out of that diet.

Within vegetarianism there are also subgroups of vegetarians. The most typical vegetarian in the UK today is an ovo-lacto-vegetarian consuming eggs and dairy products as well as foods of vegetable origin. There are also lacto-vegetarians who eat dairy products but not eggs, including British Indian vegetarians who abstain from eggs for religious reasons. Ovo-vegetarians are less common but include those who are lactose intolerant and therefore do not eat dairy products, and those vegetarians who are generally vegan but who eat eggs produced by their own free-range hens or by hens whose welfare is known to them. The Vegan Society's definition of veganism did not originally exclude honey, but the doctrine on this point changed in the 1990s. Some people who call themselves vegans consume honey, although this is not common. Many people today define their diet as vegetarian despite eating some slaughter products, most commonly fish. This

is sometimes a result of ignorance of the definition of vegetarian – which has been consistent since 1847 – but often simply an aspirational desire to associate themselves with a particular image or lifestyle. Terms such as “demi-vegetarian”, “pescetarian” and “meat-reducer” are also used to describe people who are fish eaters or who have reduced the meat in their diet.

## **PART II: CHRISTIANITY AND VEGETARIANISM**

### **CHAPTER 1: 1809 – 1847**

Vegetarianism emerged in the context of a society which faced a variety of material and spiritual challenges, according to reform-minded contemporaries. The Britain of the Industrial Revolution was faced with profound environmental problems such as the supply of adequate pure water, and those who sought to tackle a popular culture which prized the consumption of alcoholic beverages for medical, social and cultural reasons had to address the problem of supplying alternatives. Vegetarianism must be seen, as scholars have argued, as in part an offshoot of an evolving temperance movement in Britain, and in parallel, in the United States.

Temperance – and to a lesser extent teetotalism – were relatively successful campaigns that were taken up enthusiastically by the churches both mainstream and sectarian, established and nonconformist and even some Catholic churches. Vegetarianism, however, was not destined to follow the pattern of the reform movement out of which it grew. It was never taken up by the mainstream churches and remained an extreme and unorthodox view within mainstream Christianity. Ultimately, however, the changes in legislation and practice were such that the temperance movement would peak and fade. The churches no longer have temperance campaigning groups and even the terms temperance and teetotalism are scarcely recognised nor the distinction understood by the general

public. Vegetarianism, which was never taken up by the churches, was to become increasingly acceptable and even fashionable and entertain the mainstream in the 1980s when its popularity among pop musicians made something to which people aspired in this period with surveys regularly showing that people would self-identify as vegetarian despite eating some elements of meat or fish. This study compares the temperance and vegetarian movements and their place in the churches and considers when they grew in popularity, why this was the case and the support which they received from the churches. As vegetarianism grew out of the temperance movement it seems appropriate to consider the different ways in which movements which might be considered to be very close developed.

Alcohol consumption was commonplace in the early decades of the nineteenth century. People imbibed even when they could ill afford it. Drinking water was largely unsafe and often the only water supplies in poor areas were owned by publicans.<sup>1</sup> Milk was often of poor quality and adulterated. Few alternatives, such as cordials existed. Although coffee duties reduced the cost of coffee in 1825 it was nevertheless as expensive as alcoholic drinks.<sup>2</sup> Drink was also believed to be important in providing energy for work, as a pain killer – alcohol was often prescribed by doctors – and for its beneficial psychological effects in assuaging grief and life difficulties, as well as its potential to add to the jollity of festivals and celebrations.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.



The temperance movement began with free traders trying to make milder and purer drinks available by freeing the beer and wine trades in 1830 and 1860 respectively. The temperance movement targeted spirit drinks from 1828. From the early 1830s teetotal societies, who supported total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, were formed. By the end of the decade some supporters were taking the “long pledge” which forbade the offering of alcoholic drinks to others rather than the shorter pledge, which promised that the pledger would not consume them himself. During this period campaigns aimed at persuading the nation to abstain from spirits or from all alcoholic drinks (including beer). The challenge to free trade and the support of prohibition did not take shape until the foundation of the United Kingdom Alliance in 1853. Several Bible Christians with key roles in the Vegetarian Society also held office in the United Kingdom Alliance.

The temperance movement was established on the traditional “evangelical model” with funding from wealthy philanthropists and with the patronage of prominent clergy, gentry and even the monarch.<sup>3</sup> All early prominent teetotallers were liberal/radical nonconformists, although in some local societies nonconformists and Anglicans cooperated in the endeavour.<sup>4</sup> Teetotalism grew out of the temperance movement, although there had been individuals, and even groups such as the Bible Christians and the Concordists, whose religious beliefs required them to be teetotal. However, both the temperance and teetotal movements were non-denominational in conception and essentially concerned with the reformation of the individual and of society. They were created as secular rather than

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 117.

specifically religious institutions and the Vegetarian Society would follow this model.

Although it was not the first teetotal society to be established, the Preston society was the first to promote teetotalism with enthusiasm.<sup>5</sup> The teetotal movement appreciated that the drunkard would only be safe if he or she could be kept from associating with people and places where they were formerly led to drink. Teetotalers were encouraged to create connections within the movement and to move into a totally different sphere of life. The growth of the movement saw “the creation of temperance hotels, temperance friendly societies, temperance halls, temperance periodicals and building societies”.<sup>6</sup> The late nineteenth century would see vegetarian attempts to create a similar network of vegetarian restaurants, hotels and even a vegetarian club in Manchester.

In the Victorian period vegetarianism was usually part of a package of “food reform” and vegetarians were generally temperate and quite possibly teetotal. Early Vegetarian Society banquets were toasted in “plain water”. The Concordists also refused tea and coffee. The suggestion for a vegetarian organisation was mooted in a journal that had temperance, hydropathy and other reforms as its main concerns.<sup>7</sup> Vegetarianism was often an extension of temperance – a temperate, or simple or frugal, diet.

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<sup>5</sup> The first teetotal society was established in Paisley in 1832.

<sup>6</sup> Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 116.

<sup>7</sup> *The Truth Tester*, 1 April 1847 in a letter by ‘A Vegetarian’ and written W. B. Withers of Whitchurch, Hants.

Many vegetarians, such as the Bible Christian John Wright of Bolton who had converted to vegetarianism with Cowherd in 1809, were active in the temperance movement. Wright helped to found the Bolton Temperance Society in 1833 and, was entrusted with the charge of drunkards at the magistrates' court, many of whom signed the pledge under his supervision in return for a lighter sentence.<sup>8</sup>

Few references can be found in the vegetarian journals or the minutes of the Vegetarian Society or Bible Christian Church of this period to the practical involvement of women. The ministers of the Bible Christian Church and the officers of the Vegetarian Society were all men. Those addressing the meetings to found the Vegetarian Society were also male, as were the early speakers who represented the Vegetarian Society in talks at temperance and other meetings around the country.<sup>9</sup> Whilst women were not mentioned as lecturers on vegetarianism, a Mrs Stamp is listed by a correspondent as a lecturer in the temperance movement and is commended to temperance committees.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the vegetarian movement was more conservative than the temperance movement, as the writer admits he had

... some scruples as to the propriety of the female speaking, I was an attentive observer, but there was nothing to criticise. Christianity, modesty and eloquence, shone through her whole address; and not for one moment does she step aside from her character as a woman. Her speaking is refined and impressive. May the

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<sup>8</sup> Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 77-78.

<sup>9</sup> *The Vegetarian Advocate* (VA), Vol. I 1848-1850, (London, 1850), 23. The VA reports William Horsell of the hydropathic establishment in Ramsgate giving a series of addresses on vegetarianism on what appears to be a lecture tour. Other speakers included the Bible Christian minister James Gaskell, who gave a talk at the Philosophical Institute in Hulme and John Smith the author of *Fruits and Farinacea and the Proper Food of Man*.

<sup>10</sup> *The Vegetarian Advocate*, Vol. I, 139.

cause of temperance long retain so fair an ornament, and the perishing drunkard such a friend.<sup>11</sup>

Kathryn Gleadle makes an interesting point that “the place of women within radical sub-cultures was, therefore, far more complex, and potentially empowering, than is often conveyed”.<sup>12</sup> Gleadle makes a convincing case that reform in early Victorian radicalism began in the home owing to the need for women to be committed to the reform ideals as they would require additional time supervising servants and superintending the household and kitchen. Vegetarianism often called for flour to be milled at home, or bread baked at home, as well as for the sourcing of alternative animal-free products such as scrubbing brushes. Gleadle thinks it is possible that politicising the act of food preparation would have given women greater satisfaction in the task and provided a way in which they could express their ideological views, without defying any notions of appropriate feminine behaviour. She also suggests that some vegetarian writers felt that this role was comparable to that of a physician. Without the support of women it would not be possible to practice vegetarianism – as the *Vegetarian Advocate* appreciated,

The ultimate success of our movement, no less than its gradual growth and adoption, depend most materially on the co-operation of wives, sisters, and servants. The influence of woman’s voice and example will ever be one of the greatest means for the furtherance of social reform and in no department of it more than in that which pertains to eating and drinking.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Kathryn Gleadle, “The age of physiological reformers”: rethinking gender and domesticity in the age of reform” in *Rethinking the Age of Reform*, (Cambridge University Press: Past and Present Publications, 2003), 201.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 210.

Gleadle cites examples of children being raised by a vegetarian mother being noted with approval in both vegetarian and Bible Christian literature. However, she notes that the

figure of a conservative wife, reluctant to alter domestic arrangements, became a common trope in vegetarian circles. In vegetarian meetings up and down the country, James Simpson<sup>14</sup> repeatedly blamed women for the perpetuation of meat consumption.<sup>15</sup>

Gleadle further claims that despite concerns such as Simpson's, women often made up to 50 per cent of the audience at vegetarian events and frequent votes of thanks were made to the ladies for their active contribution to the event's preparations. She highlights how vegetarian women utilised philanthropy as an outlet open to them to promote radical causes, and particularly notes the Ladies' Phonographic Corresponding Society as one in which vegetarians as well as other "political radicals" were actively involved.<sup>16</sup> Middle-class women might also promote vegetarianism through the giving of prizes to working-class allotment holders as did Mrs Simpson (wife of James Simpson), but those of more modest means could still be useful to the cause in distributing reform literature as well as contributing to the correspondence pages of these journals.<sup>17</sup> Vegetarian women were also able to assist the movement by the publication of cookery books such

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<sup>14</sup> James Simpson was a Bible Christian and the first president of the Vegetarian Society.

<sup>15</sup> Gleadle, "The age of physiological reformers", 212.

<sup>16</sup> Later in the century we see the establishment the Women's Vegetarian Union (WVU) providing an organisation run by women to promote the diet to women and which was often funded by women. For more information on the WVU see James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 166 – 173.

<sup>17</sup> See Kathryn Gleadle, "The age of physiological reformers", 215.

as Mrs Brotherton's *Vegetable Cookery*<sup>18</sup> and Elizabeth Horsell's *The Penny Domestic Assistant: Being a Guide to Vegetarian Cookery*<sup>19</sup> as well as through fiction such as Sarah Ann Clubb's 1854 story *Good Influence*<sup>20</sup> and Anna Blackwell's *Ellen Braye*.<sup>21</sup> Women were also involved in hosting vegetarian social occasions in their homes and in supervising the food at events organised by the Society. At the banquets held at the annual meetings of the Vegetarian Society the table plans indicate the prominent ladies that were hosting or "presiding" at each table of guests. Gleadle notes, "Women's contribution may have been heavily circumscribed by cultural convention, but activities such as cooking were, within this context, a means to establish authority and recognition."<sup>22</sup>

In addition, vegetarian establishments such as hydropathic centres, hotels, restaurants and schools were sometimes run by women or with both husband and

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<sup>18</sup> *The System of Vegetable Cookery* was first published in periodical form in 1812, a second edition appeared in 1821 and a third was published by Horatio Phillips of London in 1829 under the title *Vegetable Cookery: with an introduction recommending abstinence from animal foods and intoxicating liquors*. Its author was given as 'a member of the Bible Christian Church'. The fourth edition of 1833 published by Effingham Wilson, in common with subsequent editions, gave the author as 'A Lady'. Although the recipes were Mrs Brotherton's work the introductions were penned by her husband, Joseph Brotherton. At least three later editions were published and included an introduction by James Simpson.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Horsell, *The penny domestic assistant: being a guide to vegetarian cookery, without animal products or mineral substances; with remarks on industry, frugality, and cleanliness: nature's bill of fare, and valuable statistical tables, designed to aid those who desire to promote vegetarian habits of diet, and the health, wealth, and social comfort of the people*, (London: William Horsell, n.d. possibly early 1860s).

<sup>20</sup> S. A. Clubb, *Good Influence: A Tale for the Young who are Willing to Seek the Stepping Stone to Health, Intelligence and Happiness*, (London: Frederick Pitman/ Manchester: William White, 1854). Clubb is the sister of H. S. Clubb, the Bible Christian and vegetarian. Clubb was a shorthand teacher at the Concordium, a chartist activist, secretary to James Simpson before travelling to America in 1853 where he worked as a journalist. He was also a committed abolitionist and pacifist. In 1855 Clubb produced plans for a vegetarian settlement in Kansas, which was not a success, before becoming minister of the Bible Christian Church in Philadelphia after the death of the Reverend William Metcalfe. For more information on Clubb see Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 89, 92 and 97, Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 33-34, 44, 178 and 182 and Karen and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America, A History*, (Westport, CT: Praeger publishers, 2004), 85, 89-91 and 109.

<sup>21</sup> Anna Blackwell, *Ellen Braye, or the fortune-teller*, 2 vols, (London: Saunders and Otley, 1841). See Gleadle, "The age of physiological reformers, 216.

<sup>22</sup> Gleadle, "The age of physiological reformers, 218.

wife running the establishment. This allowed vegetarian women to demonstrate their support for reform principles through economic endeavours.<sup>23</sup> As other scholars have noted, exceptions were made to the general rule of women not participating in debates and discussions at vegetarian meetings. By 1850 the London Association had a ladies' committee that included Elizabeth Horsell and the artist Jane Hurlstone. At meetings held at the Talfourd Hotel in Farringdon Street, London women were encouraged to address the room and Horsell's speeches attracted admiration in the vegetarian press.<sup>24</sup> Yet women's activism within vegetarianism in this period was displayed only within clearly defined social rules and mores.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the emphasis given by male reformers to the importance and benefits of "Fireside Reform" perhaps allowed women to imbue their domestic duties with greater political significance and led to greater involvement in the movement by women in the late Victorian period.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst the vegetarian movement was, from its earliest days, at pains to demonstrate the diet's utility for people of all social classes and all occupations and none, the movement itself was comprised of mostly middle class and upper working class adherents. Many appeals were made to working men with meetings and soirees in various cities held to demonstrate the benefits of an inexpensive and nutritious vegetarian diet. In February 1850 the *Vegetarian Messenger* reported that over half the membership was from the lower classes; 245

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 216-217 for more information.

<sup>24</sup> See Gleadle, "The age of physiological reformers", 218 and Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 162.

<sup>25</sup> It is worthy of mention, however, that there was an earlier attempt to form what was to be a short lived vegetarian society in 1843. Mrs S. C. Chichester accepted the role of president. For more information see Part II Section 1a of this work.

<sup>26</sup> James Hibberd uses this term in 1851, *Vegetarian Advocate*, (supplement February 1851), 94.

“tradesmen, mechanics and labourers” made up a total membership of 478 persons.<sup>27</sup> *The Vegetarian Advocate* published many testimonials from those working men who had benefited from the diet, but these examples do not demonstrate a large following for vegetarianism amongst the working classes. Meetings and testimonials suggest that the appeal of vegetarianism among the working class was to the “respectable”, suggesting that the diet was most successful in gaining support from those who were already interested in self-improvement.<sup>28</sup>

Julia Twigg views the Vegetarian Society at this time as “strongly northern and working class” which she acknowledges is atypical of the movement in later periods.<sup>29</sup> However, James Gregory believes that this “plebeian support in the earlier period should not be overstated” and considers that although the movement was keen to promote the diet as having wide-ranging appeal it was essentially led by the middle-classes and had greatest appeal among the middle and upper working classes.<sup>30</sup>

The leaders of the Vegetarian Society were always drawn from the middle classes. Each month the *Vegetarian Messenger* published a break-down of the membership according to “position in society”. From this data we can see that although professionals such as medical men and educationalists were well

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<sup>27</sup> Although women are identified separately, their social class is not given.

<sup>28</sup> In the later Victorian period the Vegetarian Society produced membership statistics in which occupations were delineated.

<sup>29</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”. <http://www.ivu.org/history/thesis/society-members.html>

<sup>30</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 153.



represented, the bulk of the membership was drawn from “tradesmen and agents” and “artisans”.<sup>31</sup>

The Society’s membership records also demonstrate that it drew most of its members from the new industrial cities of the north and in particular from towns like Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. London saw some vegetarian activity but the focus of the Society was predominantly northern, as Julia Twigg argues.

Twigg also notes that the working class were attracted to vegetarianism by the emphasis on a cheap means to a healthy diet and, the beliefs that a meatless diet improved one’s alertness and that vegetarians were less prone to stress.<sup>32</sup> James Simpson, the Society’s first president, notes,

We have members who belong to all classes and all occupations; every sort of hard vocation is followed by vegetarians and their experience is, that they can live cheaper and work harder upon a reformed diet than a mixed.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 152-153 and Twigg “Vegetarian Movement 115-116.

<sup>32</sup> Twigg, ‘Vegetarian Movement’, 95-97.

<sup>33</sup> J Simpson, *Dietetic Reform: A Lecture on the Principles and Practice of Vegetarian Diet*, (Northampton 1856), 27, cited in Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 82.

### **a. THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY**

Although the contemporary vegetarian movement in Britain has little connection with Christianity or, indeed, any faith group, the Vegetarian Society was co-founded by a group of Christians whose founding minister was a former Anglican clergyman, and follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, the somewhat appropriately named Reverend William Cowherd. The accounts that survive of those who knew Cowherd – both his supporters and detractors – give the impression that Cowherd was a force to be reckoned with. He was clearly a charismatic leader for his followers and a challenging character to those who objected to his unorthodox views. One could readily argue that it was the force of Cowherd's personality, and those of his early ministers such as the Reverend James Scholefield, the man the Chartist leader Fergus O'Connor named as "The Chaplain of the Chartists", or the Reverend James Clark who led a group of Bible Christians to America in 1817, who inspired this vegetarian sect and held it together for the duration of their lifetimes. The strength of the leaders of this small sect certainly explains the establishment and growth of vegetarianism in their churches in some of the poorest communities in Manchester and Salford but there is perhaps a *prima facie* case for arguing that the religious conditions in Salford in the early nineteenth century made it possible for this ideology to really establish itself.

Whilst the ministers of the Bible Christian Church played a substantial role in the establishment of vegetarianism as a key tenet of the Bible Christian Church, a range of underlying economic or religious and social causes made such a doctrine

more palatable to the working poor of Salford, where established religion had a limited foothold in the early nineteenth century. Rapid urbanisation, increased economic prosperity, selection in the market place and vegetarianism's link with 'respectability'<sup>1</sup> and temperance were other factors. A divide between rural and town life led to a changing relationship with animals.

Although there was clearly a large and sufficiently vocal band of vegetarians to form a Society in 1847, the Society was needed not only to promote the idea of vegetarianism to the general public but also to provide a mutual support structure for vegetarians. The Bible Christian Church's following in Salford according to the 1851 census amounted to 177 people although it was claimed that the Church could accommodate five to six hundred people. Similarly the Vegetarian Society's membership in its first few years was perhaps two to three hundred people in Britain. Colin Spencer notes that the general public considered ale, wine and meat as essential to the daily diet, and hence doctors prescribed beef tea for the sick. People were therefore inclined to view vegetarianism and teetotalism as dangerous experiments.<sup>2</sup>

One might well ask what led the Bible Christians to choose to reach out to the wider community to develop the vegetarian movement through an ostensibly secular organisation, rather than to try to bring the nation to Bible Christianity and

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<sup>1</sup> Respectability in this period was of great importance. A distinction was often made between the respectable poor and the undeserving poor. Respectability implied sobriety, hard work and a good 'character', the ability to provide for the family and to educate children. It would generally suggest a regular church attendance.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, *Vegetarianism, A History*, 247.

its abstemious ways. P. J. Lineham thinks that their commitment to education may hold the key. He notes that many Bible Christians had no background in the New Church so they rarely referred to Swedenborg, but Swedenborgian ideas continued to pervade the sect. One major difference between the mainstream New Church and the Bible Christians was that the latter exalted “reason” which was seen as more authoritative than revelation. The sect had much in common with popular Deism.<sup>3</sup> Science and education were important to many artisans in nineteenth-century England but the Bible Christians believed that they held “the secrets of life and the spirit”.<sup>4</sup> “Good government was a way of bringing the New Jerusalem to earth”<sup>5</sup> and education was “a way of transforming the flesh into spirit”.<sup>6</sup> Lineham suggests that

Thus Swedenborgian principles were desacralised, and coupled with the social movements of the age. The New Jerusalem inaugurated in 1757 was to become the experience of all who would discipline the flesh ... Bible Christians embraced with equal conviction any secular goals which seemed to fulfil their beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

The mainstream Swedenborgians “shared many of these beliefs about the virtues of education” but the Bible Christians secularised Swedenborgian ideas and became more active in social issues.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Deism is the belief in the existence of God based on the evidence of reason and nature only and the rejection of supernatural revelation. Roland Detrosier is a good example of how the similarities between the two led to Detrosier giving his support to Deism. For a discussion of Detrosier see Twigg, ‘Vegetarian Movement’, 103-104.

<sup>4</sup> Lineham, “English Swedenborgians”, 320

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 321

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

In the early years, the Vegetarian Society's association with the Bible Christians was such that some of the early executive meetings were held in the library of the latter's King Street Chapel. One report makes it clear that the premises acted as the Society's headquarters.<sup>9</sup> The Bible Christian influence is evident in the Society's magazines. The link with the church was strong enough for the Society to continue to hold social events at the church premises as late as 1927.<sup>10</sup> In 1920, when the Society was given notice to quit its offices in Deansgate, it successfully applied to the trustees of the church for the tenancy of a house and shop that the church owned in Cross Lane.<sup>11</sup> The Society's connection with the Church continued until the latter disbanded. Each year the Society's Annual General Meeting included a Sabbath church service at the Bible Christian Church, Salford, with a vegetarian themed sermon which was often described at length in its journal.

Salford was not just the birthplace of modern vegetarianism, with its close links to the Bible Christian community to be found there; in its early days the Vegetarian Society had a physical home in Salford. The Bible Christian Church was also the spiritual home of the secular Vegetarian Society for the lifetime of the church – the place where services to mark events in the life of the secular society would take place. It is less clear what made the vegetarian doctrine so appealing to this small Christian community in Salford. The force of Cowherd's personality can only

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<sup>9</sup> Brotherton Scrapbooks, 35/65, cited in Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 96.

<sup>10</sup> GMCRO, G27/5, Bible Christian Church minutes, 8 July 1927.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 March 1920, G24/5. The Vegetarian Society did not take up the tenancy but moved to premises in Wilmslow in 1921 which were reported to be smaller and more expensive than those in Deansgate.

provide a partial explanation. The radical religious tradition in Manchester and Salford, and the changes in the social conditions of the people, and those two places, as well as the increasing industrialisation and urbanisation of the “manufacturing cities”, may have each played a part in the history of modern vegetarianism.

The religious history of the Salford and Manchester areas make them likely places for the growth of alternative and even heterodox ideologies. At the time the Bible Christian Church was established in 1809, established religion had never had a strong foothold in Lancashire. Snape discussing the end of the seventeenth century notes that

Perhaps nowhere else in the kingdom, therefore, were the twin dangers of Popery and Dissent more apparent to the post-Toleration Church of England than in southern Lancashire, an area which, according to E. A. Rose, may have counted as many Catholics and dissenters As Anglicans amongst its population at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup>

In the early part of the nineteenth century the Anglican revival had not yet taken place in Manchester and folk or popular Christianity and Catholicism remained relatively strong in the region. There were few parishes of the established church compared to elsewhere in the country. The parish of Manchester – a larger area than the municipality of Manchester – grew in population from 125,911 in 1801 to 515,581 in 1851<sup>13</sup> and the number of Anglican churches increased from 23 to 56.<sup>14</sup>

Church building however, was not growing between 1794 and 1820 and space

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<sup>12</sup> M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society, The Lancashire Parish of Whalley in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 46.

<sup>13</sup> Derek Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 50.

<sup>14</sup> W. R. Ward, ‘Swedenborgianism, Heresy, Schism or Religious Protest?’ in *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest*. (ed. D. Baker), *Studies in Church History*. Vol. 9, 1972, 108f.

was limited. As a result pew renting was expensive – a pew in St John’s was £25 a year.<sup>15</sup> Tithes and church rates caused further difficulties for the poor and dissenters resented their enforced contribution to the Anglican Church.

“Lancashire has been called a ‘religious battleground’ and from the time of the Reformation it had a variety of competing traditions”.<sup>16</sup> There was a lingering belief in the supernatural as one can see from the Lancashire witch trials.

Lancashire was also a stronghold of Catholicism. In many villages there were no churches: the diocese of Chester had 70 parishes compared with 510 in Suffolk. The Collegiate Church was High Church and had a strong Jacobite tradition and Manchester and Salford had a strong non-juring tradition. There was also a strong puritan aspect in Manchester and its dissenting chapels and those of nearby Bolton were the biggest in the country: “Religion was privatised to an unusual degree.”<sup>17</sup>

Manchester and Salford’s place at the cutting edge of the Industrial Revolution with its accompanying urbanisation created circumstances favourable to the institutionalisation of vegetarian ideas. Enthusiasm for intellectual innovation is related to rapid urbanisation. Village communities are often typified as conservative with villagers anxious to conform, although there are notable exceptions. Urbanisation led not only to people being unafraid to share their ideas but also provided the opportunity for like-minded people to meet one another more easily, as they were not as spread out among separate towns and villages. Snell

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<sup>15</sup> Derek Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 50.

<sup>16</sup> Lineham, ‘English Swedenborgians’, 70.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

does not “believe that industrialisation between c.1750 – 1870 destroyed local attachments and community”. Rather he claims that there was

often more community in the epicentres of industrialisation than there ever was in those districts before. Across the country, the Industrial Revolution coincided with a strong and often heightened sense of place and belonging, as well as with an intensification of regional cultures and local pride.<sup>18</sup>

This sense of belonging and place was likely to have been intensified in a church that required outward symbols of faith such as abstinence from alcohol and flesh foods as well as pacifism. These beliefs and practices would have set the Bible Christians apart from even their more respectable and temperate neighbours and intensified their sense of “belonging” to the Bible Christian community.

Snell notes that one might suppose that a strong parish role was least applicable to religious Nonconformists because “the topography of dissent was often extra-parochial,” but instead he found that the Nonconformists “were usually well integrated into the civic, economic and social life of the parish ...” He cites Wales as his example of Nonconformist domination in civic life. In a similar fashion a small group of influential Bible Christians in Salford dominated the town’s civic life.

In this period, there was also a general shift in the attitude of society towards nature and animals. Some of this was a reaction to industrialisation as can be traced in the literature of the Romantic Movement. The view of a growing

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<sup>18</sup> K. D. M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging, Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700 – 1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 499.



humanitarianism<sup>19</sup> in the nineteenth century is challenged by Griffin who demonstrates that bull baiting had all but disappeared in England by the time that legislation was passed to outlaw it. Where it continued to thrive, in the West Midlands, it was not because a “degraded, brutalised populace”<sup>20</sup> could not be expected to share our late twentieth-century sensitivities but, Griffin claims, because bull baiting was simply more popular in these areas than other forms of blood sports such as cock throwing which continued in other areas. Griffin contends that bull baiting in the West Midlands was vigorously suppressed by the civic authorities not out of a humanitarian concern but because the more the practice was attacked by the authorities, the more it was defended with physical violence.

However, in urban areas there was also an increase in the love of nature in part brought about by an increasing isolation from rural life. Animal rearing and slaughtering were not part of a way of life for most people anymore. The people of the new cities were more likely to have contact with a companion dog or cat than with “food animals”. Town life, according to Twigg, drove a “psychic wedge” between animals as food and animals as companions; this opened up the possibility for vegetarian arguments to be considered. Although it is certainly the case that townspeople in this period would have seen animals at the butchers, in the street being driven to market and on city farms these contacts would not

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<sup>19</sup> Humanitarianism is the ethic of the extension of kindness, benevolence and sympathy to all human beings to alleviate suffering without distinction of gender, race, religion or nationality. In the nineteenth century this involved such issues as anti-slavery and child labour. The establishment of the Humanitarian League in 1891 extended this ethic to all sentient beings and campaigned for the abolition of hunting for sport and vivisection.

<sup>20</sup> Emma Griffin, *England's Revelry, A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660 – 1830*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2005), 245.

usually be of the duration or quality of those of rural people. People working in the factories would have limited contact with live farm animals in their natural environments and so were distanced from the experience of rearing and slaughtering animals. This work was undertaken for them by others in much the same way as it is for the majority of British people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Twigg also argues that vegetarianism can only develop once there is a break from subsistence patterns of eating and a substitution of “selection in the market”.<sup>21</sup> This choice was available to the wealthy and emerging middle classes before urbanisation but even for these groups town life had an impact on the quality and variety of their choices.

Antrobus considers that periods of economic growth in which material needs are satisfied “give rise to periods when the emphasis is on the meeting of spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic and environmental needs, rejecting the industrial system which provided the economic well-being”.<sup>22</sup> The middle classes, especially, gain the leisure time to pursue these needs. While a hierarchy of needs is not universal and may vary across age groups, cultural differences, availability of resources in an area or because of geopolitical issues, it is certainly the case that many humanitarian and philanthropic organisations arose in Britain and America in a period of relative prosperity in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century also saw the growth of an idealised view of rural life that also supports Antrobus’s view.

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<sup>21</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 111.

Roger Scola suggests that Manchester and Salford from the 1790s onwards enjoyed a high wage economy relative to other parts of the country. Despite periods of recession there was a large increase in real wages and personal consumption between 1760 and 1870.<sup>23</sup>

For the Bible Christians, animal rights were part of the general extension of rights. They had fought to abolish slavery, to improve the conditions of working children and the working classes and for religious freedoms. Vegetarianism was seen as a means as well as an end. It promoted individual welfare and a temperate personality which would lead to social good, “It was the linking of the private ethics with the public good which made the Bible Christians a disproportionately powerful force in Victorian England.”<sup>24</sup>

Julia Twigg sees the historical explanation for vegetarianism as the “cyclic rise and fall of the phenomenon”. Vegetarianism claims Twigg, “rides on the back of a series of other cultural movements”.<sup>25</sup> However, she does acknowledge that against this pattern of rise and fall there are also long term underlying changes that favour the development of vegetarianism. She highlights the movement from a rural to an urban consciousness as one of these changes. This shift changes the relationships between people and animals as well as between nature and food.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Roger Scola, *Feeding of the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester 1770 – 1870*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 260-262.

<sup>24</sup> Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 112

<sup>25</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 59.

<sup>26</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 60.

From the eighteenth century there is evidence of an increased concern for animal welfare. In the early nineteenth century an organised animal welfare movement was established. The concern arose mostly from the middle classes and especially those affected by evangelicalism and the first Romantic movement. This urban feeling, Twigg contends, was part of a larger and longer-term growth of compassion in the west, that crossed many boundaries and changed attitudes towards punishment, both spiritual and secular, to children and child rearing and street and domestic violence.<sup>27</sup> However, these movements and religious groups, with notable exceptions, only actively involved a small number of people and had limited impact on society at large. The anti-slavery movement and mass petitioning might be seen as one of these exceptions as it received a groundswell of public support. However, it is also possible to see this support for anti-slavery advocacy as concerned with the symbolism of slavery and what it said about the virtues and vices of a community rather than about egalitarianism:

This approach connections anti-slavery to ideologies of benevolent paternalism, in which peoples who considered themselves to be blessed with “superior” sensibilities and opportunities were held to be duty-bound to assist “lesser” peoples.<sup>28</sup>

This is not to suggest that the movement lacked activists motivated by a concern for racial equality but its popular appeal may have been rooted in notions of national honour and religious identity rather than humanitarianism.

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<sup>27</sup> Twigg, ‘Vegetarian Movement’, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Joel Quirk, *The Anti-Slavery Project: From the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 246.

Some of Cowherd's congregation may have eaten little meat before joining the Bible Christian Church, depending on how many in each family worked, which may have made the transition to vegetarianism easier. Engels stated that meat-eating played a part in demonstrating the comparative wealth of a family. He noted that whilst better paid workers might eat meat daily, in poorer homes meat was eaten only two or three times a week and this diminished until at the poorest end of the spectrum, among the Irish for example, potatoes were the sole food.<sup>29</sup> Engels also reported that the adulteration of food was commonplace in Victorian cities.<sup>30</sup> Vegetarians were at least spared the problems of tainted meat. Engels maintained that it was the poor that were most likely to be deceived by food adulteration as the rich could afford to patronise the larger shops which had a reputation to lose. The rich were also more fitted to spot food adulteration as they had acquired a taste for good food and might have access to their own unadulterated food via their estates.<sup>31</sup>

Vegetarianism was believed to be well fitted to the needs of the working classes in cities. Its proponents claimed that vegetarian food made its adherents better able

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<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968), 72. Friedrich Engels (1820 – 1895), German social scientist, author, political theorist, philosopher, and father of Marxist theory, alongside Karl Marx. In 1845 he published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, based on personal observations and research.

<sup>30</sup> Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of British and American food adulteration in the nineteenth century see Bee Wilson, *Swindled: The Dark History of Food Fraud, from Poisoned Candy to Counterfeit Coffee*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008) and Andrea Broomfield, *Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 117. For a discussion of how the subject is covered in nineteenth-century cookery books and domestic manuals see Julian M. Strang, 'Caveat Emptor: Food Adulteration in 19<sup>th</sup> century England' in *Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery, 1986: The Cooking Medium : Proceedings*, (London: Prospect Books, 1987), 129-133.

to cope with the physically demanding work of the factories in industrial cities.

There are countless examples of such testimony, to the working poor, of the benefits of vegetarianism. A foreman in a cotton mill, "S.C.", had suffered from indigestion and other diseases "usually consequent upon breathing the hot air of these mills". He was quoted as saying of the vegetarian diet that he was "perfectly satisfied with the practice of Vegetarianism, as my health is all that I can wish for; I can eat well, and relish what I do eat; sleep well, and work better than I could before."<sup>32</sup>

These workers believed that vegetarianism made them more "nimble", a valuable attribute in the factories. With the coming of industrialisation, workers no longer needed the brute strength required for labouring or farming work. What they needed to survive the factory system was endurance and dexterity. Writing in the *Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature*, Joseph Brotherton said that the Bible Christian Church's members worked mostly in "different branches of manufacture carried on in this neighbourhood." He reported that the general state of health of the members is "certainly *superior* to that of persons who do not adopt the same mode of living: this is capable of being proved by the books of the sick societies."<sup>33</sup> When the Bible Christians were featured in the press reference was almost always made to their vegetarian diet and often to their teetotalism too. The exception was the announcement of church notices where such matters were not

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<sup>32</sup> *Vegetarian Messenger*, Vol. II, (London, 1852 [1851]), 11.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph Brotherton, letter in *Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature*, Vol. XIV, (London: C. Fox, 1819), 312-314.

mentioned but in obituaries and historical articles on the life of the church their diet is always related as the distinctive feature of the sect.<sup>34</sup>

The desire to preach vegetarianism came from the Reverend Cowherd but the cultural and economic location of the diet in nineteenth-century Salford made it more likely that it would be acceptable to Cowherd's congregation and the wider 'respectable artisan' constituency of England's industrial cities. The influence of the church on the population may have extended further than its congregation through the influence of Cowherdite Bible Christianity on Joseph Brotherton's political career and via Cowherdite "social services", including free lending libraries, burial grounds and education. However, ultimately the Bible Christian Church, and the Vegetarian Society it helped found and support, never fully achieved the aims of a later president of the Vegetarian Society: "the object of the Society was not to found a sect but to influence a nation".<sup>35</sup>

## **The foundation of the Vegetarian Society**

The idea to form a Society of Vegetarians was first mentioned in the journal *The Truth Tester*, whose full title is given as *The Truth Tester, temperance advocate*

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<sup>34</sup> See obituaries such as 'News of the Week', *Hertford Mercury and Reformer*, Hertfordshire, Saturday 17 January 1857, 4, 'The late Mr Brotherton MP for Salford', *London Standard*, Friday 9 January 1857, 2, 'A congregation of vegetarians', *Dundee Courier*, Monday 12 June, 1905, 7 and other coverage such as 'Two Old Salford Chapels', *Manchester Times*, Friday 14 November 1890, 5 and 'A Vegetarian Church', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 3 January 1903, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Newman, cited in Charles Walter Forward, *Fifty Year of Food Reform: A History of the Vegetarian Movement in England*, (London: Ideal Publishing Union, 1898), 76. Professor Francis Newman (1805-1897), president of the Vegetarian Society from 1873-1883, was the brother of the more famous Cardinal Newman, an Evangelical and later a mystical theist. Newman was a Professor of Latin at University College, London. By his own admission he supported a number of "anti" causes, once declaring himself at a dinner party to be "anti-everything", including anti-vivisection, anti-smoking and anti-vaccination as well as being a temperance reformer.

*and healthian journal*, and which defined itself as “A periodical devoted to free discussion, anatomy, physiology, other questions affecting the social, physical, intellectual and moral health of man”. As the full title suggests, the journal covered a wide range of “reform” topics particularly temperance and hydropathy, i.e., water cure. The testimonies to the many and various benefits of the vegetarian diet suggest that the title was not only read by committed vegetarians, since these testimonials suggest a desire to promulgate the vegetarian diet among a sympathetic, but not yet “convinced” audience. The suggestion for a vegetarian society was raised in a letter from “A Vegetarian” in Whitchurch, Hants on 1 April 1847.<sup>36</sup> William Oldham suggested a “physiological conference” on 8 July. A later report on the conference at Alcott House, Ham Common, on 8 July, notes that 50 sat down to lunch. In the afternoon 120 – 130 persons were present including 30 “inmates of the house”.<sup>37</sup> The meeting was adjourned to the last week in September with a view to the “formation of a Society”.<sup>38</sup> The main motivation for the foundation of this society appears to have been “humanitarian”. Of the resolutions taken at this meeting the first was “that true humanity forbids the voluntary hurting, wounding, and slaying of any being susceptible to pain.” The report of the meeting on 30 September at Northwood Villa in Ramsgate, Kent, claims that some delegates travelled as far as 300 miles to be present.<sup>39</sup> Nine had abstained from flesh and alcohol for upwards of 30 years, most of them for 38 years. Claims were made for the longevity of the adherents to the vegetarian diet:

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<sup>36</sup> *The Truth Tester*, Vol I, 1847-1848, (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1848), 112-113.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>39</sup> Northwood Villa was a hydropathic establishment founded by William Horsell.



“The aggregate age of four gentlemen is 296 years, neither [sic] of whom have tasted flesh for the last 38 years.”<sup>40</sup> The conference was attended by 150 people.

Following the meetings of the fledgling Society the vegetarian content of the *Truth Tester* increased with more testimonials to the benefit of a vegetarian diet being published in its pages. In particular the journal published defences of the diet submitted in response to negative coverage in the wider press and poetry in favour of (and against) the diet as well as more personal testimonies.

By the time of the first annual meeting of the Vegetarian Society, the movement had its own journal with which to promote the diet. The first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate* notes that the influence of dietetic reform in the *Truth Tester* was such that the latter became the *Vegetarian Advocate*. Published by William Horsell, the *Vegetarian Advocate* was “a periodical devoted to the free discussion on anatomy, physiology, dietetics, temperance hydropathy, and other questions offering the social, physical and intellectual and moral health of man for the years 1848-9”. Although the content focuses more prominently on the vegetarian question an interest is evident in promoting the movements out of which vegetarianism sprang such as temperance and hydropathy. Clearly, in this period, vegetarianism was rarely what contemporary campaigners describe as a “single issue” cause, but was usually part of a package of complementary beliefs. James Gregory, noting this interdependence of related issues amongst Victorian vegetarians, refers to these individuals who were prime movers or members of a

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<sup>40</sup> *The Truth Tester*, Vol. I, 29.

number of “negative” causes as “anti-everythingarians”.<sup>41</sup> The first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate* starts with a report of the first annual meeting of the Vegetarian Society. A total of 232 members from Lancashire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire, Middlesex, Suffolk, East Kent, Ireland and Scotland attended a banquet held at the Heyward’s Hotel in Manchester on Friday 28 July 1848. The annual report notes the membership had grown in the preceding year from 140 to 315, some from as far away as France, Belgium, Germany and America. There were 60 American members, which foreshadowed the establishment of the American Vegetarian Society in 1850.

In short, the vegetarian movement’s establishment in the early nineteenth century owed much to the efforts of two radical Swedenborgian/Christian mystic inspired sects. The continuation of the Vegetarian Society during its difficult early years owes much to the Bible Christians. The second half of the nineteenth century saw several more Christian vegetarian groups arise. The influences of these groups differ from those in the early part of the nineteenth century. Although some of the later groups still have an impact on society at large, they are not so intertwined with the vegetarian movement, that is to say the secular vegetarian organisations, in the way that the Concordium and to a greater extent the Bible Christian Church was.

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<sup>41</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 9.

## **b. JAMES PIERREPONT GREAVES AND THE CONCORDIUM**

Of those attending the meeting at Ramsgate in 1847 to found a Vegetarian Society two distinct groups can be identified as being instrumental in bringing about the meeting: the Concordium at Alcott House, Ham Common, in Surrey, which was founded by the mystic James Pierrepont Greaves (1777-1842), and the Reverend William Cowherd's Bible Christians from Salford, Manchester and the North West of England. Whilst those following the "vegetable regimen" of all beliefs and philosophies were welcome at this meeting the Society was always envisaged as a union of all vegetarian people regardless of doctrine – these two groups provided the momentum behind the establishment of this secular society. The Bible Christian Church later gave the Vegetarian Society stability. James Simpson, the Society's first president, supplied financial support in its early years. Throughout the lifetime of the Bible Christian Church, the Church provided the Society with officers and a place to hold meetings.

Both Greaves and Cowherd were influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg the Swedish mystic, his alleged vegetarianism and his opinion on the importance of flesh-free diet. Greaves was influenced by a range of what were generally known as mystics, theosophers and seekers of personal enlightenment, among them Jacob Boehme, William Law and Swedenborg.

James Pierrepont Greaves was born in 1777 and was the eldest surviving son of a middle-class family of linen drapers in Cheapside. The family were reasonably

prosperous until the Napoleonic Wars made overseas trade difficult – this finally led to the bankruptcy of Greaves and two of his brothers. Greaves and his strongly evangelical family were keen supporters of such notable evangelical causes as the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst Jews, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society.<sup>1</sup>

Latham suggests that Greaves had experienced a loss of self-esteem after his bankruptcy as he had been rejected by his peers for his failure in trade. He continued to live in the St Paul's Churchyard area of London and to earn the ability to repay his debtors, but this failure led him to look inwards. Following some personal mystical experience or revelation, in 1817, he rejected evangelicalism and sought a more personal spirituality. Greaves describes his personal revelation to Amos Branson Alcott, the New England Transcendentalist, in his first letter to him in 1837, "Some strong interior visitations came over me, which withdrew me from the world, in a considerable degree, and I was enabled to yield myself up to Love's own manner of acting, regardless of all consequences".<sup>2</sup> In the same letter Greaves reveals how, soon after this experience, he came across an account of the work of the educationalist Pestalozzi. In 1818 he travelled to Yverdon with a group of boys who were to be educated at Pestalozzi's school. During his time in Yverdon, Greaves gave a copy of Swedenborg's *Heaven & Hell*

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the religious affiliations of the Greaves family see J. E. M. Latham, *Search for a New Eden, James Pierrepont Greaves (1777-1842): The Sacred Socialist and His Followers*, (New Jersey, London, Ontario: Associated University Presses, 1999), 36-42.

<sup>2</sup> *The Dial* 3, 1843, 423, cited in Latham, *Search for a New Eden*, 43. *The Dial* was an American magazine published intermittently from 1840 to 1929. In its first form, from 1840 to 1844, it served as the chief publication of the Transcendentalists. For more information see Joel Myerson's *The New England Transcendentalists and the Dial* (Associated University Presses, 1980).

to J. H. Smithson who subsequently became a leading Swedenborgian minister.<sup>3</sup> This recommendation by Greaves indicates his widening interests in this period. Greaves went on to teach university students at Tübingen, in Württemberg, Germany and he became a vegetarian soon after his conversion experience of 1817.<sup>4</sup> By the end of his life he ate what would now be described as a raw food diet – uncooked fruits and vegetables. Latham sees this diet as the result of Greaves's "frugality" as well as a fear of the "inflaming effects of hot foods".

Expelled from Württemberg for his unconventional teaching methods in 1824, Greaves returned to England and to a post with the Infant School Society. A lean period in London was followed by a time living in Stroud, Gloucestershire with his sister where he created a "welfare for work" scheme for the many working class people suffering during a period of decline in the local woollen industry. The scheme provided food and a system of tokens that could be exchanged for clothing, garden tools, seeds and household items (but not alcohol). By 1837 Greaves was living in Burton Street in London, on the edge of Bloomsbury, and had created a salon around himself in the form of the Aesthetic Institution. Here he gathered some devoted followers as well as others who attended for a while but fell away. The Syncretic Society, formed in 1841, grew out of this group. However, three followers did take on the task of establishing the community and school that was seen as the first step to "renewing society". William Oldham,

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<sup>3</sup> *Intellectual Repository & New Jerusalem Magazine* 11, enlarged series, 1864, 209, cited in Latham, *Search for a New Eden*, 46.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on this period of Greaves life, and his expulsion from Württemberg, see Latham, *Ibid.*, 61.

Charles Lane and Henry Gardiner Wright all came from a background in trade not dissimilar to Greaves's. Latham notes that Greaves had little contact with the Ham Common community from its establishment in 1838 until he took the water cure there in 1842 and subsequently died. Oldham was the well-organised administrator that ran the experiment in communal living and education. Lane, a journalist, came to Alcott House to help Oldham after the crisis of Wright's secret marriage. Lane's background in journalism proved useful at Alcott House and later in New England. Wright was a tea importer who turned out to be a gifted teacher. The Alcott House Concordium was funded, as was Greaves himself, by the wealthy Sophia Chichester and her sister Georgiana Welch. The sisters were supporters of a number of radical reformers including Richard Carlile, "Zion" Ward and George Jacob Holyoake.<sup>5</sup> Although Greaves visited the Concordium at Ham House he never lived there. Holyoake visited the Concordium in 1843 and wrote an article about it for the Chartist newspaper the *Northern Star*. Although capable of noting the austerity of their diet which he notes would not suit everyone and the eccentricity of their clothing and appearance he nonetheless sees some merit in the experiment with co-operative living: "The intention of the Concordists is excellent and their experiment a most useful one. Hence I should be more anxious to help the amendment, than enter upon the condemnation of what may be defective."<sup>6</sup> Another visitor the General Secretary of the Owenite Rational Society and part of the Owenite community at Harmony Hall in Hampshire, William

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<sup>5</sup> G. J. Holyoake (1817 – 1906) was a secularist and supporter of the Co-operative movement. He edited and established a number of secularist and radical newspapers and coined the term 'secularism' in 1851.

<sup>6</sup> 'Visit to the "Concordium" at Ham Common, Surrey by G. J. Holyoake, *Northern Star*, Saturday 15 July 1843, 4.

Galpin, did not expect to enjoy his stay at the Concordium but was pleasantly surprised:

I had no intention of remaining more than a day or two, as I had heard so many accounts of the miserable state in which they lived, and of their strange mystical doctrines, that making allowance for much exaggeration, I thought a day or two would quite suffice. I found, however, so warm and cordial a reception, and so much genuine sympathy for the great object of my existence, that on leaving for London to perform some engagements I had entered into, I resolved on returning at the earliest moment.<sup>7</sup>

In the summer of 1842, three months after the death of James Pierrepont

Greaves, A. Bronson Alcott was persuaded to visit the community at Ham.

Latham notes that the only insight that we have into the “unconventional religious practices of the community” comes from Alcott who cannot be considered an impartial observer, as he arrived predisposed to be delighted with the community named in his honour.<sup>8</sup>

On the Sunday in June that he [A. Bronson Alcott] describes, people came down to the school from London and there was a “service of reading, singing and conversation”. He himself read a “parable from Krummacher with paraphrase and conversational episodes interspersed, and Mr Wright gave a lesson in worship, not unlike mine in the Temple.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Home colonization, Letter XX, *Northern Star*, Saturday 29 July 1843, 7. After the failure of Harmony and of Galpin’s own attempt at establishing a community Little Bentley also in Hampshire Galpin joined the White Quaker community founded by schismatic Quakers Joshua Jacob and Abigail Beale. The White Quaker community was vegetarian and like the Concordium members were distinguished by their clothes which in the case of the White Quakers were undyed (white). For more information on the White Quakers see James Gregory, “Some account of the progress of truth as it is in Jesus”: The White Quakers of Ireland’, *Quaker Studies* 9, 2004, 68-94.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

Latham contrasts the “informality and intelligibility” of the service at Alcott House with the chanted prayers and responses that Alcott described as “pantomimic ritual” and “masked show” that he experienced a month later at Westminster Abbey.<sup>10</sup>

Latham describes Greaves as a “mystic and theosopher in the line of prophetic or visited individuals who turned away from dogmatic Christianity in favour of personal enlightenment”.<sup>11</sup> Greaves remained a poor man and lived a very simple and also celibate life, relying on the charity of others. His main message to his followers was his belief in God’s Love. From the 1830s Greaves defined himself as the “sacred socialist”. Greaves adopted this term quite early in the history of socialism (the term was first coined in 1827). Greaves was committed to communitarian principles but his primary concern was the spiritual renewal of the individual. He was ill at ease with Owenite socialism which focussed too narrowly on materialism for Greaves’s ascetic tastes. Greaves had no interest in political or economic policies. He did believe that a small community of “love-directed” individuals could reform the world but he was never very interested in the tactics that might bring this about. Contrasting Robert Owen<sup>12</sup> with Greaves, Latham notes that while Owen was essentially practical in responding to,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Owen, socialist and philanthropist. See Gregory Claeys, ‘Owen, Robert (1771–1858)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21027>, accessed 21 July 2013].



... weaknesses as he saw them in contemporary education, industry, commerce, marriage and politics, Greaves had one idea only – the need to reform man through a recognition of the Divine Spirit, love, that dwells within each person. Only through a spiritual renewal of every individual would society be changed.<sup>13</sup>

Or as Greaves wrote himself:

Owen conditionates for the outer man, and draws his resources from the outward world, I would ever conditionate for the inner man, and direct to the resources in the interior world.<sup>14</sup>

By June 1842 Alcott felt that the Concordium could be transferred to the New World where the cost of living was lower and where the “second Eden” could find rich soil. When Alcott returned to America in September 1842 he took Wright and Lane with him along with the late Greaves’s library – a certain sign that the community expected to be transplanted to America. Despite the fact that following his revelation Greaves often had no paid work or private income and lived by the charity of friends and supporters he managed to amass a substantial library of mystical and philosophical books. Although the list of books in the collection published in *The Dial* did not distinguish between the titles purchased by Alcott and those which had belonged to Greaves, the library included Swedenborg’s *Arcana Coelestia* and *Heaven & Hell*. It contained a number of works by William Law<sup>15</sup> including *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* and several by Thomas Tryon including the *Way to Health* which advocated vegetarianism and abstinence

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<sup>13</sup> Latham, *Search for a New Eden*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> James Pierrepont Greaves, *the Sentiments of R. Owen and J. P. Greaves, as Contrasted by the Latter* (Ham Common: The Concordium, 1844), epigraph. Cited in J.E.M. Latham, *Search for a New Eden*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> William Law (1686–1761), devotional writer and nonjuror and author of *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (1726) and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729). See Isabel Rivers, ‘Law, William (1686–1761)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16154>, accessed 28 July 2013].

from tobacco and alcohol, and proclaimed a horror of war. The collection also included the vegetarian “Dr” John Byrom’s *Miscellaneous Poems* (2 vols). Byrom was a friend of William Law and was influenced by Law to become a vegetarian.<sup>16</sup> It was Byrom’s son who built St John’s Church in memory of his father and appointed as his kinsman the Reverend John Clowes, a follower of Swedenborg who in turn appointed the Reverend William Cowherd as his curate. Thomas Hartley’s *Paradise Restored* was also to be found in the collection. Hartley was a follower of Swedenborg and it was through him that Richard Houghton of Liverpool became a Swedenborgian. Houghton was later responsible for Salford becoming a focus of Swedenborgian activity. Other titles among the collection included Porphyry’s *On Abstinence from Animal Food* translated by Thomas Taylor and the work of Jakob Boehm.<sup>17</sup>

The experiment in transferring the Concordium to the New World, that was to become “Fruitlands”, did not work out; Wright and Lane eventually returned to England.<sup>18</sup> Latham notes that the community’s “best days” were in 1842 – 43, just after the death of Greaves.

By 1844 dissent was rife within the community. By this time Sophia Chichester and Georgiana Welch had moved from Ebworth Park in Gloucestershire to a

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<sup>16</sup> Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> This is the spelling in the catalogue of the collection. It is also spelt as Jacob Boehme in contemporary English and Jacob Behmen in the Seventeenth Century.

<sup>18</sup> Fruitlands was the short-lived utopian community that was established in eastern Massachusetts by Alcott, Wright and Lane.

house on Ham Common near to Alcott House. Sophia Chichester became the president of the world's first vegetarian society which was founded by the Concordists at Alcott House – the short-lived British and Foreign Society for the Promotion of Humanity and Abstinence from Animal Food. As Latham notes, it appears to have been an undemanding role and nothing seems to have come of this grand sounding organisation. On 8 July 1847 William Oldham hosted a Physiological Conference at Alcott House that was to lead to the meeting at Ramsgate where the Vegetarian Society was founded. At this conference eggs and milk were permitted and explained as a way of helping people to move from meat consumption to an animal free diet. At the meeting in Ramsgate to form the Vegetarian Society Oldham was elected the Society's first treasurer. In 1848 he was replaced by J. G. Palmer of Birmingham who presided over the conference at Alcott House. At the time of the conference the Concordium's benefactor Sophia Chichester had recently died and only the school remained at Alcott House. Alcott House closed in 1848 but the school continued for a year or two longer at nearby Park Place, the home of a former patient at Alcott House, who had been cured by hydropathy some years earlier.

## CHAPTER 2: 1848-1889

As other scholars have noted the secular vegetarian movement saw a decline in membership and support after the initial growth and enthusiasm of the early years of the Vegetarian Society - in the 1860s and 70s the Society's membership dwindled to 125 members by 1870.<sup>19</sup> In its early years the fledgling Vegetarian Society led by its first president, the Bible Christian James Simpson, had used the standard techniques of reform movements in this period to reach out to a wider audience. Lectures were given to sympathetic groups, pamphlets and journals were distributed and members attempted to engage with sympathetic temperance and reformist journals and organisations and the mainstream media. Thanks to Simpson's financial support the Society had also been able to host annual well-attended banquets to celebrate the anniversaries of its founding.

Simpson's untimely death in 1859 seemed to act as a catalyst for a period of decline in the Society. Whilst the Society was at pains to suggest that Simpson's early death was due to overwork, rather than his vegetarian diet, his death was nevertheless a great blow to the momentum of the Society in its important early years. However, even before Simpson's death the movement was in decline; Gregory suggests a movement of "peace and mercy" such as vegetarianism was out of step with the times in a decade that saw the Crimean War and the Indian

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<sup>19</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 113 n.1.

Mutiny;<sup>20</sup> “Vegetarianism was out of tune with the high tide of mid-Victorian England”.<sup>21</sup> Twigg similarly attributes the Society’s growth from the late 1870s to a rise in English culture of Romantic consciousness that affected a wide range of ideas of which vegetarianism formed a part. These suggestions rest, though, on the assumption that the vegetarian movement was greatly affected by the wider environment and that support had earlier been widespread.

However, many regional associations were never much more than a single corresponding secretary and attempts had been made to “exaggerate strength”.<sup>22</sup> It is equally plausible that, once the early enthusiasm for the Vegetarian Society had waned and its prime movers had relocated, died or moved on to other causes, the movement quickly lost its initial energy and then its membership. It therefore seems likely that the Society at this time owed its decline to *both* macro and micro environmental factors – the wider political and social milieu of the times and the falling away of its early enthusiasts who had driven it forward. Virtually all organisations are formed, establish themselves, lead to disagreement within the ranks and subsequently to a period of resolution and growth. The Society simply followed this pattern.<sup>23</sup> Vegetarian interests had not merely declined in organisational terms – that is to say the Vegetarian Society – but also in society as a whole. Twigg links the decline, and near disappearance, of the vegetarian

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<sup>20</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 113.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 50.

<sup>23</sup> In 1965 Bruce Tuckman described these “Stages of Group Development” as forming, storming, norming, performing.

restaurant in this period to the similar decline in the fortunes of the Vegetarian Society.<sup>24</sup>

From the late 1870s interest in vegetarianism was again on the rise. The election of Francis Newman as president of the Vegetarian Society in 1873 and his suggestion of creating an “associate grade” of membership for the Society – to encourage recruitment of those who supported the movement’s objectives whilst not (yet) vegetarian themselves – led to an era in which membership grew rapidly. The 1880s also saw a growth in the number of branches of the Society that were established or revived, and a corresponding growth in vegetarian restaurants – Twigg reports one in 1878 but 52 in 1889 – demonstrates a renewal of interest in the movement.<sup>25</sup> Twigg also notes that the pattern of distribution of these groups and restaurants – 34 of the 52 were in London – indicates a shift away from the industrial north of the early days of the Vegetarian Society and towards London as the centre of the movement.<sup>26</sup> However, Twigg’s assertion that the Bible Christian influence declined in this period and that Swedenborgian interpretation was “increasingly infrequent, and when biblical arguments were employed – decreasingly from the 1870s – they were non-sectarian in character” is incorrect. Although specifically Swedenborgian interpretation became less common in later years, the Bible Christian influence in the Vegetarian Society remained throughout the life of the church, and even after its demise, and the Vegetarian Society was

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<sup>24</sup> Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 133.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

neither so religious at the outset, nor so secular at the end [of the Bible Christian Church], as might have been anticipated.<sup>27</sup>

Within the displacement of the movement's centre to London, Twigg also identifies a shift towards a more middle class movement particularly the "fast expanding lower middle class". She records the "increased preponderance of white collar, especially clerical and retail, occupations" and a decline in references to working class members in journals.<sup>28</sup> However, Twigg may be giving too much weight to such anecdotal references for, as Gregory notes, the working class membership of the society was probably *never* particularly large and was frequently overstated in its journals.<sup>29</sup> Certainly, as Twigg notes, the location of vegetarian restaurants in the city of London or commercial areas suggests they had support from the growing middle classes. Contemporary reports indicate 25 per cent of patrons of these establishments were female and that the majority was made up of shopkeepers' assistants and dressmakers, warehouse and office workers.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1870s a number of food reform groups had been established in London and the *London* Food Reform Society became the *National* Food Reform Society, which angered the Vegetarian Society's officers. Tensions between the two

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<sup>27</sup> Samantha Jane Calvert, "The Beefsteak Chapel: A Study of the Influence of the Reverend William Cowherd's Bible Christian Church, Salford on the Vegetarian Movement in England, 1809 – 1932", MA thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2004. 47.

<sup>28</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 115.

<sup>29</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 153.

<sup>30</sup> See Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 115.

organisations were fed by personal conflicts, leading in 1888 to the establishment of the London Vegetarian Society.<sup>31</sup> By the 1880s the membership of the Vegetarian Society had increased to 2,000 members, 3,000 members were said to have attended its conference in 1881 and Vice President of the Vegetarian Society Anna Kingsford, writes of a membership exceeding 3,000.<sup>32</sup>

During the life of the Bible Christian Church, and beyond, the journals of the Vegetarian Society always included religious arguments for vegetarianism although, at all times, the arguments promoting the diet's benefit to human health or vitality were those most frequently advanced. In 1904 W. E. A. Axon, a Bible Christian, contributed a long article entitled "Vegetarianism in the Early Christian Church" to the *Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, and in 1933 after the demise of the Bible Christian Church, under the heading of "Famous Vegetarians", Marion Reid wrote in the same journal of Emanuel Swedenborg: "whatever we may think of his beliefs, we too would bow our heads in reverence to the memory of one so simple in his goodness, so humble in his nobility, so lowly in his greatness".<sup>33</sup>

The late nineteenth century saw the growth of many interconnected religious movements outside orthodox Christianity. Often these were strands of thought

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<sup>31</sup> For a detailed discussion of the London Food Reform and Vegetarian Society see Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 61- 67.

<sup>32</sup> Rod Preece, *Sins of the Flesh, A History of Ethical Vegetarian Thought*, (Vancouver/Toronto: UBC Press, 2008), 274.

<sup>33</sup> "Famous Vegetarians", *Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, 1933.



rather than established denominations or movements. Twigg identifies some of these late-nineteenth-century religious influences: the religion of nature, American transcendentalism, liberal Christianity, and the religion of socialism. Yet those influenced by these ideas were fickle, moving quickly from one idea to the next or taking up several ideas at once.<sup>34</sup> Twigg notes that a reaction to the strictures of Evangelical childhoods, particularly the ‘presentation of man as a child of sin, corrupt and utterly below God’,<sup>35</sup> is a common theme in the biographies of vegetarians in this period and she considers that

The adoption of Indian spirituality or the religion of socialism was experienced as a release into a world of lightness and freedom ... it was a part of a wider late-nineteenth century cult of simplicity of religion; liberal Christianity especially had rejected the anxieties and difficulties of the previous decades and emphasised a spirit of acceptance of taking what one could from Christianity.<sup>36</sup>

From the 1880s the influence of Indian religion and eastern thought had an impact on some English people. One of the best-known groups influenced by eastern views was the Theosophical Society, founded in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky. Blavatsky was not a vegetarian, but many of her followers were, including Annie Besant, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, and Kingsford and Maitland were great influences in the life of John Todd Ferrier the founder of the Order of the Cross. Twigg also identifies “a sense that religion is about inner being. God and truth were to be sought internally, uncovered within the self, with the corollary

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<sup>34</sup> See Twigg, “Vegetarian Movement”, 190.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 192.

notion of the supreme spiritual potentiality of man.”<sup>37</sup> It was also an era in which religion as community was also important as can be seen by the establishment of the Labour Church movement from the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

Once the Vegetarian Society underwent a revival in the late 1860s, women took a more prominent place in organizing local associations. The Vegetarian Society’s membership included a sizeable proportion of women in this period; in 1874-85 women made up 12.78 per cent (140 out of 1095) of the new membership, a figure that increased to 20.65 per cent (57 of 276) from 1894 to early 1899. Many more women in that time became members in their own right, as well, rather than as the wives or daughters of vegetarians – the total of wives and daughters fell from 35 per cent (49 of the 140) to 22.8 per cent (13 of the 57).<sup>39</sup> Individual women also took on a more central rôle in the Society, becoming trustees – including Anna Kingsford<sup>40</sup> and Charlotte Despard<sup>41</sup> – or addressing Vegetarian Society meetings, such as Annie Besant.<sup>42</sup> Vegetarianism is increasingly associated with the emancipation of women, who began to contribute to, and even edit, its journals,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Mark Bevir, “The Labour Church Movement, 1891-1902”, *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Apr., 1999), pp. 217-245.

<sup>39</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorian and Vegetarians*, 164l.

<sup>40</sup> Anna Kingsford (1846-1888) was one of the first English women to obtain a medical degree. She was a campaigner for anti-vivisection, women’s suffrage and vegetarianism and active in the theosophical society. See Lori Williamson, ‘Kingsford , Anna (1846–1888)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15615>, accessed 22 July 2013]

<sup>41</sup> Charlotte Despard (1844 – 1939) was a British-born, suffragist, novelist and Sinn Féin activist. See Margaret Mulvihill, ‘Despard , Charlotte (1844–1939)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37356>, accessed 22 July 2013]

<sup>42</sup> Annie Besant (1847 – 1933) was a prominent Theosophist, suffragist, writer and orator and supporter of Irish and Indian self-rule. See Anne Taylor, ‘Besant , Annie (1847–1933)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30735>, accessed 22 July 2013]

and to write pamphlets and cookery books. Women are also acknowledged as the main benefactors of the vegetarian diet; Charlotte Despard, in her presidential address to the London Vegetarian Society in 1918, claims “Vegetarianism is pre-eminently a woman’s question because it will do away with the most degrading part of her work.”<sup>43</sup> Another key female worker in the movement was Frances Boulton, who founded the children’s section of the Vegetarian Society, the Ivy Leaf Society and its journal the *Children’s Garden*.<sup>44</sup>

Particular parallels appear between the vegetarian, the teetotal and the temperance movements in the late nineteenth century. The 1850s saw a decline in the membership and fortunes of the Vegetarian Society, and a similar decline of the “moral suasion” arguments of the temperance movement occurred in the 1850s and 1860s in favour of legislative action. The foundation in 1853 of the United Kingdom Alliance which aimed to legislate for the prohibition of the trade in all intoxicating drinks divided reformers into “moral suasionists” and “legislative compulsionists”:<sup>45</sup>

In the 1850s and 1860s the temperance reform lay dormant. Only a few individual groups were still active and working for the cause. A great revival appeared in the late nineteenth century, but it was a changed movement.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Preece, *Sins of the Flesh*, 274.

<sup>44</sup> For a detailed examination of the Women’s Vegetarian Union see Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 166 – 173.

<sup>45</sup> Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Lilian Lewis Shiman, *Crusade against Drink in Victorian England*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), 245 – 246.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the churches did not question the consumption of alcohol as drinking was ubiquitous at all levels of society and it was very much part of the life of the churches. Joseph Livesey, noted that at one ordination twenty-one toasts were drunk.<sup>47</sup> The churches had few qualms about moderate drinking. However, they all roundly condemned drunkenness on biblical grounds. When temperance was first promoted the churches were neither supportive nor did they reject it. The movement gained support from individual ministers but it was a matter of person choice whether or not a minister supported the movement. Teetotalism changed the relationship between the churches and the movement and caused a strain between the two that lasted three decades. It was not until the rise of 'Gospel Temperance' in the 1870s that the churches were foursquare behind temperance.<sup>48</sup> Many teetotal reformers were disappointed by this response.<sup>49</sup> The situation varied from church to church with some rejecting the teetotallers and other accepting that teetotalism was part of the campaign for sobriety. Areas that had experienced rapid urbanisation and industrialisation and where drunkenness among the working poor was more of a problem were more likely to welcome teetotalism as the handmaiden of the Lord. Some denominations such as the Wesleyan Methodists who had supported temperance were wary of teetotalism. However, the issues were not so much theological as social and practical: "Their opposition was directed both at the new principles and

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<sup>47</sup> J. Livesey, *The Staunch Teetotaler*, (London: Tweedie, 1869), 236.

<sup>48</sup> Gospel Temperance had many different meanings but in its broadest terms included any temperance activity influenced by Christianity. In its widest sense it included the Salvation Army and the Church of England but in the narrowest sense it was a movement that arose in the 1870s with a creed of bodily salvation being a precursor to spiritual salvation. For a discussion see Shiman, *Crusade against Drink*, 96.

<sup>49</sup> See for example *The Teetotaler*, 3 July 1841, cited in Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink*, 44.

at the new type of member attracted by teetotalism.”<sup>50</sup> The teetotallers were sometimes viewed as a form of working class radicalism that needed to be suppressed.

As vegetarianism grew out of the temperance movement, and was so closely allied with the temperance movement, any decline in the fortunes of the more extensive movement might be expected to have a consequent impact on the fortunes of the more limited movement of the “higher form of temperance” – the vegetarian diet. Similarly the rise in the fortunes of the temperance movement<sup>51</sup>, like the vegetarian movement, really began in the 1870s, although by this time the temperance movement and many of its early activists had become an accepted part of the mainstream of society while vegetarianism was still largely viewed as extreme. By the end of the nineteenth century the temperance movement itself declined following the defeat of prohibition and the “religious rejection of teetotalism as an integral part of Christianity”.<sup>52</sup>

Similarities also exist between the membership and organisation of the UK Alliance and the Vegetarian Society in the 1860s. Both organisations had considerably fewer female than male members and, in each, women had a secondary role and were more likely to assist with fundraising and hospitality than

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<sup>50</sup> Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink*, 53.

<sup>51</sup> For a detailed discussion of the numbers of donors to teetotal organisations, the circulation figures of teetotal literature and estimates of adult teetotallers in this period see Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 316-317. However, and perhaps it has this in common with the vegetarian movement, Harrison warns “it would be unwise to estimate the influence of either organisation [temperance societies and the British Communist Party] simply from its membership at any one moment.” 317.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

to be given a key “speaking part”. Both organisations also received few donations from women. This is in contrast to the role that women played in the National Temperance League. Members of the prohibitionist United Kingdom Alliance may have been more conservative than those of the more liberal-minded National Temperance League, or the reform organisations based in Manchester – both the Alliance and the Vegetarian Society were based in Manchester in this period – may have been more traditional in their attitudes to gender roles than those in London. Or the common factor may be the conservative influence of the Bible Christians, who provided officers to both the Vegetarian Society and the United Kingdom Alliance in this period. The early meetings of the United Kingdom Alliance were held in the house of Alderman Harvey, a Bible Christian and the brother in law of Joseph Brotherton who also attended the meetings and his son-in-law and the president of the Vegetarian Society, James Simpson. Harvey was very influential in the United Kingdom Alliance from 1853 until his death in 1870, and Brotherton’s friend and fellow Bible Christian, James Gaskill, who was also a prohibitionist, left £1,000 to the United Kingdom Alliance in his will.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 225-226.

### **a. THE SALVATION ARMY**

The Salvation Army was founded in London in 1865 by William Booth. Its doctrine is orthodox and its articles of faith emphasise salvation. Its objects are “the advancement of the Christian religion... of education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objects beneficial to society or the community of mankind as a whole.”<sup>54</sup> The Salvation Army differs in its management and practice from other Christian denominations. From 1878 the title “The Salvation Army” was used to describe the work and a quasi-military command structure was developed. Using the idea of spiritual warfare Salvationists adopted distinctive military symbols such as ranks, uniforms and flags to create a specific identity for the group and to inspire and regulate its work. The Salvation Army’s evangelistic and social work is led by the General and by full-time commissioned officers who are recognised ministers of religion, by soldiers who are volunteer members and who comprise the bulk of the membership. Salvationists are required to accept a disciplined and compassionate life of high moral standards that includes abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. The Salvation Army is perhaps best known for its international programmes of social work and humanitarian aid. The Salvation Army currently has 15,765 corps, 17,117 active officers, 110,360 employees, 1,148,426 soldiers, 188,727 adherent members (those who are not active soldiers), 384,694 junior soldiers, 26,703 senior band musicians, 105,608 songsters and 91,591 Sunday School members. The Salvation Army has 10,721 (number of beneficiaries: 641,749) community development programmes, 421 (capacity: 23,729) homeless

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<sup>54</sup> The Salvation Army Act 1980, <http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/about>, accessed 25 July 2013.

hostels, 204 (capacity: 13,144) residential addiction dependency programmes, 221 (capacity: 9,274) children's homes, 152 (capacity: 10,048) homes for elderly persons, 50 (capacity: 1,372) mother and baby homes, 61 (capacity: 1,959) refuges, 626 community day care centres, 55 non-residential addiction rehabilitation centres, 65 projects serving the armed forces, 187 (serving 1,299,878 people) disaster rehabilitation schemes, visited 240,415 prisoners and has 21 hospitals.<sup>55</sup>

A popular view propounded on vegetarian websites holds that the founders of the Salvation Army, William and Catherine Booth and some of their family, were vegetarians.<sup>56</sup> *The Orders and Regulations for Field Officers of the Salvation Army* by the General are often quoted to demonstrate the founders' commitment to advocating a vegetarian diet:

It is a great delusion to suppose that flesh meat of any kind is essential to health. Considerably more than three parts of the work of the world is done by men who never touch anything but vegetables and farinaceous food, and that of the simplest kind. There are far more strength-producing properties in whole-wheat flour, peas, bean, lentils, oatmeal, roots, and other vegetables of the same class, than there are in beef or mutton, poultry or fish, or animal food of any description whatever.<sup>57</sup>

The author recommended a vegetarian diet in the next paragraph:

For those who wish to practise the vegetarian system, we give some hints in the Appendix; as to the table of diet that may be most conveniently used, information

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<sup>55</sup> Salvation Army 2013 Year Book, <http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/statistics>, accessed 24 July 2013.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, [www.ivu.org/history/europe20a/william-booth.html](http://www.ivu.org/history/europe20a/william-booth.html); [www.ivu.org/congress/wc57/souvenir/warriors.html](http://www.ivu.org/congress/wc57/souvenir/warriors.html); [www.vegsoc.org/info/developm.html](http://www.vegsoc.org/info/developm.html), accessed 1 February 2008.

<sup>57</sup> William Booth, *Orders & Regulations for Field Officers of the Salvation Army* by the General [William Booth], International Head Quarters of the Salvation Army, London, EC, 1886, Part 1, Health, Section 3, Food, 41.



must be sought elsewhere; there are numerous sources which will amply repay a little inquiry into this subject.<sup>58</sup>

Those who cannot bring themselves to take only this kind of food, or who for reasons wish to persevere with flesh meat, should on no account partake of animal food more than once a day, and then in moderate quantity.<sup>59</sup>

*The Orders and Regulations* gave specific advice on the nature of the vegetarian diet: vegetables and raw foods such as fruit and salad are commended as is whole wheat-meal bread. Later paragraphs make clear that this abstemious diet is believed to be useful in “practising self-denial, improving ... health, and brightening ... spirits” as well as supplying the means of saving “a substantial amount of money to help forward the Kingdom of God”.

[For] a pound of as good and strengthening, nourishing vegetable food can be obtained for twopence as in animal food will cost a shilling. If, therefore, the F.O.’s [Field Officers] in this, and other similar directions, deny themselves, they will save money, and set an example to others which will be certain to be followed to such an extent as will bring thousands of pounds into the Lord’s exchequer.<sup>60</sup>

*The Orders and Regulations* provide a handy calculation of such self-denial’s potential for the Army’s funds:

If twenty thousand people abstain from animal or other unnecessary kinds of food, and save thereby only two shillings a week each (which is a low estimate), and give a shilling of it to The Army, The Army would have an increased income of £52,000 per annum, and this self-denying band of Soldiers would be healthier, happier, and holier thereby into the bargain.<sup>61</sup>

*Order and Regulations for Soldiers*, introduced in 1890, included a short section [9 paragraphs] on food. The first paragraph states:

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 41. It is interesting to note that the Appendix referred to here does not appear to have ever existed although it is referred to in subsequent editions of the *Orders & Regulations* until the 1908 edition.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

It should be simple and nourishing in character. With brown bread and good vegetables, milk, eggs, and fruit, there is very little need for meat, and good, vigorous health can be maintained without it.<sup>62</sup>

This paragraph was retained up to and including the 1943 revision. From 1950 onwards, the guidance was less specific.

William Booth was certainly a strong advocate of the vegetarian diet, which is clearly held up in the *Orders and Regulations* as an ideal to which Field Officers should aspire. This places William Booth amongst a select group of founders of mainstream Christian denominations who were vegetarian and advocated the vegetarian diet to their flock.

However, Envoy Dr George H. Hazell of the Salvation Army's Australian Eastern Historical Society is convinced that this interpretation "does not accord with the facts".<sup>63</sup> In Hazell's view although some of the Booths had "unusual, you might say bizarre, ideas on health and eating"<sup>64</sup> they were not strict vegetarians, and held no settled views on the matter. According to Hazell, William's concerns were prompted by his sensitive stomach: "pernickety eating was owing to a dyspeptic ulcer".<sup>65</sup> Hazell sees William's son, Bramwell Booth,<sup>66</sup> and his family as more committed to the vegetarian cause but still notes that whilst hydropathy was strongly advocated in official Army publications such as the *Orders and*

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<sup>62</sup> *Orders & Regulations for Soldiers*, Chapter IV, Section 2, paragraph 1

<sup>63</sup> Dr George H. Hazell, "How vegetarian were the Booths", *Under the Tricolour*, January 1999 No 8, 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Bramwell Booth 1856 – 1929) was the first Chief of Staff (1881–1912) and the second General of The Salvation Army (1912–1929), succeeding his father, William Booth.

*Regulations for Officers*, “vegetarian views were not so advertised,” at least in the period 1890 – 1929. In the same period Bramwell’s *Advantages of a Vegetarian Diet* appeared in the Order of the Golden Age’s journal and was later published as a Vegetarian Society pamphlet.

However, a careful examination of every edition of the *Orders and Regulations for Officers of the Salvation Army* shows that the text remained virtually unchanged from the original edition in 1886 until 1942, when the text was altered slightly to give it a more modern tone. From the original edition in 1886 until 1942, the same flesh free diet is recommended, with the injunction that if one must eat flesh at all it should be no more than once a day. In essence the Salvation Army was recommending that its officers should be vegetarian if possible.

Although the comparison Hazell makes with hydropathy – another alternative or non-mainstream practice – is interesting, a comparison with the Orders & Regulations on diet, and particularly vegetarianism, with the references to alcohol is more appropriate. Whilst the Salvation Army’s stance on vegetarianism may be disputed, the Army’s stance on alcohol is well documented. The teetotal status of the Army’s followers is, even today, perhaps one the Army’s best known attributes. However, there are very few references to teetotalism in Salvationist literature. The only reference to teetotalism seems to be in promises made by officers on joining, and in an isolated reference in the rules for Local Officers: “no person can be or remain a Local Officer who uses intoxicating drink or tobacco in any form, or who does not wear a uniform when on duty, or who is not willing to sell ‘War Cry’

every day of the week.”<sup>67</sup> Even here the use of intoxicating drink, thrown in with a range of other faults which might lead to expulsion, suggests that an unwillingness to wear the uniform or sell *War Cry* is equally problematic. No guidance or philosophy on the benefits or importance of teetotalism appears in any version of the *Orders & Regulations*. In fact, far greater attention was given to abstinence from tobacco, which received a full paragraph’s discussion:

The F.O. should instruct his Soldiers, especially when newly converted, in the evils that follow the use of tobacco in every form, and the importance of their abstaining from it. They should be taught that it is –  
injurious to health  
unclean  
A waste of money  
A disagreeable infliction upon those about them  
An unnatural habit of self-indulgence for which there is no justification.<sup>68</sup>

In comparison with the issues of alcohol and tobacco, vegetarianism appears fairly high on the Salvation Army’s agenda. The section on food in all editions of the *Orders and Regulations* garnered only some twelve paragraphs. Teetotalism was arguably so central to the Salvation Army that material recommending it in the *Orders and Regulations* was unnecessary, as all Salvationists had already “taken the pledge.” However, the same cannot be said of tobacco, much less vegetarianism.

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<sup>67</sup> *Orders & Regulations*, Chapter II, Section I Rules for Local Officers, 1888, 12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Part V, Chapter IV, Leading Principles, 154.

## William and Catherine Booth and vegetarianism

Despite the popularly held view that the Booths advocated vegetarianism, little discussion of vegetarianism exists in the many biographies and hagiographies of the Booths. Hazell notes that William Booth's official biographer Harold Begbie claimed that Booth suffered throughout his life from an "extreme form of dyspepsia".<sup>69</sup> Begbie also quotes from a letter from William Booth writing in his sixties saying: "My eating is a great trial. I get awfully tired of the misery that seems to follow every meal. I eat less and less, but I must eat something."<sup>70</sup>

Other references throughout the lives of the Booths do not support the view that Catherine and William were committed vegetarians. During their engagement Catherine writes to William "Have you thought any more about vegetarianism? I am inclined towards it more than ever ... we will examine its claims."<sup>71</sup> In a later letter Catherine refers to having had a "vegetarian" breakfast that morning in a way that suggests that it was not her usual habit.<sup>72</sup> In *The Training of Children*, William Booth reports that

Our first four children were a few years of age before they partook of [animal food] as a regular article of diet ... since then at different periods of their lives, we have again proved the great value of an exclusively vegetable and milk diet.<sup>73</sup>More

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<sup>69</sup> Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth: Founder of the Salvation Army*, Vols. I and II ([S.I.] Macmillan & Co., 1920), cited in George H. Hazell, "How Vegetarian Were the Booths?", 1. Begbie was a former vegetarian and the former editor of *The Vegetarian*. H. S. Salt (1851–1939) English writer and social reformer felt that Begbie took up food reform "less as a life mission than as an interesting episode in this career – I will not say as a job, but as something which coincided with one." See Salt's *The Company I have Kept*, (London:G. Allen & Unwin, 1930).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Catherine to William Booth dated 13.09.1854, cited in George H. Hazell, 'How Vegetarian were the Booths?', 1

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

information on William Booth's vegetarianism can be found in the Army's publications. In an 1894 interview with *The War Cry*, Booth is asked whether he is still a vegetarian:

No, I regret to say that I am not; for, seeing what discussion and trouble it would be likely to entail during my travelling, I deliberately backslid on this subject on the day I left England. I am now taking a little meat once, and sometimes twice, a day.<sup>74</sup>

However, the General is clear that this is not a diet that he would recommend to others. When asked by his interviewer if he could outline his daily diet for the benefit of other Salvationists he replied that although willing to do so,

... my present bill of fare is hardly what I am prepared to endorse, seeing that it is made up to meet my present circumstances, and therefore has not my recommendation for those who are not rushed about at the speed I am just now.<sup>75</sup>

William Booth also writes on the subject of food in *Religion for Every Day*:

Animal food should not be taken, at most, more than once a day. There are multitudes of men and women who would be wiser, healthier, happier and holier without meat altogether. I recommend everybody who has not made the experiment of total abstinence from flesh meat in every form to do so at once. Give it a month's trial.<sup>76</sup>

*The Salvation Army as a Social Force* by Fred A. McKenzie provides further evidence of William Booth's preference for a vegetarian diet. This was printed and published by the Salvation Army Headquarters (and therefore an official

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<sup>74</sup> "An interview with the General" by an Englishman, *The War Cry*, Christmas Number, 22 December 1894, 8.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>76</sup> General William Booth, *Religion for Every Day*, XV On Food, (London: The Salvation Army Book Department, 1902), 104.

publication of the Army) in 1900. McKenzie notes that General Booth, at that time in his seventy-second year, sets his soldiers an example of a simple life:

His personal habits are of the plainest. He is, of course, like every member of The Army, a total abstainer, and he very rarely eats meat. When at home he is wholly a vegetarian, but when travelling he often finds it impossible to obtain vegetarian food without giving his hosts trouble in such cases he does not hesitate to take a little meat. Sweets of any kind, down to the innocent pudding, have no attraction for him, and he will not touch them. His chief luxury is a cup of tea – in fact, on tea and bread and butter he is prepared to face the world!<sup>77</sup>

Some researchers see William Booth as a vegetarian by the end of his life. David Malcolm Bennett doubts whether one can establish whether Catherine ever became a strict vegetarian but thinks that William may have been. He quotes Bramwell Booth as saying that “For the greater part of the last forty years of his life,” i.e., from the mid-1870s, his father “did not eat butcher’s meat, nor did he care for poultry”.<sup>78</sup> Bennett also quotes a letter sent to those who hosted Booth in the early twentieth century: “The General does not take Fish, Flesh, or Fowl in any shape or form”.<sup>79</sup> From this Bennett concludes that “It seems, therefore, unarguable that at least at the end of his life William Booth was a vegetarian.”<sup>80</sup>

However, numerous examples can be found of meat both being served to the Booths, and eaten by them, in their home. In his *War Cry* interview of 1894, written only eight years before his death and during the period Bramwell claims his

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<sup>77</sup> Fred A. McKenzie, *The Salvation Army as a Social Force*, (London: The Salvation Army, 1900), 15-16.

<sup>78</sup> David Malcolm Bennett, *The General: William Booth, Volume 1 The Evangelist*, (Florida: Xulon Press, 2003), 378.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

father was not eating flesh or poultry, Booth laments that he is no longer vegetarian. It seems more likely that whilst Booth always believed that abstinence from flesh should be the preferred diet of a Salvationist, and was perhaps wholly vegetarian towards the end of his life, particularly when it was easy for him to be so (at home for example), for most of his life he was not wholly vegetarian. In this respect Booth has much in common with the experience of Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh Day Adventists, who consistently recommended the diet but did not always practice it herself.

### **Bramwell and Florence Booth and vegetarianism**

Of all Catherine and William's offspring Bramwell is most associated with vegetarianism. His articles on vegetarianism were published in *The Local Officer* and republished in the Order of the Golden Age's journal *The Herald of the Golden Age*, and were later reprinted in pamphlet form by the Vegetarian Society. Thus Bramwell's reasons for being a vegetarian were in print from 1900 to at least 1955 when the Vegetarian Society posthumously published his article as a pamphlet entitled *The Advantages of a Vegetarian Diet*. In the introduction to that article reprinted in *The Officer* in 1927, the editor notes:

The following paper was written by the General some years ago and published in The Herald of the Golden Age. As is well known, the General was for many years a strict vegetarian, and his diet is still almost wholly of that character. He has been compelled to modify his diet somewhat owing to the difficulty of obtaining wholly vegetarian meals when on his travels. Nevertheless the following still expresses



the General's convictions as to the immense advantage of a non-flesh diet, advantages of which he has for many years had experience.<sup>81</sup>

Although whether Bramwell and Florence and their children were *always* vegetarian is in some doubt, by his own description Bramwell was certainly “for more than ten years at one time a strict vegetarian”. His personal experience of vegetarianism is the first of nineteen reasons for recommending a vegetarian diet that he gives in his article on vegetarianism. The other eighteen reasons re-state most of the contemporary arguments in favour of a flesh free diet: its benefits to human health; its ability to control the passions; that vegetarian fare is cheaper to produce than animal food; it prevents drunkenness and encourages hard work and longevity; man is not adapted to eat flesh food; the increased risk of food poisoning from diseased meat; flesh causes consumption, cancer and many other illnesses; live export and transport and the cruelty of the slaughterhouse, the brutalising effect of slaughterhouse to both animals and the people so employed; and the fact that a diet of flesh is not necessary to do hard work. Bramwell therefore includes not just the claims of the benefits to human health but also those of animals. Bramwell's concern for animal welfare is well documented in his daughter's biography of him. Here Catherine Bramwell-Booth describes his fondness for animals and concern for their welfare throughout his life:

As at Gore Road, so later in his own home, it was understood by every member of the household that everything that concerned living things was Bramwell Booth's special care and interest. The first-hatched chickens of the year, a strange grub in the vegetables, or an unidentified caterpillar found by the children, all must be kept until he had seen them. Mouse-traps could be used only surreptitiously. His sympathies were always with the “creatures”. When his wife showed him a Bible,

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<sup>81</sup> *The Officer*, Vol. XLV, Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd, London, July to December, 1927, 189-191.

his own gift to her and specially valued, the leather binding of which had been badly gnawed by a mouse, he exclaimed with genuine distress, "Darling, how hungry the poor little thing must have been!" And he was no mere sentimentalist. More than once, when inspecting The Army's Land Colony at Hadleigh, he personally witnessed the slaughter of animals on the Colony butchery, in order to satisfy himself that everything was done as humanely as possible, though such a scene was particularly repugnant to one of his disposition.<sup>82</sup>

Bramwell was particularly opposed to vivisection and hunting in any form. In 1922 he would write in his journal that:

What puzzles me, is why it should be thought horrible to let dogs worry a cat and allowable to let them worry a hare. To chase a calf or a horse until it sank in exhaustion, or was torn to pieces, would be thought abominable cruelty; and yet to do the same thing to a stag is counted as fine, a royal sport. We have abolished bull-fights and bear-baiting in most civilized countries – why? On this principle, I take it – that no sports or pastimes are permissible which involve needless suffering to some living creature. It is useless to say that those who take part in them do not find pleasure in the sufferings of these creatures they pursue. That is not the point. The point is that the every essence of the sport is in the fact that one living creature is set to pursue and generally to kill another living creature.<sup>83</sup>

Regarding vegetarianism, Catherine Bramwell-Booth, demonstrating her father's concern for every detail in Army life, reports that he

... guided and watched over [Cadet training] in every land, not excluding such mundane matters as the quality and variety of diet. By his express arrangement a vegetarian "bill of fare" was provided at Clapton for those who wished to do without meat. He often called for the menu, and discussed with officers responsible the importance of a balanced diet for young people, the majority of whom were for the first time living a sedentary life.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Catherine Bramwell-Booth, *Bramwell Booth*, (London: Rich & Cowan, 1933), 39-40.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

This may suggest a desire to promote vegetarianism among the future officers of the Salvation Army and to provide them with the opportunity of experiencing such a diet.

It is difficult to say why Catherine does not discuss her father's vegetarianism, or his dietary habits in any way. Bramwell wrote a series of articles for *The Local Officer* on such topics as "fletcherizing"<sup>85</sup> food and the benefits of wholemeal bread and fruit.<sup>86</sup> Yet Catherine's book is less biography than hagiography, and she may have sought to minimise any quirky or unusual aspects of her father's life.

Catherine was keen to show her father in a particularly pragmatic light, and balances Bramwell's compassion for animals by pointing out that he was not guilty of anthropomorphism and was no "sentimentalist", but was able to witness slaughterhouse scenes.

In common with all Christian vegetarian sects in this period, Bramwell attempts to justify vegetarianism biblically. In *The Advantages of a Vegetarian Diet* he writes that

Because, according to the Bible, God originally intended the food of man to be vegetarian. "God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat." – Gen. i, 29.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Horace Fletcher (1849–1919) was an American food reformer, called "The Great Masticator," who held that food should be chewed 32 times – or, about 100 times per minute – before being swallowed. J. H. Kellogg posted large signs in the dining room at Battle Creek Sanitarium reminding his patients to "fletcherize" their food.

<sup>86</sup> Bramwell Booth, "About Food, 1. Vegetarianism", a series of articles in *The Local Officer* in April, June, September and October of 1900.

<sup>87</sup> Bramwell Booth, *The Advantages of Vegetarian Diet*, published by The Vegetarian Society, London, n.d. but date of receipt stamp at IHQ suggests Dec 1955.

Bramwell again cites this text in recommending fruit as an important article of diet in an article in *The Local Officer*:

Now, there can be no doubt that God intended fruit to be a very important part of the food of man. Even the animal eaters admit this to be so. Many of them take a good deal themselves, and to its healing and purifying influences they probably owe the fact that the meat does not kill them off long before it does!<sup>88</sup>

Hazell feels that Florence Booth, wife of Bramwell, was the most committed vegetarian of the Booth clan, but even then the Bramwell-Booths were not “strict vegans”. In defence of this view Hazell cites a story from Catherine Bramwell-Booth’s life of her grandmother [Catherine Booth] that took place in 1887. Dining at the Booths’ home the four-year old Catherine was offered a slice of meat by her uncle, Herbert who was then rebuked by Mrs Booth because the young Catherine’s parents were vegetarians at the time and only served their children “occasional” fish and poultry. Yet the child, Catherine’s mother, Florence claimed in 1903 to have been a vegetarian only for fifteen years,<sup>89</sup> and thus adopted the diet a year after the occasion referred to by the elder Mrs. Booth. Since the young Catherine was occasionally served fish and poultry, the Bramwell Booth family were perhaps following a *predominantly* vegetarian diet earlier than 1888 and only later strictly forswore flesh.

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<sup>88</sup> Bramwell Booth, “About Food, 1. Vegetarianism”, *The Local Officer* September 1900, 45.

<sup>89</sup> *The Social Gazette*, The Salvation Army, 16 May 1903, 2. I am indebted to Gordon Taylor, Archivist at the International Heritage Centre, Denmark Hill, for sight of some notes he had prepared on the history of Oriole Hospital in Loughton for this information.

## Salvation Army Women's Social Work and vegetarianism

The Salvation Army's commitment to vegetarianism can also be found in the Salvation Army's Women's Social Work's use of the flesh-free diet in an attempt to control the passions of inebriates and children. H. Rider Haggard wrote the following account after visiting a number of Salvation Army projects in 1910:

The Women's Social Work of the Salvation Army began in London in the year 1884, at the cottage of a woman soldier of the Army who lived in Whitechapel. This lady, who was interested in girls without character, took some of them into her home. Eventually, she left the place which came into the hands of the Army whereon Mrs Bramwell-Booth was sent to take charge of the twelve inmates who it would accommodate. The seed was thus sown in 1884 and has now multiplied itself into fifty-nine Homes and Agencies for women in Great Britain alone, to say nothing of others abroad and in the colonies.

The use of a vegetarian diet was widely believed to be beneficial to the reformation of inebriates in the nineteenth century. Whether this was a result of the Salvation Army Homes for Inebriates' use of vegetarianism as a "cure" for alcoholism, is difficult to establish. Salvation Army literature speaks of the benefits of a vegetarian diet to alcoholics, including the testimony of a cured female inebriate:

You wonder, perhaps, as some people do, that they did not give special medicines. We don't often use them, dear, in such cases, we rely upon the power of God, and on simple, wholesome food and regular lives.<sup>90</sup>

An Annual Report of the Army's Women's Social and Rescue Work contains an allegedly true case study of an alcoholic reformed by one of their homes. The

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<sup>90</sup> *Living Epistles*, The Salvation Army Social Work, Christmas 1902, XI, "An Emancipated Woman", 127.

story of Betsy Bobbett (a pseudonym) is told in the words of an officer who witnessed her cure:

I go on the principle that wrong is wrong, however shown, and nobody but God can put a wrong soul right. Then the vegetarian food we use is the greatest help in diminishing the craving for alcoholic stimulants. It is carefully selected to this end.<sup>91</sup>

The weekly diet provided in the home where Betsy Bobbett stayed shows an entirely vegetarian diet. Whilst Mrs Booth “highly recommends” this diet, she did not insist upon it. The Inebriate Home where Betsy Bobbett was cured was supposedly “the only one where an exclusively non-meat diet is used”.<sup>92</sup>

However, Haggard, who visited a number of the Salvation Army’s social work projects in 1910 and produced a report for the Army entitled *Regeneration*, claims that a vegetarian diet was used in *all* Salvation Army homes for female inebriates. He commented on the Hillsborough House home:

With the shrewdness that distinguishes them, the Officers of the Army have discovered that the practice of vegetarianism is a wonderful enemy to the practice of alcoholism. The vegetarian, it seems, conceives a bodily distaste to spirituous liquors. If they can persuade a patient to become a vegetarian, then the chances of her cure are enormously increased. Therefore, in this and in the other female Inebriate Homes no meat is served.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Betsy Bobbett From Many Points of View Being the Annual report of The Women’s Social and Rescue Work of The Salvation Army under the Direction of Mrs Bramwell Booth*, IHQ, London, 17.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>93</sup> H. Rider Haggard, *Regeneration, Being an account of the Social Work of the Salvation Army in Great Britain*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910), 99.

A report by McKenzie on a home for women inebriates called “Adenshaw” in Pollokshields suggests the same: there “Only by prayer and fasting, with discipline and wholesome dieting, can this drink evil be thrown out.”<sup>94</sup> Whether a wholesome diet was invariably vegetarian is unclear but seems likely due to the lack of any flesh served in other such homes.

A vegetarian diet was also used in Salvation Army children’s homes such as “The Nest”. One commentator described The Nest – a facility for up to 70 girls up to the age of 16 years of age – as a “roomy, private house in the prettiest part of Clapton.”<sup>95</sup> A visit on a typical Sunday afternoon is described with the children at play in the garden, which featured a “dollies cemetery” in one corner. The children attended school, but housewifery and needles skills were stressed. Some girls were “in service”. All the inmates, though, were said to come from difficult backgrounds: “incorrigibles, stealing, staying out at nights and I know not what all else”, who might otherwise have been sent to an industrial or reformatory school had the Salvation Army not saved them from this fate. One girl’s father murdered her mother in front of her eyes, but others had even “sadder tales”, having been the “victims of the lust of men, sometimes even of their own fathers.”<sup>96</sup>

In contrast to modern views of coping with traumatic episodes in childhood, the philosophy at The Nest was to put the past firmly behind the child. There were no “talking therapies” for The Nestlings:

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<sup>94</sup> F. A. McKenzie, *Waste Humanity*, Chapter VII, The Ever-Open Door, (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1908-9), 73.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VIII, “‘The Nest’ and its Nestlings”.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

The one great rule insisted upon with every tragic case brought into 'The Nest' is that, from the moment the door is entered the tragedy is wiped out. No one ever speaks of it to them, and they are never suffered to say a word of it. Then the merciful oblivion of time begins to do its work. The children are never left alone. There is always some one with them, helping them to play, helping them to work, or teaching them. It need hardly be pointed out how necessary this is. A girl brought from evil surroundings might carry with her ways or speech that would act like poison among the others. As it is, that is unknown.<sup>97</sup>

The Nest was run on vegetarian principles, but McKenzie gave no reason for this except to say that

Vegetarianism certainly seems to suit the children. But those in charge think it necessary to see their vegetarian food is carefully selected. The children's jam, for instance, is home-made. Fruit takes the place of flesh. Wholesome milk, home-made bread and the like cause meat never to be missed.<sup>98</sup>

Haggard, though, visited The Nest and a number of the Army's other social work projects in 1910, and was told by the Officer in charge that, occasionally, when they grow older, "propensities originally induced in [the girls] through no fault of their own will assert themselves", so to "lessen this danger, as in the case of the women inebriates, all these children are brought up as vegetarians."<sup>99</sup>

Haggard also reports on the Men's Social Work at the Middlesex Street Shelter in London. For an additional charge of 1d inmates were given a good supper

consisting of a pint of soup and a large piece of bread, or of bread and jam and tea, or of potato pie. A second penny supplied them with breakfast on the

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 84-5.

<sup>98</sup> McKenzie, *Waste Humanity*, 86.

<sup>99</sup> H. Rider Haggard, *Regeneration*..



following morning, consisting of bread and porridge or of bread and fish, with tea or coffee.<sup>100</sup>

Clearly there was little meat on offer in the shelters, although this might have been because a filling meal for the men could be provided on a very small budget.

*Regeneration* contains many references to soup offered at the Army's shelters but no descriptions of the type of soup. Haggard quotes a cost of £8 per 1000 servings for the soup served by the Embankment Soup Distribution Charity, including the labour involved. The soup was likely to have been vegetarian, if only to keep costs low.

A short lived Salvation Army hospital and a Home of Rest for Officers at Oriolet in Loughton in Essex were also run on vegetarian principles shortly after the turn of the century. Neither was to be for the exclusive use of Salvationists – everyone was welcome. Prior to being offered to the Salvation Army, Oriolet had been run by its owner, A. F. Hills, as a vegetarian hospital for some years and his offer of its use was likely to have been made to safe-guard its future as a vegetarian institution.

Oriole was not Hills's only foray into vegetarianism; he had been a leading light in the late Victorian movement in London. He was a millionaire ironworks owner, and as a committed vegetarian he had thrown his time, energy and money into vegetarian projects, taking on key roles in the London Vegetarian Society and the International Vegetarian Federation. These functions included publishing a quasi-independent magazine, *The Vegetarian*, and funding a farm in Billericay which

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

provided work and vegetarian food to the unemployed. Hills was also involved in funding various vegetarian hotel and restaurant projects, such as the Ideal in London and The Pitman Vegetarian Hotel in Birmingham. Hills is said to have funded an ironworks' football team on the condition that the players were vegetarians,<sup>101</sup> and once advertised the sale of animals on the condition that they were not killed. Mrs Booth seems to have been quite happy about the lack of meat at Oriole, stressing her own vegetarian status and hoping the hospital would be "a place of instruction in all that pertains to physical well-being". Three of God's greatest blessings would be freely used at Oriole: Fresh Air, Pure Food and Clean Water. The entirely vegetarian diet of the hospital continued until the hospital closed in February 1904 due to the poor health of its only physician, Dr Ruth Wilson. Dr Wilson had, though, considered the diet a success from every point of view. Eighty-one visitors stayed there, all of whom declared themselves satisfied, and many benefited greatly. Mrs Booth hoped that in the near future it would be possible to open another house for a similar purpose, and demonstrate the value of a vegetarian diet.

Vegetarianism was clearly taken seriously by the editors of Salvation Army publications, as interviewers reported the Booths' diet and published their articles on the subject. At least one vegetarian officer was also given space to share the experience of her diet. The editor of *Assurance*, the Official Gazette of the Life Assurance Department of the Salvation Army, introduced one such article by saying that the author, Staff Captain Tracy, had recently addressed a London

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<sup>101</sup> This club eventually became the professional football club West Ham United.

meeting of Staff Officers of the Salvation Army. Staff Captain Tracy was explaining how to become a vegetarian and telling of the benefits she had personally derived from abstaining from the use of meat, and was persuaded to write an article for the journal as her thoughts were felt to make “interesting and profitable reading”.

Staff-Captain Tracy’s article chiefly advises on food and general hygienic living but ends with the following

Let nobody imagine that I am making a religion of my diet, or that I am a vegetarian chiefly on scriptural grounds. I do not pretend that the Bible teaches vegetarianism, although I do contend that it supplies a few very good arguments in favour of the diet, and lifts up some wonderful examples – Daniel for instance. Daniel was an admirable specimen of a simple vegetarian. He kept his windows open and lived upon pulses.<sup>102</sup>

Bramwell Booth, in contrast, had certainly been prepared to make scriptural claims for vegetarianism only a couple of years earlier.

## **Conclusion**

Where vegetarianism is promoted by more mainstream Christian groups, the writers are often prompted by their denominations’ existing concerns. The Booths’ interest in health and natural hygiene issues, including such concerns as anti-tobaccoism and hydropathy, led naturally to an interest in “food reform” or vegetarianism – adherents of these other movements were often interested in a package of complementary beliefs.

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<sup>102</sup> Staff Captain Tracy, “A very Personal Testimony”, *Assurance*, Volume IV, The Official Gazette of the Life Assurance Dept of the Salvation Army, Head Offices, London, May 1901 to April 1902, 122-123

Booth held that a vegetarian diet is “favourable to purity, chastity, and a perfect control of the appetites and passions”.<sup>103</sup> However, the Booths’ lifestyles, involving a lot of travel in Britain and abroad often led them to “backslide” (William Booth’s own term) on vegetarianism. On the other hand they never deviated from recommending a vegetarian diet to officers and soldiers of the Society and these recommendations remained in print in the *Orders and Regulations for Officers* until 1974 despite numerous opportunities to revise the text.

In several respects the Salvation Army’s history of vegetarianism is similar to the Seventh Day Adventist approach. Both boast founders who promoted a vegetarian diet among their followers, and both had founders who moved in and out of vegetarianism for most of their lives, usually giving as their reason the difficulty of following the diet when travelling and accepting the hospitality of others. Salvationists and Adventists both recommended the diet as a saving on household expenditure on flesh which could be better donated to the missionary work of the movement. Both movements believed, in common with many nineteenth century alternative health and diet practitioners, that vegetarianism would quell the passions and “cure” anything from masturbation to alcoholism. The Bible Christian Church, the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Cross also believed there was a link between the desire for flesh and alcohol.

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<sup>103</sup> Bramwell Booth, *The Advantages of Vegetarian Diet*, (London: The Vegetarian Society, 1955), no. 3

How successful Salvationists were at encouraging their own members to take up vegetarianism is unknown. The Salvation Army distributed large quantities of vegetarian literature supplied by the Order of the Golden Age, but no record indicates high levels of vegetarianism within the Army, so perhaps the rank and file did not take to their hearts those requirements which – unlike teetotalism – were not mandatory. On the other hand, vegetarianism is likely to have been more widespread among the Salvationists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than is generally claimed today, even if the Booths were the only high-profile exponents. Perhaps the most that can be said with any assurance is that the Army has an undeniably vegetarian legacy: a clear recommendation by both William and Bramwell Booth of the benefits, both spiritual and temporal, of a vegetarian diet.

## **b. THE ORDER OF THE DANIELITES**

In the beginning God created man to live for ever, for no sentence of death had been passed upon him. The food given him by his all wise creator to enable him to keep his body in perpetual life, undiminished activity, and supreme happiness, was *living* fruit and seed (Gen1:29), for the art of destroying the life of fine fruit by fire (cooking) was doubtless then unknown.<sup>1</sup>

The Order of the Danielites was founded as a Christian, vegetarian, teetotal, anti-tobacco Good Templar organisation on 1 September 1876. The date was significant to its early members as the forty-fourth anniversary of the signing of the first teetotal pledge by the “Seven men of Preston”.<sup>2</sup> Although it is not clear from the surviving literature the number of members that existed at any time, it is clear that the numbers involved were very low and the membership was predominantly London-centric with limited non-metropolitan activity. The Danielites had a liturgy and hymns but they were never a church nor a sect as the membership, including their founder, continued to worship within their own denominations alongside their membership of the Danielites. Like the Order of the Golden Age, the Danielites offered an outlet for Christian vegetarian concerns.

The Order was founded by Lt Col T. W. Richardson (1852-1920) who served in the Finsbury Rifles between 1873-1902.<sup>3</sup> Richardson, a dentist by profession, was raised as a life vegetarian and was also a “life teetotal” in addition to his

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<sup>1</sup> Order of the Danielites, *Preamble to the Constitutions for Grand and Private Gardens of the Order of the Danielites, instituted September the 1<sup>st</sup> 1876*, T. W. Richardson for the Supreme Council, London, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> On 1 September 1832, Joseph Livesey drew up a pledge of total abstinence from all forms of alcohol which was signed by seven men including Livesey. These seven were honoured within temperance history as the first to sign a teetotal pledge.

<sup>3</sup> Finsbury Rifles was a volunteer force.

membership in, and leadership of, various organisations. He became involved in the temperance movement early in his life when, in 1871, he was initiated into the “Liver” lodge of the International Good Templars at Liverpool. Then in 1873 Richardson became a member of the Vegetarian Society (Manchester) and was appointed Local Honorary Secretary for London. He later joined the Sons of Temperance in 1874, the Anti-tobacco League a year later, and the Independent Order of Rechabites in 1889. He was a high ranking member of the Loyal Orange Institution of England and President of the London Dietetic Reform Society and subsequently one of the founders of the London Vegetarian Society. Richardson was also a prominent Freemason who, according to his obituary in the *Danielite Star* written by one of his sons, T. C. Richardson, held high office in several branches. He joined the “Mill Yard” Seventh Day Baptist Church in Leman Street, London in 1889 and, after the death of its minister, Dr W. M. Jones, acted as its pastor.<sup>4</sup> After an interregnum when Dr Daland took charge, Richardson resumed his pastorate of the church until his death in 1920, having been ordained in 1905, when he began publishing *The Sabbath Observer*, the official journal of the Seventh Day Baptist denomination.<sup>5</sup>

Richardson claimed to be “probably the first to take up natural substitutes in the place of animal materials” and is said to have attended a vegetarian banquet in

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<sup>4</sup> Seventh Day Baptists (SDB) are Christian Baptists who observe the Sabbath (Saturday), the seventh day of the week. The first recorded Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Church was the Mill Yard SDB Church, which was formed in London in 1650. The SDBs are doctrinally similar to the Baptists from which they ceded other than in the keeping of the Sabbath. For an interesting discussion of an earlier period in the history of this church see Timothy Larsen, “Gender Egalitarianism, The Baptist Women of the Mill Yard Church”, *Contested Christianity, The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology*, Baylor University Press, (Waco, Texas: 2004).

<sup>5</sup> The journal continued in print until 1966. Today the church retains two places of worship in Britain according to John M. Gilheany, *Familiar strangers*, 68.

1876 dressed entirely in clothes free of animal materials: “gutta-percha soled canvas shoes with iron heels, cotton cord trousers, linen vest with glass buttons cotton velveteen jacket, linen tie, straw hat, etc.”<sup>6</sup>

Richardson was essentially quite traditional in many of his views. In common with many people of the time he was an ardent royalist, and although usually very critical of anyone who did not share his belief in the importance of a teetotal, vegetarian (preferably vegan) and tobacco free pledge – whom he considered to be of low moral values – the royal family seem to have been exempt from this rule. Writing of the recent coronation of King George, Richardson speaks of the royal family in glowing terms:

They [King George and Queen Mary] indeed, with their charming children form a splendid Englishman’s home. We can picture George, the sailor and mechanic, at the bench with his overalls on, and Mary, the true English mother with her children at her knee. We love our royal Family and rejoice in our good fortune in having such a king.<sup>7</sup>

The Order of the Danielites was the subject of both generous and humorous coverage of its activities. *The Star*, Guernsey reported on the new organisation in 1877 and having noted its full pledge which it felt was “run riot” and the beliefs of the organisation as set out on their cards it commented: “Farewell Order of the Danielites with all thy boasted charms give us the roast beef of old England and several other dainty etceteras which you prohibit; and we will not quarrel with

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<sup>6</sup> *Danielite Star*, Jan – Mar 1911, No. 77, 319.

<sup>7</sup> *Danielite Star*, July – Sept 1911, No. 79, 327.



thee.”<sup>8</sup> However, there were many other positive reports such as reports of Danielite weddings with positive descriptions of the food served including the founder’s own wedding in 1880.<sup>9</sup> A report of ‘A Vegetarian Conversazione’ at Richardson’s home with discussion, music and food offered to vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests (it was reported that two-thirds of those attending were vegetarians) was reported positively and with much discussion of the popular recipes.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Founding of the Order of the Danielites**

Soon after joining the International Order of Good Templars Richardson was inspired to adopt that Order’s model for those abstaining from meat, alcohol and tobacco:

It did not take him long to see and appreciate the great advantages possessed by the Good Templar Order of the ordinary Temperance Societies, in its thorough organisation, periodical members’ meetings, wearing distinctive badge or regalia (like the Nazarites of old), and receiving new members with a certain amount of ceremonial; the former not losing 25 per cent of its membership through pledge-breaking, while the latter on average lost over 75 per cent. He was thus led to the conclusion that for vegetarianism to spread as it ought, a Vegetarian Good Templary must be established bearing the same relation to the general vegetarian movement that the Good Templar Order bears to the general temperance movement.<sup>11</sup>

Richardson was to spend several years perfecting the ceremonies, signs and rules and selecting a new name for this new organisation. On a visit to Jerusalem with his parents and brother in 1874 Richardson asked the Chief Rabbi if there was a

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<sup>8</sup> *The Star*, Guernsey, Saturday 9 June, 1877.

<sup>9</sup> See for example the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 17 January, 1880, 6 and ‘Notes of the week’, *Hastings and St Leonards Observer*, Saturday 9 August 1879.

<sup>10</sup> *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, Friday 23 August, 1878, 2.

<sup>11</sup> *A Brief History of the Danielites*, Order of the Danielites, n.d., but reprinted from the *Food Reform Magazine*, July 1883.

word for one who “abstains from Flesh-meat” and was told that Nazir (Nazarite) was the appropriate word. The Nazarites kept the Passover at a table by themselves, he was told, as they would not sit down where flesh or wine was on the table as it was contrary to their vow. But Richardson rejected “Nazarite” as unsuitable as the Nazarites were required to wear their hair long and uncut and were forbidden even to touch a dead carcass, both of which Richardson found unacceptable. At a Moody and Sankey<sup>12</sup> meeting not long afterwards, though, Richardson heard the hymn “Dare to be a Daniel”, which seemed an appropriate name for the Order even though, while the prophet Daniel is said to have adopted a vegetarian diet in his youth (Dan. 1:3-21) he may have abandoned the diet later in life (Dan. 10:3).

### **Beliefs and practices of the Order of the Danielites**

Despite his rejection of the name “Nazarites”, Richardson retained the Nazarite vow, which became a distinctive Danielite feature:

In the sixth chapter of Numbers we find that the promised blessing for those who vow to abstain from alcoholics and dead bodies is ‘holiness’. The Nazarite’s reward is, we believe, still offered to God’s servants who keep the vow, and act up to its requirements. We fear, however, that there are many who do not want to be holy.<sup>13</sup>

Members and Confederates of the Order of the Danielites who took the first degree pledge accordingly promised to abstain from “Flesh, Fowl, Fish, Alcohol

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<sup>12</sup> Ira David Sankey and Dwight Lyman Moody were American evangelical preachers and hymn writers who had a huge influence on gospel music in the nineteenth century. From 1873-75 Moody and Sankey held large revival meetings in Britain with Moody preaching and Sankey singing, and regularly filling venues with a capacity of 2,000 - 4,000.

<sup>13</sup> *Danielite Star*, April – June 1906, No. 58.

and Tobacco” so long as they remained in the Order. Those who took the second degree pledge made the same promise for life. In addition to the pledge of dietary abstinence the Order also required that members and confederates believe in God:

The Order being founded on the Bible, and in the name of Daniel, “a man Greatly beloved”, it cannot admit those who do not believe in the Divine Creator as the Ruler of all things. Beyond this, personal religious views are not interfered with.<sup>14</sup>

Fifteen people, including Richardson and his wife,<sup>15</sup> established the Danielites in 1876. The Order was created to

unite true Vegetarians into one common brotherhood [and to] set free the slaves of fashion and of vitiated customs, and teach them how to live, so that they may enjoy the highest possible moral and physical development.<sup>16</sup>

These objects were to be achieved via weekly meetings which, in common with other Good Templar style organisations, were to be given a specific name not already in use by other organisations. Seeking the imagery of nature, Richardson considered “orchard” and “field” before settling on Eden: Gardens. Edenic imagery and language is common to most Christian vegetarian sects and groups. The desire to reprise Eden or to break down the barriers between man and God through the Edenic diet is regularly expressed in Christian vegetarian groups. The Danielites take this imagery even further with the creation of Gardens.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., No 1, 16 May 1887, the Order of the Danielites, London, 1887, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Richardson married Miss Susannah Amelia Uncle in Islington in 1880. He married Gertrude Elizabeth in 1892.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1.

## The Gardens

At the Gardens there were to be “discussions, essays, debates, singing, &c.”<sup>17</sup>

Members were formed into local societies or “Gardens”, of not more than 100 people. The children’s groups were called “Groves”. Gardens and Groves in each district collected under one heading called a “Grand Garden”, and the Grand Gardens had a national head garden – the “Great Garden”. The Danielites’ Supreme Council was a national body, as well. Fully developed, it was intended that the national Great Gardens assemble on an international basis at least once a year. The national Great Gardens were made up of past Grand Chief and Junior Gardeners who were subscribing members to Private Gardens – members who had held office in an area and who had taken a life pledge. The “past gardeners degree” comprised those who had served a complete term as a worthy Chief or Junior Gardener who would be advanced to past gardener. In all there were eighteen different officer roles outlined in the General Rules. The Grand Gardens were for “localities” and Private Gardens were for areas.

The Private Gardens had two degrees: the first degree for those who pledged to abstain from fish, flesh, fowl, alcohol and tobacco for the period of their membership, and the second degree who took a life pledge. “Confederateship” was a status available to those who took the pledge but were unable to attend a garden. Those initiated into a garden of the Order were addressed as “Brother

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1.

and Sister". From 1898 Children over five years of age could be enrolled as "Cousins" on obtaining the written consent of a parent or guardian and signing the first degree pledge (for the period of membership).<sup>18</sup> When five Cousins had joined from the same neighbourhood, a new "Grove" (children's garden) could be formed. The Order reached out to a wider audience with public meetings, lectures, the publication and distribution of vegetarian literature, individual effort, petitions, banquets, soirees and excursions.

James Gregory correctly identifies the Danielites as a vegetarian Good Templar organisation which "required a declared belief in the existence and power of God and based itself on the Bible".<sup>19</sup> Julia Twigg identifies the Order as "essentially a social group" with a magazine "light in tone, with references to dances, character-dress performances, discussions, garden parties and theatricals"; she views their interests as dressing up, pageantry and pretty garden imagery, and feels that they resemble the "simple" and "artistic" circles of Bedford Park and the "Queen Anne" movement."<sup>20</sup> Yet a detailed examination of the *Danielite Star* shows that there are relatively few references to the parties, dances, dressing up and theatricals that Twigg mentions. This misunderstanding may come from the constitution of the Order where it was specified that whilst outside the objects of the Order each Garden and member was allowed freedom in all other matters. Great and Grand Gardens were not permitted to prohibit "dancing, character-dress, performances,

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<sup>18</sup> *The Constitution for Grand and Private Gardens of the Order of the Danielites* includes Groves for children in the 1898 edition but they do not appear in the 1876 or 1887 edition.

<sup>19</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 103.

<sup>20</sup> Twigg, "The Vegetarian Movement", 131. Spencer repeats the mistake, see *Heretics Feast*, 293.

theatricals, religious or other discussions, family amusements, &c., but each Private Garden may make its own by-laws, pro or con”, which is a mere statement of what was permitted and not of activities that were regularly taking place.<sup>21</sup>

Some references indicate dances in the Green Lane Temperance Hall and a Temperance Fancy Dress ball in December<sup>22</sup> (with the light hearted note that “should anyone appear as a ‘butcher’ he may expect to receive the ‘cold shoulder’”) but these activities, in 1887, do not appear to be either frequent or particularly important to those involved. The Order’s members mostly met as part of its gardens and not on social occasions; references to social occasions in later editions of the *Danielite Star* are very rare. One of the regular events attended by the Danielites in the early years was open to a much wider group: the annual Grand Temperance Fete at Crystal Palace, at which Danielites were asked to wear their regalia or at least “the demonstration badge ... a pair of silver tassels on the left shoulder or breast.”<sup>23</sup>

Twigg’s suggestion that the *Danielite Star* is “light in tone” can perhaps be best explained by the journal’s inclusion of a certain amount of sarcastic humour. As editor, Richardson, for example, quoted Dr Cobbard as saying that there are two kinds of tapeworm, one that infects the poor and the other the rich, because the lower classes subsist chiefly upon pork and the wealthier prefer mutton, veal and

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<sup>21</sup> *Constitutions for Grand and Private Gardens*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1898.

<sup>22</sup> See *Danielite Star* 14 October 1887 No. 6, 23.

<sup>23</sup> *Danielite Star*, 15 June 1887, No 2, 6.

roast beef. Richardson remarks “So if you want the hooked tapeworm, eat pork; if you prefer the hookless worm, eat mutton, veal and roast beef”.<sup>24</sup> There is also a regular column of quotes, jokes and stories of a humorous nature. Such humour is rarely found in other organisations of a similar type in this period, as reform journals tended to take their subject matter very seriously. However, the majority of the *Danielite Star*’s material consists of articles on vegetarianism, temperance or related subjects and information for members and the main articles, which were presumably often penned by Richardson, were taken quite seriously. Other articles responded to criticism of “advanced views” or “personal fads” such as raw food and to those who suggested that putting forward such views might scare away would-be vegetarians.<sup>25</sup>

The *Danielite Star* does, however, emphasise that the Danielites were the only “truly vegetarian society” and that other societies were merely “advocates of vegetarianism”.<sup>26</sup> After all, the national secular vegetarian societies of the time accepted meat eaters as “associate members”, and the London Vegetarian Society even allowed such associates to hold office and vote at its annual meetings. Unlike the other societies, the Danielites required the complete abstinence from meat, drink and tobacco of their members: “It ... prefers to be, like Gideon’s army, composed of a few earnest and true rather than a multitude of the half-hearted.”<sup>27</sup> References to Gideon’s Army were frequently made as an

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<sup>24</sup> *Danielite Star*, 14 October 1887, No. 6, 23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>26</sup> *Danielite Star*, 15 May, 1888, No. 13, 74

<sup>27</sup> *Danielite Star*, No. 1, 16 May, 1887, 1.

explanation for the poor support the Danielites received. Members were not required to abstain from tea, coffee, milk, butter, eggs and cheese, but it was noted that “several members rarely, if ever, partake of them” and that “The Order is, however, of opinion [sic] that the full benefits of Akreophagy<sup>28</sup> can only be obtained by the total disuse of such articles”.<sup>29</sup> On a visit to the United States Richardson’s wife, Mrs T. Richardson, wrote a letter to the American journal the *Health Reformer*, published in November 1878 and republished in the first *Danielite Star*. Mrs Richardson was pleased to learn of the Bible Christian Church of Philadelphia and is “happy to comply with your request [for information] respecting the Order of the Danielites. On dietary abstinence her letter notes:

The ruling idea which governs the extent of the ‘Danielite’ pledge is the Nazarites’ Vow (Numbers 6). These self-denying, God-fearing Nazarites were privileged to worship in the Temple, nearest the Holy of Holies, and the Divinely framed pledge which they took required them to abstain from wine and strong drink, and from coming at (ie touching) anything that had breathed and was dead, as the words are in Hebrew.<sup>30</sup>

The tobacco clause is based on Deut. 29:18 where Mrs Richardson claimed:

in the margin it is rendered a ‘poisonful herb’ and the context seems to point at its being used to add drunkenness to thirst in the idol temples, where drugged wines were used, until men’s consciences were lulled to sleep, and they glided easily into the commission of abominable acts, that if fully sober they would have abhorred. Tobacco does just this in our day, and besides, leads its votaries to absent themselves from the Sanctuary in order to indulge in their unnatural propensity;

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<sup>28</sup> Akreophagy or anti-flesh eating, is a Greek derived synonym for vegetarian that was popular with some late nineteenth-century reformers.

<sup>29</sup> *Danielite Star*, No. 1, 16 May, 1887, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 1



and where it does not prevail quite so far as to keep them out of God's house, inveterate habit makes them long for the pipe, even while sitting under the preached word, and thus they feel the sermon wearisome and are impatient for its conclusion, that they may again stupefy their brains and ruin their health and create unnatural thirst.<sup>31</sup>

The Order's rules contained a provision for anyone violating the pledge: the backslider could be declared expelled unless "reinstated in open Garden within four weeks from the time when he made the acknowledgment or was found guilty".<sup>32</sup>

Unlike many other Christian vegetarian groups in the nineteenth century the Order was not pacifist. With a Lieutenant Colonel for its founder, and three of his sons – all life vegetarians – in the army, the *Danielite Star* proclaimed that the Great War was the Armageddon foretold in Rev. 16:14. The experience of war, it was suggested, was an opportunity to learn that we are punished for our sinful lives. Despite its horrors and misery, war could be seen to have beneficial effects: some 5,000 butchers had closed their shops because the war had driven up the price of meat, and

The sale of spirituous liquors has been prohibited in Russia, and the people want the prohibition continued. The hours for the sale of intoxicants in England have been curtailed, and the clubs brought into line.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Constitutions for Grand and Private Gardens of the Order of the Danielites*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1898, rule 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Danielite Star*, "War and Drink", Oct – Dec 1914, Vol. 4, No 12, 45.

War is presented as a battle between the drink-sodden Germans and teetotal allies, since Russia prohibited vodka and beer and France Absinthe while British soldiers refreshed themselves with tea: “Is it fully realized yet that for the Allies, and for the first time in history, this is to all intents and purposes a ‘teetotal’ war?”<sup>34</sup>

Several references were also made to the war being a battle between the papacy and Christianity. This anti-Catholic theme is a recurring one in the later years of Richardson’s editorship of the *Danielite Star*. The Pope is held responsible for the war since the Kaiser was his “best friend”: “Thus Satan, Pope, Kaiser, are indeed a trinity of savagery, “frightfulness,” lust, and slaughter.”<sup>35</sup> These sentiments are not particularly relevant to the interests of the Danielites and it is indicative of Richardson’s outspoken nature and his growing willingness to share views outside of vegetarianism, teetotalism and anti-tobaccoism that these views are increasingly being expressed on the pages of the *Danielite Star*. Richardson as the driving force of the Danielites was the voice behind the *Danielite Star*’s editorial and it is clearly increasingly extreme and atypical of the mainstream vegetarian societies which generally restricted the content of their journal to issues directly associated with vegetarianism.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Oct – Nov – Dec, Vol. 4, No. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., “Is it Peace”, Jan-Feb-Mar 1917, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2.

## Regalia

The Danielites' regalia were one of the Order's distinctive features. Richardson's enthusiasm for regalia was influenced by his membership of the Good Templar organisations, each of which had a distinctive badge of membership. The Danielites wore their regalia not only at their own meetings but at meetings of other Good Templar organisations, and at vegetarian events, which ensured they were noticed. It consisted of a sash worn over the right shoulder of rich yellow material or gold or gilt lace about four inches wide, with bright green lines which were quite precisely delineated: "One line half an inch wide at three-eighths of an inch from the edge, and a second one-eighth of an inch wide at nine-eighths from the edge (a quarter of an inch from the broad line)".<sup>36</sup> Second degree members who had taken the life pledge also wore a bright green bow on the right shoulder with a pair of green tassels from two to four inches long. Past-Gardeners (members of the Grand Garden) wore tassels of silver, and members of the Great Garden and the Supreme Council, gold tassels. Members of the Supreme Council also wore a small gold crown on the bow. The officers, in addition, had emblems: the Supreme Chief Councillor two spades and a sceptre crossed on a shield, Chief Gardeners a plough, Junior Gardeners a spade, Great Registrars a small scroll across a key, all Marshals a sickle, First Foresters an axe and Senior Deacons a star of six points. The emblems were of gold or gilt for Supreme and Great Officers and of silver or white for Grand Officers and Officers of Private Gardens.

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<sup>36</sup> Major T. W. Richardson, *Book of rules or constitution of the the Order of the Danielites Instituted Sept 1 1876*. Third Edition, London: For the Supreme Council., Major T. W. Richardson, 31 Clarence Road, Wood Green, N., 1898, 15.

Supreme Officers' emblems were to be mounted on a gold or gilt circle with a wreath and surmounted with a crown. Great, Grand and Second-degree Officers' emblems were mounted on a small green bow with a pair of gold, silver or green tassels respectively, about one inch long and First-degree officers' ones on a small yellow bow with yellow tassels if desired. All such emblems were to be worn on the middle of the front of the sash. A number of decorations could also be added to the sash: topaz and emerald brooches, stud and rings, the Danielite "Blue Ribbon" button hole badge and a long service medal for seven, fourteen and twenty-one years' service. There was a Past Chief's Jewel, and a Jewel for the life Degree and a Charter Jewel. For the children's branch the Full regalia were

a collar made of the ribbon of the Order, two inches wide, and dissecting a point or acute angle in front, where joined, the ribbon badge shall be a small piece (about 1.5 inches) of the ribbon of the Order, seven eighths of an inch wide, to be worn pinned on the left breast.<sup>37</sup>

Richardson was not keen on the term "vegetarian" which he felt wrongly implied that vegetarians lived on vegetables whilst a good vegetarian would eat mostly fruit and seeds. He believed that the word was chosen for vegetarians by meat eaters who misunderstood the diet.<sup>38</sup> Richardson preferred the term Akreophagy from the Greek for one who abstains from meat as more accurately descriptive of

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<sup>37</sup> *Constitutions for Grand and Private Gardens of the Order of the Danielites*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1898, rule 131.

<sup>38</sup> He is quite mistaken in this view as recent research by John Davis, International Vegetarian Union historian suggests that the word 'vegetarian' was first used by those connected to the Alcott House Concordium whose diet was entirely vegan and predominantly raw food.

the diet. Despite this, Richardson's *Danielite Star* uses both terms synonymously and often in the same paragraph.<sup>39</sup>

The journals place a great emphasis on raw food – a diet of uncooked fruit, grains, seeds and nuts excluding root vegetables – a strict understanding of fruitarianism (in modern usage fruitarianism is often synonymous with raw food and includes root vegetables and possibly a small percentage of cooked food). In an article about the definition of vegetarianism the author (presumably Richardson) writes:

The most advanced Vegetarians contend that all cookery is wrong, that vegetables are for beasts, and that fruit and grain or seed (including nuts) is the proper food of man. This corresponds with the scriptural account of the creation, in which we are told that man was given "every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed". While agreeing that fruit and seed is the right and only natural diet for man, circumstances make its adoption inconvenient and difficult to many; and then the artificial appetite for savouring food is not easily overcome. This "vegetarian cookery" comes in as a stepping stone.<sup>40</sup>

Richardson's preference for a *raw* diet seems based solely on scripture and a belief in the diet's simplicity and health benefits. No claims are made for it as more compassionate. However, Richardson's compassion appears in his "Hints on Cookery": "Many who become convinced that our stomachs are not the proper tomb for the dead carcasses of our fellow creatures think it necessary to consume

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<sup>39</sup> See for example *Danielite Star*, Jan – Mar 1905 p. 1 where in both the standard statement describing the order and the article entitled "Good for the Voice" use both vegetarian and akreophagy interchangeably.

<sup>40</sup> *Danielite Star*, 15 December, 1887, 30.

eggs, milk, butter and cheese in considerable quantities ...”<sup>41</sup> This type of emotive language of “tombs” and the “dead carcasses of our fellow creatures” is not far removed from that of the secular vegetarian organisations of the time and has animal welfare overtones. A concern for animal welfare is also found in the *Danielite Star* the following year: in an article entitled “How to Begin” the author writes:

‘How to begin’ is a question upon which our friends differ, but all agree in doing away with the unnecessary slaughter of our fellow creatures. But is slaughter unnecessary? the reader may be inclined to ask. It appears to us that our existence as Vegetarians proves it unnecessary; and we therefore think it is for the flesh-eater to prove that he is a gainer by devouring flesh and blood – that he enjoys better health, is freer from aches and pains, has a keener sense of enjoyment in the good things of this world, and that he is likely to live longer as a result of his eating animals before he can attempt to justify the cruelty of the slaughter-house. Such, however he is unable to do, for the facts are to the contrary.<sup>42</sup>

The Danielites are one of the few Christian vegetarian sects to have created a specifically vegetarian liturgy. In his *Brief History of the Danielites*, Richardson notes that although the name for the Order was inspired by the hymn “Dare to be a Daniel”, the hymn itself was not taken up by the order as

reconsideration decided it would be too much like singing one’s own praises. It is, however, very pleasing to the Danielites to hear it sung as a welcome when they attend the Good Templar Lodges as a deputation in regalia.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 16 January, 1888, No. 9, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 15 March 1889, No. 23, 97.

<sup>43</sup> *A Brief History of the Order of the Danielites*, nd, but reprinted from the *Food Reform Magazine*, July 1883, 4.

The Order did however create its own hymns to be sung at its initiation ceremonies. Its “Opening Ode” sung to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne” reads:

For us no stately bull shall bleed,  
For us no bird be slain,  
We live and for our daily need  
Suffice sweet fruit and grain.  
Then let us ever firmly stand,  
Unmov’d by scoff or jeer,  
Thus heart to heart and hand to hand  
Will we each other cheer.<sup>44</sup>

There was also a closing ode and a tune headed “lectures”. For the second degree (the life pledge) the opening and closing ode and three “initiatory” odes included the following language:

Spurning the wrong and upholding the right,  
Comrades and friend we will firmly unite  
Work! Work away then with courage and zeal;  
For the cause we love so well  
we make our appeal.  
*Chorus*  
Hail! Worthy comrades, hail, hail, hail!  
Pledge we for life,  
For the truth must prevail.  
Daniel of old did the king’s meat abjure;  
Fruit and seed the food shall be for us evermore.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> T. W. Richardson for the Supreme Council, *Book of Odes, Constitutions for Grand and Private Gardens of the Order of the Danielites, instituted September the 1<sup>st</sup> 1876*, London: Order of the Danielites, 1898, 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Second Initiatory Ode, 7.

The Bible Christians were the only other Christian vegetarian sect to have a handful of hymns and litanies acknowledging their vegetarianism and concern for animal welfare.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Danielite Star***

Each issue of the *Danielite Star* had as its masthead the Hebrew “Danielim” surrounded by rays above the words “Heaven’s Light our Guide”. The journal was nearly always published on yellow paper in keeping with the colours of the Order. A publication fund was established early in the journal’s life in order that “those who would be glad to assist the work of the Order and the cause generally, though not prepared to become members, may have the opportunity of giving it their support.” The funds were to be spent on the publication and distribution of leaflets, tracts and pamphlets advocating the non-flesh diet. One such effort was the *Danielite Herald* in Pitman’s shorthand (one of Richardson’s interests) – an “Evercirculator” started in September 1878.<sup>47</sup> There were also a handful of pamphlets such as “Send to the Butcher”, “Eminent Physicians on Tobacco” and “The Bible on Diet” as well as a lone publication promoting the Order in French: “Les Danielites (Societe De Leguministes)”.

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<sup>46</sup> See Samantha Calvert, “The Beefsteak Chapel”, Appendix A.

<sup>47</sup> Isaac Pitman, the inventor of the shorthand system, was a vegetarian and a Swedenborgian. A vegetarian restaurant in Birmingham was named after him. Many Victorian vegetarians were interested in shorthand and also spelling reform. Tony D. Triggs, ‘Pitman, Sir Isaac (1813–1897)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22322, accessed 23 July 2013]



The *Danielite Star* was published as a monthly journal from May 1887 until its suspension for want of funds in April 1889. Volume I had 23 issues, but Volume II, begun in October 1897, had quarterly issues on the Order's "coming of age". The *Danielite Star* was also expanded and included advertising, which the printer agreed to take in part payment. However, in April 1889 a letter from Richardson says that the printer is unable to obtain enough advertising, and so publication must cease. He notes that it will scarcely be missed as *The Vegetarian*, an independent journal published by Arnold Hills in London, is "an excellent advocate of our principles". He also refers to some members (including himself) being Sabbatarian but notes most members are Sunday (first day) observers, and offers to send free literature about Sabbatarianism to those who request it. When the journal resumed publication it did so without advertising.

The journal continued after Richardson's death when one of his sons, T. C. Richardson became its new editor and financial underwriter. Bi-annual issues rather than quarterly ones were planned owing to higher postage costs and lack of money. In this final phase some advertising began to return and more articles, albeit shorter ones, were featured frequently addressing the key concerns of the Order such as "The Bible on Tobacco", "The Drink Crave" and "Modern Slavery – appetite, fashion and vitiated customs".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Danielite Star*, April – June 1907 No. 62, July – Sept 1907; No. 63 and Oct – Dec 1907 No. 64 respectively.

The bi-annual *Danielite Star* only lasted one issue before quarterly publication resumed. The July – September 1922 edition was double the size of the previous and the content was similar to that of contemporary vegetarian societies.

Sometimes articles were reprinted from other newspapers. This burst of energy after the death of T. W. Richardson seems to have brought about something of a temporary revival in the Order's fortunes: a few years later, in 1925, the editor noted that meetings of the Cherry Garden had been held virtually every month and that new candidates had been initiated.<sup>49</sup> The same issue reported several enquiries about the work of the Order following the annual vegetarian service at Mill Yard Sabbatarian Church, where the editor, following in the footsteps of his late father, gave the address.

In 1928 a lack of funds is apparent again and, under a new printer, the design was changed. Expenses had increased and a request was made for support of the publications fund. It was felt to be important to continue to publish the only English vegetarian, teetotal *and* anti-tobacco publication "in spite of the obstacles".<sup>50</sup>

However, due to the financial pressure, the October – December 1931 edition was the last. The editor claimed he had to bear a "considerable share of the expenses" of publishing and several appeals to readers and members had been made "without result".<sup>51</sup> In one of its final articles the editor reflected on Christmas:

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Jan – Mar 1925, Vol. 5, No. 23, 133.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Jan – March 1928, Vol. 6, No. 5, 84.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Farewell number, December 1931, Vol. 6, No. 20, 1.

Let us cease our war on animals, and then there will be a better chance of the realisation of peace between nations, and of the time when “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”<sup>52</sup>

The *Danielite Star* frequently cites biblical texts either in favour of an argument put forward in an article or simply as stand-alone testimonials to the teachings of the Order. Many of the texts popular with other groups and sects are used, such as Gen. 1:29 and 1Cor. 8:13, “Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s failing, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.” However, less commonly used texts also appear, such as those connected with the Nazarite vow, a key image for the Danielites. Mrs T. Richardson writes:

The instances of Nazarites recorded in scripture are very encouraging. Daniel, in honour of whom the order is named, and to whom was revealed what was to come to pass in these latter days, is spoken of in scripture as ‘a man greatly beloved’ – Dan 9:23, and 10:19. Paul, whose Nazariteship is referred to in Acts 18:18; 21, 23, 24, 26:5, was so strongly imbed with our principle that he exclaimed, ‘How beautiful is the not eating of flesh nor drinking of wine’. Rom 14:21.<sup>53</sup>

This highly subjective reading of Paul is the antithesis of the view of John Todd Ferrier of the Order of the Cross, who felt that Paul was not part of the inner circle of The Master whose vegetarian teachings Paul had altered or misunderstood.

Despite the grand vision of an international brotherhood of vegetarians, teetotallers and abstainers of tobacco in the Order’s Constitution, there seems little

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Farewell number, Oct – Dec 1931, Vol. 6, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 16 May 1887, No. 1, 1. Reprinted from the *Health Reformer* of November, 1878.

evidence of such a movement outside of Britain, or even outside London. The *Danielite Star* lists only the Great Garden (Richardson's home) for correspondence and copies of pledge books, pamphlets and stationery. A regular advertisement appears for the Danielite Swimming Club, which met weekly at the Hornsey Road Baths in London, Richardson is listed as the contact for this club, suggesting that all Danielite activities revolved around him. The female Danielites, though, met with the Ladies' Vegetarian Swimming Club at the same baths on Wednesdays and the Honorary Secretary was a Miss L. C. Seal.

The surviving Danielite literature reflects no clear idea of the extent of the Order's membership. Richardson is careful never to mention a figure in any of the journals. In the *Danielite Star* on 15 June 1887 he writes on the strength of the Order and remarks that he is frequently asked about the numbers of Danielites but he refuses to supply them, although he once again refers to Gideon's army and the importance of having a few true and strong supporters rather than a "multitude of the half-hearted". This statement strongly suggests that the Order was not supported by a large number of members. Further evidence of poor support can be found in the report of the annual vegetarian sermon given at Richardson's church, the Mill Yard Seventh-Day Baptist Church by Richardson himself on Saturday 4 September 1920. It was attended by only one gentleman and a few ladies from the "London Vegetarians" who attended every year, and only one apology was received. This annual sermon was one of the few events promoted in the journal in this period, and the low attendance and lack of apologies suggest an organisation that is in decline. Perhaps the closest that the Order came to

acknowledging its lack of success was in 1926 on the occasion of the fiftieth Jubilee of the Order's founding. The editor then noted that "Other Orders and Societies have grown and are doing good work. Our Order has not grown to anything like the same extent, as our Pledge is more drastic." Just as Richardson had done in earlier years, his son compared the Order to Gideon's Army and wrote that they are "earnest and true rather than a multitude of the half-hearted".<sup>54</sup>

The three-fold pledge (vegetarianism, teetotalism and anti-tobacco) may have reduced the number of members. However, the bigger obstacle was likely to have been the emphasis on a life pledge, as opposed to other societies' requirement of a pledge of vegetarianism while they remained members, which may well have made people uneasy about joining, even though first degree members pledged only so long as their membership lasted. The Danielites' similarity to what were often called the "secret societies" of freemasonry and the Good Templars, and the emphasis on regalia and initiation rites, may not have appealed to many vegetarians. The mixing of Christianity with dietary and other restrictions was evidently not problematic, since the Order of the Golden Age – a Christian, teetotal, vegetarian and nominally pacifist group, enjoyed enormous success.

Richardson was not the only Danielite prominent in the London Vegetarian Society and other groups. Mrs Frances L. Boulton, also a Danielite, was the editor of the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., July – Sept 1926, Vol. 5, No. 31, 182.

*Children's Garden*, a Vegetarian Society magazine for children.<sup>55</sup> William E. A. Axon, another Danielite, was also a well-known Bible Christian and a member of the Manchester Vegetarian Society, suggesting that the Danielites continued to worship in their own denominations or traditions.<sup>56</sup> In this respect the Danielites mirror the practice of the Christian vegetarian Order of the Golden Age, whose members remained communicants within the established church, rather than seeking to form a church or a community that would supersede their own denominations.

Hand in hand with the low membership of the Order went the lack of funds. The request for funds towards the cost of publishing literature had existed from the *Danielite Star's* earliest issues. Some members of the Order evidently were not paying their subscriptions:

This time last year we reminded those connected with our Order that their subscriptions were due for 1907. Little attention was paid and our work suffered accordingly ... Subscriptions for 1908 are now due. Arrears will also be gladly welcomed.<sup>57</sup>

A year later Richardson returned to the same theme, noting that the Order was not the only society to be experiencing difficulties in getting its members to "pay up".<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 15 May 1888, Vol. 2, 159.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., April – June 1908, No. 66. W. E. A. Axon was at various times Honorary Secretary, Treasurer and President of the Vegetarian Society (1911-1914). For more information on W. E. A. Axon see Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 99, 101 and 106. For a list of officers of the Vegetarian Society who were members of the Bible Christian Church see Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, Appendix 1, 115.

<sup>57</sup> *Danielite Star*, Jan – Mar 1908, No. 65, 270.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., April – June 1909, No. 70, 289.

The Danielites' membership would appear from its journal to be made up mostly or entirely of the middle classes, perhaps most obviously in Richardson's mention of often hearing of vegetarians having butchers' meat for their servants:

This is totally unnecessary. We have now had many years of experience with servants, and we should say it is only about one in twenty that objects to a non-animal diet, in the house, though many will have flesh when they are out.<sup>59</sup>

The subject of servants is also found in the journals of the Order of the Golden Age. Neither of these titles features the working class testimonials that could be found in the [Manchester] Vegetarian Society's early journals and there seems to be little attempt to specifically target the working poor with information about the benefits of a vegetarian diet.

## **Conclusion**

The Danielites have many distinctive features. The group's inspiration was the Good Templars or Freemasons, rather than religious practice, as shown in the number and variety of officers in the fully established Danielite Order as well as its

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Oct- Dec 1911, No. 80, 331.

regalia. Although the evidence is slight, the Danielites do not seem to have developed as their founder intended. Their appearances in the media are restricted to the journals of the vegetarian movement and the organisation did not have a profile in the mainstream of society. The regulations called for several types of Gardens in which varying degrees of membership brought varied privileges, the original first degree Garden, named the Garden of Eden, was “planted” in 1876 when the Order was founded, but only one further Garden – the Cherry Garden – is documented as actually coming into existence.

As the years pass the *Danielite Star* suggests an organisation which has become little more than a small circle of supporters of the original Garden in London and other members who are receiving the journal but not actively participating in gardens. The Danielites’ lack of success – especially when compared to the relative success of the Order of the Golden Age who shared many of their concerns – suggests that something about the Danielites did not reach out to contemporary vegetarians. At least one vegetarian disliked some of the more unusual views Richardson espoused. Percy A. Scholes in a letter to *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review* remarks:

I have found one of the greatest causes of opposition to vegetarianism to lie in the foolish conduct of my brother vegetarians. Too many of these are cranks first and vegetarians second, and the result is the discrediting of the whole movement. As an example of what I mean, there is an excellent little article by Lieut. – Col. T. W. Richardson, in your last issue, disfigured here and there by absurdities. These almost reach the *limit* surely in the statement ‘In spite of insults and persecutions I have never shaved, as I believe a Christian has no right to disfigure the image of God.’ Carry this a stage further and we shall have vegetarians ‘as Christians’



refusing to have their hair cut or pare their nails. Such things are not to be made into principles.<sup>60</sup>

Richardson's vegetarianism was mainly based on an extreme form of biblical literalism and the Order of the Danielites was a product of an era that had many "orders" with regalia, rituals, titles etc. An order for vegetarians was potentially a good idea. Possibly the major stumbling block to the Order's success was Richardson himself whose peculiar combination of views that ranged from the conventional to the *avant garde* to the plain cranky must have led to few people sharing his values.

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<sup>60</sup> Letter to *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review* of August 1915 by Percy A. Scholes. Cited in John M. Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers*, 72.

### CHAPTER 3: 1890 – 1959

Julia Twigg notes the continuing pattern of rise and fall in the vegetarian movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although after World War I the trend is less clear.<sup>1</sup> Discussing the London Vegetarian Society in *Vegetarian News* in 1920, Maurice Webb wrote:

I would venture to say that the society in London and other societies across the country at the present time are quite unworthy of the movement they represent. There is about them and their work an air of meanness and littleness, an obvious lack of imagination and courage that reflects very badly on the vegetarian cause. Two years ago, the London Vegetarian Society had a staff of one, a dingy office, some miserable pamphlets, and its activities began and ended with the holding of a few poorly attended meetings and an annual bazaar.<sup>2</sup>

Five years later A. C. Newcombe still compared the post-war movement unfavourably with that of the turn of the century.<sup>3</sup> Twigg, however, identified a rise in the popularity of vegetarianism in the late 1920s, which she attributed to the popularity of other contemporary cultural movements: "To some degree these represent once again the re-running of familiar themes from Romanticism, though in this period its influence is much more modified than was the case in the 1880s and '90s (or indeed in the 1970s)."<sup>4</sup> While Romanticism has had a part to play in the popularity of vegetarianism in a number of periods it is important not to

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<sup>1</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Vegetarian News*, September 1920, 103, cited in Twigg, "The Vegetarian Movement", 212 n.10.

<sup>3</sup> *Vegetarian News*, January 1926, 20, cited in Twigg, "The Vegetarian Movement", 212 n.10.

<sup>4</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement". 212.

overstate it. The movement's links to other causes such as temperance and humanitarianism most likely affected its popularity more than the Romantic movement.

In the post-World War I period vegetarianism had a middle-middle and lower-middle-class bias. The recommendation to the working man to take up the vegetarian diet disappeared almost completely from the literature. Working-class testimonials, so prevalent in the journals of the vegetarian societies, also largely disappeared. This strong association with middle-class progressives continued until towards the end of the twentieth century when vegetarianism was taken up initially by members of the counter-cultures. Later it was adopted by a cross section of society regardless of social class, often inspired by a concern for animal welfare or rights.

World War I and II provided new challenges and opportunities for the growth of the vegetarian diet. During World War I no special provision was made for serving vegetarians, so any individual soldier's diet varied greatly depending on his circumstances and his family's preferences - many relied on food parcels from home.

For civilians at home the situation was less difficult until the later stages of the war, when food shortages led to rationing. Vegetarians eagerly greeted changes to the nation's diet, such as the addition of more bran to bread, the rationing of meat in

the later stages of the war and the urging of meatless days. Vegetarians were given additional fat and butter rations although their promised supplementary cheese ration never materialised.

A close relationship developed between vegetarianism and pacifism in World War I. Many vegetarians became conscientious objectors, and thus shared in the vituperation and ridicule to which the conscientious objector was generally treated. Some 6000 of the 16000 registered conscientious objectors were imprisoned during the war and, of the rest, "3,300 were non-combatant troops, another 3000 in the ambulance division, 4000 in alternative work at home".<sup>5</sup> Vegetarians in prison experienced great difficulties until a food strike, led by Fenner Brockway at Wormwood Scrubs, led to the official approval of their diet. In the interwar period many pacifists, among them Fenner Brockway, nevertheless felt that Fascism had to be fought if it was to be brought to an end.

The Great Depression focussed on human, rather than animal, suffering, and the Vegetarian Society sent food parcels to mining areas from the General Strike of 1926 and throughout the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> Since it was given "without any preaching against meat", this support was gratefully received.<sup>7</sup> However, vegetarianism made no great strides in the interwar period despite the continuation of its pamphlets and information and the seating of a small number of vegetarian MPs in the Commons including Fenner Brockway, Rennie Smith, Peter Freeman and

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<sup>5</sup> Spencer, *Heretic's Feast*, 310.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 311.

Stafford Cripps. Also Ellen Williamson, the MP for Jarrow who led the march, who was “largely” vegetarian.

Food rationing in and after World War II brought about a sense of equality in diet, since everyone received the same rations. The lack of meat and animal products such as eggs, cheese and butter made these items more desirable after rationing ended. A Committee for Vegetarian Interests (CVI) was established to represent the interests of vegetarians during the war. As a result a register was kept of vegetarians (100,000 at the end of the war who received an additional ration of cheese, fats and nuts in lieu of a meat ration). Anecdotal evidence suggests that in large households a member might register as a vegetarian in order that a greater variety of rations would be received each week and shared out among the household. The figure of 100,000 accordingly may not be a true reflection of the number of committed vegetarians at that time. The CVI continued beyond the war and was instrumental in the founding of the Plant Milk Society which itself created a British plant milk, that in turn led to the founding of Plamil, a company that still manufactures soya milk products.

Some vegetarians were concerned that their diet should include abstention from eggs and all dairy products. Others extended this not just to what was eaten but to animals being used or killed for their hides, pelts, skin or wool to produce clothing, footwear and household goods. Today the Vegan Society defines the former as dietary vegans and the latter as vegans. In the UK the impetus for

veganism is most often animal rights or welfare. Veganism has its roots in World War II; in 1944 the Vegan Society was founded in Leicester, and one of its founders, Donald Watson, a conscientious objector and woodwork teacher, said that he chose the word “vegan” from several suggestions. “Vegan” is made up of the first three letters and the last two letters of “vegetarian” as, for Watson, “veganism starts with vegetarianism and carries it through to its logical conclusion”.<sup>8</sup> Watson became a vegetarian at the age of fifteen, and died aged 95 in 2005. In August 1944 Watson and Elsie Shrigley (d.1976) met to discuss forming a subgroup of the Vegetarian Society comprising non-dairy vegetarians, but the Vegetarian Society refused to give the group a special status or to advertise their proposal in the pages of its journals. While sympathetic to veganism, the Society felt that promoting, or emphasising, this stricter diet might give the impression that a vegetarian diet was in some way less pure and that recognition of veganism might diminish the enthusiasm of vegetarians for the cause altogether.<sup>9</sup>

On 1 November 1944 Shrigley and Watson therefore met with five others at the Attic Club in Holborn, London, to discuss forming an entirely new organisation.<sup>10</sup> Later that month the fledgling Vegan Society published its admittedly idealistic aims:

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<sup>8</sup> Cited in Rod Preece, *Sins of the Flesh*, 298.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 298.

<sup>10</sup> This date is now celebrated annually as World Vegan Day.

It is not suggested that veganism alone would be sufficient to solve all the problems of individual and social well-being, but so close is its philosophy linked with morality, hygiene, aesthetics and agricultural economy that its adoption would remedy many unsatisfactory features of present-day life. Thus, if the cause of exploitation were removed, spiritual influences, operating for good, would develop conditions assuring a greater degree of happiness and prosperity for all.<sup>11</sup>

The optimism of the new movement is clear in that this statement was published in war time – although admittedly towards the end of the war when the nation was perhaps more hopeful of eventual victory.

The gradual reduction of food rationing - which did not end completely until the 1950s – led the nation to seek out foods in short supply during the war. As a nation, though, the British people were demonstrably at their healthiest during World War II. Their diet of little sugar and limited meat and animal products – such as eggs and dairy products – was severely restricted. Home grown vegetables were heavily promoted to supply the shortfall in animal products. However, the public craved the items that were unavailable. The war did not create a taste for vegetarianism but led to a post-war desire to provide plentiful, cheap meat to supply the demand, and witnessed a growth in factory farming methods.

The post war period also led to the two national vegetarian societies (the London Vegetarian Society and the Vegetarian Society based in Manchester) working

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<sup>11</sup> Cited in Preece, *Sins of the Flesh*, 299. Levels of purity in diet from red meat through white meat to fish as the least objectionable food to vegetarians is a relatively common concept. Many prospective vegetarians will reduce animal foods in their diet in this way leading to the existence of self-proclaimed fish-eating vegetarian or pescetrians. For a further discussion see Julia Twigg, "Food for Thought: Purity and Vegetarianism", *Religion* 9, (Spring, 1978): 13-35.

more closely together. In 1958 the two journals merged and in 1969 the societies amalgamated to become the Vegetarian Society of the UK.

In the late nineteenth century the relationship between Christianity and vegetarianism in the UK consisted of sects that made vegetarianism a condition of membership, including the Bible Christians and the Order of the Danielites, and groups for whom vegetarianism was not mandatory but merely advocated as beneficial, among them the Salvation Army and later the Quakers. The Friends' Vegetarian Society, founded in 1902, was the first attempt by vegetarians within a Christian community to increase the numbers of vegetarians within their own denomination. It followed the creation of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society, established over a decade earlier.

The late nineteenth century also saw the establishment of the Order of the Golden Age, which had greater success and influence in advocating vegetarianism to the British populace, at least for a time, than the secular national vegetarian groups of the period. One of its officers, the Reverend John Todd Ferrier, left the Order of the Golden Age to found his own denominational group, the Order of the Cross. The first mainstream Christian animal welfare group was established in 1929 – the Catholic Study Circle for Animals. The Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society had already turned its attention to issues other than vivisection, but the change in emphasis was only formally acknowledged in 1952 when the organisation was renamed the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society and Humane Society.



Many of the denominational groups founded in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century were animal welfare groups whose specific or main concern was often vivisection. Chien-Hui Li suggests that despite the lack of institutional support from major churches many reformers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century relied on Christianity as their moral foundation. She successfully established that concepts such as sin and self-sacrifice were part of the reformers rhetoric as well as critiques of scientific knowledge and materialism.<sup>12</sup>

From the late 1860s local association officers of the Vegetarian Societies “included women, and they fulfilled important practical and honorific offices in the national societies”.<sup>13</sup> James Gregory estimates that female membership (excluding associates) as a percentage of total new recruits was 12.78 per cent (140 out of 1095) in 1874-85; and from 1894 to early 1899, 57 of 276 (20.65 per cent) of new members were female. Also, from 1874 to 1885 at least 35 per cent (49 of 140) of women members were married to or daughters of vegetarians. This number fell from 1894-99 to 22.8 per cent (13 of 57). Gregory suggests this demonstrates that by the late nineteenth century “the nature of female recruitment reflected women’s growing emancipation”.<sup>14</sup> Women also began holding office in the national societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anna Kingsford was a president of the Vegetarian Society and Lady Emily Lutyens, also a theosophist,

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<sup>12</sup> Chien-Hui Li, ‘Mobilizing Christianity in the Antivivisection Movement in Victorian Britain’ in *Journal of Animal Ethics*, (Illinois: University of Illinois, Fall 2012), Vol.12, No.2, 141-161.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 164.

<sup>14</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 164.

a vice-president. Frances Boulton, who founded the Northern Heights Vegetarian Society, was a cookery instructor and speaker on vegetarianism, and went on to found the children's section of the Vegetarian Society – the Ivy Leaf Society – as well as the *Children's Garden* magazine. The Vegetarian Society announced a ladies' committee and women became members of the Humanitarian League diet department, the Vegetarian Rambling Society and the Vegetarian Cycling Club.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most significant attempt to encourage female vegetarianism was the Women's Vegetarian Union, founded in London in March 1895 by Alexandrine Veigélé. A French woman, teacher, and a member of the London Vegetarian Society and founder of the Women's International Progressive Union, Alexandrine became vegetarian in 1888 for economic and health reasons. She was both encouraged in her vegetarian work and supported financially by her daughter Adrienne, after Alexandrine gave up teaching to concentrate on her philanthropic work. Since women so greatly influenced the household diet, as had been noted by a number of vegetarians at the time it was necessary to overcome what Gregory describes as "wifely opposition" to the diet's success, Alexandrine placed great emphasis on this work.<sup>16</sup> Although the Women's Vegetarian Union grew to 350 members by the time of the sixth annual report and included overseas members and even a Belgian branch, a depot, and a General Agency for

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 167.

employment, membership never flourished, and the Union was always poorly funded.<sup>17</sup>

Women were also significant in founding and supporting the anti-vivisection movement and many suffragettes were reported to be vegetarians.

Suffragists too saw the cruelty of vivisection, and many saw women as being victimized by men in the same ways that animals were by humans. Neither women nor animals had rights at that time, and many feminists could not help but see the parallels between the treatment of women, who were in those days strapped down during childbirth and forced to have hysterectomies, and animals.<sup>18</sup>

The first anti-vivisection society was founded in 1875 by Frances Power Cobbe, the National Anti-Vivisection Society, which continues to this day. She founded another group which is also still extant, the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection in 1898. The anti-vivisection campaigns led to Britain having the distinction of passing the world's first animal protection law that governed vivisection in The Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876. The legislation limited vivisection to when 'absolutely necessary' to save or prolong human life and ensured that animals were anaesthetised, used only once in experiments and killed at the conclusion of the experiment. The year 1907 saw what were to become known as the Brown Dog Riots in Battersea Park. The riots were sparked by the death of a dog that two female medical students said had been experimented on multiple times in violation of the Cruelty to Animals Act. This ultimately led to a successful defamation trial by the vivisector William Bayliss. A

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<sup>17</sup> More information on the Women's Vegetarian Union can be found in Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 166-173.

<sup>18</sup> Margo DeMello, *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-animal Studies*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 184.

memorial was built in Battersea Park (the grounds of an anti-vivisection hospital) to the memory of the brown dog and all those animals who had similarly suffered at the hands of vivisectors. The memorial caused a certain animosity among medics and medical students and anti-vivisectionists and led to several weeks of riots in November in Battersea and in central London between up to 1,000 medical students and 400 police officers.

### **a. THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

If it is right that we should show love and compassion for people surely it is right that we should extend our love and compassion to animals, who can feel fear and experience pain in much the same way as humans. They may not be able to speak, but we can certainly see fear in their eyes and demeanour. I feel that being a vegetarian is a natural progression from being a pacifist and a Quaker.<sup>19</sup>

Whilst it is generally believed that members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are frequently vegetarians, very little research exists to confirm this.

The sole survey on the matter – conducted in 1990 – suggests that approximately one third of those attending Quaker meetings describe themselves as vegetarian.<sup>20</sup> The percentage might well have changed subsequently. The survey also asked respondents whether they defined themselves as vegetarians, and questions so posed usually lead to a higher positive response. Many people aspire to be vegetarian and will describe themselves as vegetarian when they eat a mostly vegetarian diet or regularly eat fish or products containing slaughterhouse bi-products.

James Gregory's detailed study of the Victorian vegetarian movement and its personnel and associations identified 40 Quakers among the 435 vegetarians

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<sup>19</sup> Vera Haley, 1988, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1994, revised May 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Pink Dandelion, unpublished data collected as part of 1990 "Quaker Questionnaire", held at Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990. Survey question: 'Would you describe yourself as any of the following?' which included the response item 'vegan/vegetarian' - 29.7% ticked the box, 58.7% of those in the 'Young Friends Group' (aged 18 - 30). This was a survey set to 32 meetings of eight types (based on whether they were urban/rural north/south and large/small) plus the executive committee (Meeting for Sufferings) and the Young Friends Group (n = 63). The total response rate was close to 60%, total n = 692.

whose religious affiliations are evident.<sup>21</sup> Some 265 were Cowherdites (Bible Christians) but the Quakers were the next largest constituent. However, Gregory notes that this “probably under-represents the Quaker contribution”.<sup>22</sup>

The Quakers were also the first to found specifically religious societies for the promotion of animal rights and vegetarianism. The Friends Anti-vivisection Society (later to become Quaker Animal Concern) was founded in 1890<sup>23</sup>, and the Friends’ Vegetarian Society was founded twelve years later.

Gregory correctly asserts that while many, or even most, vegetarians supported the anti-vivisection movement there is little evidence that support flowed from the anti-vivisectionists in favour of the ‘humane diet’.<sup>24</sup> While this may be true of the secular anti-vivisection societies’ membership a different pattern can be discerned within the denominational welfarist and anti-vivisection organisations. The Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Association (FA-VA) is a particularly good example of a welfarist organisation that brought together like minded individuals within a faith group some of whom were subsequently led to found the Friends’ Vegetarian Society. Although the history of the animal welfare movement is outside the parameters of this study in some Christian groups the welfarist organisations are the precursor to discussions about vegetarianism and for this reason it is important to discuss the background to these organisations.

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<sup>21</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 101 and note 126.

<sup>23</sup> Many sources claim that the Society was founded in 1891 but this is not the case. At the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Conference of 24 May, 1890 “Margaret A. Tanner moved, and George Armatage seconded, that an Anti-Vivisection Association be formed amongst Friends, which was carried without opposition.”, *The Friend*, 1 July, 1890.

<sup>24</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 93.

The Society of Friends is not a group that imposes doctrines on members. Contemporary Quaker spirituality, both Conservative and Liberal, stresses the concept of following one's own internal experience of the Divine, referred to variously as "The Light Within", "the Divine Light" or "the Inner Light":

The Light Within is the fundamental and immediate experience for Friends. It is that which guides each of us in our everyday lives and brings us together as a community of faith. It is, most importantly, our direct and unmediated experience of the Divine.<sup>25</sup>

Dandelion notes that the view of scripture as a "secondary source would be echoed by many Conservative Friends today"<sup>26</sup> while "For Liberal Friends experience is primary and sufficient".<sup>27</sup> In practice, this means that whilst books of "advice" or "discipline" exist, they act only as a starting point for Quakers reflecting on social issues, and are not a mandatory set of beliefs to which members must adhere. Unlike many Christian vegetarian groups, whilst vegetarianism is clearly popular among Quakers it is certainly not a requirement of membership.

Other ways in which Quakers differ from more sectarian groups include the absence of a call upon scripture as a justification for vegetarianism or the protection for animals. Much is made of a compassionate creator, but biblical references are almost entirely absent, including texts greatly heralded by Christian vegetarians such as Gen.1:29 and Gen. 9.3. Similarly, Quaker vegetarian

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<sup>25</sup> *Faith and Practice; A Book of Christian discipline*, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2002, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 185.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

literature contains few appeals for a return to the Golden Age, or Eden, or the Edenic diet, unlike sectarian vegetarian writings. Neither of these is surprising, though, since Quaker theology, in general, does not rely on scripture as an essential component. Instead, the Friends' theology looks to "inner light" and biblical references and allusions do not have such a strong emotional appeal to the Quaker community and lack the weight that they might carry with other Christians. Most Quaker literature on vegetarianism and animal welfare/vivisection, from all periods, grows out of a concern to extend Quaker peace testimony to all creatures, including the "lower animals", or from a plain and simple compassion for all sentient beings, who suffer and feel pain in much the same way as human beings.

### **Early Quakers and concern for animals**

The Quaker movement has a long tradition of compassion for animals. Quaker founder George Fox, whose early expressions of concern for slaves in the New World are well-known, also expressed concern for animals. He condemned hunting and hawking, and was indignant with an ostler whom he caught stealing his horse's oats. "A wicked thieving people to rob a poor dumb creature of his food, which I had rather they had robbed me." Elsewhere he wrote that



What wages doth the Lord desire of you for his earth that he giveth to you teachers, and great men, and to all the sons of men, and all creatures, but you give him the praises, and the thanks, and the glory; and not that you should spend the creatures upon your lusts, but to do good with them; you that have much, to them that have little; and so to honour God with your substance; for nothing brought you into the world, nor nothing you shall take out of the world, but leave all creatures behind you as you found them, which God hath given to serve all nations, and generation; and so that you have food and raiment, therewith be content, which the apostles' rule, and an example to you all.<sup>28</sup>

Whether or not Fox was a vegetarian is less clear. The Quaker Vegetarian Society may have claimed he became one in 1670,<sup>29</sup> but the source of this information is unknown. Fox's journal in 1670 makes no reference to his diet and nothing suggests abstinence from flesh. John Woolman, the "Quintessential Quaker", also showed great compassion for animals; a parallel has been drawn between Woolman and the Catholic St Francis.<sup>30</sup>

Woolman is perhaps best known for his pioneering abolitionist work but his concern for animals began early in life. There is the often recorded story of how as a boy he thoughtlessly threw stones at a robin protecting her nest. Having killed the robin he was "seized with horror" at the thought of how her young would "perish for want of their dam to nourish them".<sup>31</sup> After much reflection he decides that it is better to kill the chicks too rather than to leave them to suffer. He

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<sup>28</sup> George Fox, 1667, *Doctrinal Books*, Vol.1, 1831/1975 edn., 321 cited in *Some Quaker Thoughts about Animal Welfare*, Quaker Social Responsibility & Education, n.d.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Ryder, Secretary of the Friends' Vegetarian Society produced some historical notes extracted from minutes of the Society for the centenary of its foundation in 2002. He claims "In the meeting's report of May 1942 it reveals that George Fox in 1670 became a vegetarian." No citation is provided.

<sup>30</sup> David Sox, "John Woolman's tenderness towards all creatures", *The Ark*, a publication of the Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare, No. 192, Winter 2002, [www.all-creatures.org/ca/ark-192-woolman.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/ca/ark-192-woolman.html), accessed 13/03/2005.

<sup>31</sup> *The Journal of John Woolman*, John Greenleaf Whittier Edition Text, (Gloucestershire, Massachussets.: Peter Smith, 1971), 3.

continued with his errand but records “for some hours could think of little else but the cruelties that I had committed, and was much troubled.”<sup>32</sup> In his Journal he reflects

Thus He whose tender mercies are over all his works hath placed a principle in the human mind, which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature; and this being singly attended to, people become tender-hearted and sympathizing but when frequently and totally rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition.<sup>33</sup>

There are many statements in the Journal that show Woolman’s compassion for animals:

I was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator and learn to exercise true justice and goodness not only toward all men but also toward the brute creatures; that as the mind was moved on an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible being, on the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world; that as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal and sensitive creatures, to say we love God as unseen and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by his life, or by life derived from him was a contradiction in itself.<sup>34</sup>

Woolman expressed concern on observing chickens taken on a ship for food and reflects on the “Fountain of Goodness” who gave being to all creatures

... where the love of God is verily perfected and the true spirit of government watchfully attended to, a tenderness toward all creatures made subject to us will be experienced, and a care felt in us that we do not lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation which the great Creator intends for them under our government, and believe a less number carried off to eat at sea may be more agreeable to this pure wisdom.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> The Journal of John Woolman, 1772, Moulton ed., 178 – 9.

<sup>35</sup> The Journal of John Woolman, (Philadelphia: T. E. Chapman, 1837, 171).

Woolman travelled England on foot because of his objection to the use of the stagecoach:

Stage-coaches frequently go upwards of one hundred miles in twenty-four hours; and I have heard Friends say in several places that it is common for horses to be killed with hard driving, and that many others are driven till they grown blind. Post-boys pursue their business, each one to his stage, all night through the winter. Some boys who ride long stages suffer greatly in winter nights, and at several places I have heard of their being frozen to death.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of his concerns Woolman not only refused offers to travel by stagecoach, choosing to walk, but he also had no wish to receive letters transported by this system and cautioned Friends not to send letters to him “on any common occasion” by post.

Quaker writings about animal welfare and vegetarianism often draw on the work of earlier Quakers in support of their case.<sup>37</sup> This early compassion for all of creation is seen as something to be emulated by Quakers.

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<sup>36</sup> *The Journal of John Woolman*, John Greenleaf Whittier Edition Text, Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1971, 211-212.

<sup>37</sup> See for example John Couch, *Friends and Vegetarianism*, Quaker Animal Concern pamphlet, n.d. but c.2004 and *Quaker Concern for Animals*, membership flyer, n.d. but c.2004.

## Friends' Anti-Vivisection Association and Quaker Animal Concern

The Friends' Anti-Vivisection Association was founded in 1890. Its impetus was a query at the Yearly Meeting of 1889:

This Meeting has given its attention to the subject [vivisection] thus brought before us; but, as there has not been an opportunity for fully discussing this question in all its bearings, it does not feel in a position to record a decided judgement on it. Nevertheless, deeply feeling that mercy and kindness towards the lower animals are a manifest part of our Christian duty, it is the desire of the meeting that Friends will carefully consider and make themselves acquainted with this question, in order that they may see what may be their duty with regard to it.<sup>38</sup>

At first a large committee was nominated so that the Anti-vivisection Association would be represented at each Quarterly Meeting but a committee with many members would have difficulty arranging travel to meetings. So an executive body was eventually comprised of only seven Friends, including a Dr Mary J. H. Williams. Correspondents were recruited in 52 monthly meetings but 29 lacked a correspondent. At its foundation the association had a membership of 350 friends. By the time of the second annual report in 1892 membership had risen to 432 Friends, including Joshua Rowntree MP, who was made a vice-president.

The membership then declined to 210 by 1910, but from 1914 the Association was still able to employ an organizing secretary and lecturer to propagate its message, Gladys M. Barritt. However, funds ran low in subsequent years, and by 1920 Barritt only worked part-time for the Association, although she was still in post in

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<sup>38</sup> Minute of the London Yearly Meeting, 1889, cited in *Quaker Quotations on Animals, An anthology from the time of George Fox to the present day*. Published by Quaker Concern for Animals, Braintree, Essex, 1990 (date of introduction).

1930. Subscriptions dwindled even more during the Second World War, suggesting the membership had significantly decreased. After the War the Association claimed to have gone forward in its sixtieth year (1949 – 50), making new members and rediscovering old ones. “We feel we can say that we have recovered much of the interest which was lost during the last war.” However subscriptions were low, netting just £29 19s 0d that year, suggesting that members were either paying less than in pre-war years, certain categories of membership were free, or that membership had in fact *decreased*.

The Friends’ Anti-vivisection Association underwent the first of its name changes in 1952. Minute 9 notes that “in order (a) to have a more positive title and (b) to indicate more clearly our opposition to all forms of cruelty it is decided that the Society be known as The Friends’ Anti-Vivisection and Humane Society” (FA-VS & HS). However, the Society reported only 283 members of a total of 20,000 Friends, suggesting that Friends concerned about vivisection and other cruel practices are simply not members of the Society. The annual report of 1953 notes a growth of interest and membership although no numbers are given.

By 1956 there were over 400 members of the Society for the first time. Some discussion was had of the Society sending appropriate suggestions to the committee to be appointed for revising the *Book of Discipline*, but this “should be regarded as supplementary to individual effort”. In 1958 the Society became the Friends’ Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection Society, but the annual report gives no explanation of the change. Ninety subscriptions to the Society in 1959-60 had

produced only £45 17s 0d, and numbers appear to have declined dramatically in the decade.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s under the leadership of Beryl Spence the Society seems to have entered a more radical era. In the 1989 newsletter Spence discussed the recent name change from Quaker Concern for Animal Welfare to Quaker Concern for Animals (QCA). Some members have questioned the reason. The question of “welfare” Spence suggested “we would be content with a mere amelioration of animals’ conditions”, while “rights” is often misinterpreted as supporting violent activity. The new title is intended to be both positive and uncontroversial. The autumn 1990 newsletter reprinted correspondence from Angela Howard, Secretary of the QCA and notes ten years will have passed since the Session on Animal Welfare held by London Yearly Meeting (YM) in 1981. The Meeting concluded “We have started a dialogue at our session which we hope will continue within the Society and extend beyond it when we have been led to greater understanding.” Quaker Concern for Animals called for the matter to be reconsidered at the next YM but the request was refused and the offer of a special interest meeting during the YM was made. Alongside the correspondence QCA published a listing of its activities to attempt to “continue a dialogue” in the years 1981 – 1990.

## Friends' Vegetarian Society

Whilst the founding of the Anti-Vivisection society can be traced in *The Friend*, the Friends' Vegetarian Society (FVS) seems to have arrived on the scene without remark. The first trace of it appears in the Society's fourth year when a meeting of the FVS was held at the 1905 Friends' Yearly Meeting. No reports exist of plans to found the Society and there is no record of appeals for members or reports of business prior to 1905. At this first mention, the membership is given as some 99 people, of whom 55 attended the meeting, although simultaneous meetings were held for Young Friends, older Friends, and the Repeal Association which may have affected the FVS attendance. At the FVS meeting vegetarian Friends of 40, 30 and 20 years' standing gave testimonies to the advantages of a non-flesh diet, although details of their opinions are not supplied.<sup>39</sup>

The Jubilee report claims that in 1914 there were 160 members and that "recent reports show there are 400 known members and sympathisers among the Society of Friends, although it is realised that many more Friends are convinced vegetarians". In 1928 the impact of the FVS was felt at the London Yearly Meeting

... the request to serve non-flesh food in the restaurant during Yearly Meeting was tried and a letter from the Manager stated 'roughly speaking, about fifty per cent of those using the lunch room at Friends' House, take the vegetarian menu, and we have found an increasing number favour the fruit lunch'.

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<sup>39</sup> *The Friend*, 28 July 1905, 493.

In the same year *Advices and Queries* was revised and, at the suggestion of a vegetarian Friend, William Brown, MRCVS, the General Advices included, “Let the law of kindness know no limits, show a loving consideration for all God’s creatures”. William F. Nicholson the Recording Clerk of the London Yearly Meetings, for 20 years, was also a vegetarian. The FVS was also busy contacting Friends’ Schools and as a result vegetarian fare was made available in three of the nine schools: Saffron Walden, Sibford and Ackworth. The entirely vegetarian school, St. Christopher in Letchworth is also remarked upon as it was “managed by two of our keenest Friend members”, and “reaches a high educational standard, with healthy happy children”.<sup>40</sup> The editorial for the Jubilee report ended with the comment that “as a Society we are opposed to war against man, and should not our testimony also be borne against the war constantly waged against animals?”<sup>41</sup>

In 1946 it is reported that 250 copies of the last annual report were sent out (presumably for 1945), suggesting that the membership was of approximately that number.<sup>42</sup> Three hundred vegetarian Friends and 40 sympathisers were noted as members in 1946. In 1947, the number of vegetarian Friends had risen to 320, with 60 sympathisers. In the following year 420 vegetarian Friends and sympathisers combined were noted, showing a similar annual increase to 1947. The report for 1948 noted that whilst numbers of members had increased, many in the Society of Friends who were “convinced vegetarians” had not made

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> The 1945 rationing records give the number of registered vegetarians as 100,000.



themselves known to the FVS. A call was accordingly made for members to “spread [their] Light in his own meeting and among Friends everywhere” as

The burden of spreading Truth regarding eating, drinking, food production and their bearing on our spiritual life, cannot be left to the few, it must be the responsibility of every one who has seen light shining through. ‘The Law of Kindness’ towards all God’s creatures.<sup>43</sup>

In 1949 it was reported that 600 copies of the last annual report (1948) had been distributed; the same number was distributed in 1950. In the late 1940s and early 50s the Society begins to distribute some literature. Arthur Brayshaw, the secretary of the Society, compiled a *Quaker Anthology* concerning our “lesser Brethren”, and 2,500 copies were printed, of which the Friends’ Vegetarian Society distributed 1250.<sup>44</sup> In 1951 it was reported that 1500 copies of the pamphlet *Friends should be vegetarians* had been distributed. This was felt to be “an acceptable way of sharing our convictions”.<sup>45</sup>

Selected FVS newsletters survive from 1950 – 1960; the 1950 one concludes:

So we go forward, remembering that God gave Mankind food for his body, that he should be a healthy Temple wherein the Kingdom of God could dwell. May we all make it our resolve to use every gift of God as He would have us use it for His glory.

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<sup>43</sup> *Annual Report of the Friends’ Vegetarian Society 1948.*

<sup>44</sup> *Report of The Friends’ Vegetarian Society*, ending May 1949. Arthur Brayshaw (compiled by), *A Quaker Anthology Concerning ‘Our Lesser Brethren’*, (Goldaming: Friends’ Vegetarian Society, n.d).

<sup>45</sup> *Report of The Friends’ Vegetarian Society*, ending March 1951.

New members listed lived in both the UK and abroad, although virtually all UK members were in the South of England. The Jubilee Report of 1952 refers to Frederick B. Sainty, President of the Friends' Vegetarian Society until his death in 1947<sup>46</sup>:

To one Friend this awaking spirit came, and revealed to him the consciousness that 'All Life is One', and that all life is God given and sacred, Frederick B. Sainty embraced vegetarianism as an essential part of Quakerism. His conviction became so strong that he was compelled to share it with other Friends, and so the Friends' Vegetarian Society came into being during that same year of 1902. At the time of the London Yearly Meeting in 1903 enough Friends had become convinced vegetarians for it to be possible to hold a meeting at The Apple Tree Restaurant in London Wall, and when the First Annual report was printed in 1905, a membership of 99 Friends was recorded, including several lifelong vegetarians and others who had been total abstainers from all flesh foods for 50 years.<sup>47</sup>

The report for 1960 continues:

We have evidence that our work is becoming more widely known and appreciated as people become sensitive to the suffering in the animal world. We are glad to include among our members vegetarians of the third and fourth generation, who are an inspiration to us all.

However, concerns about money continued; less cash was said to be in hand than for "many years".

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<sup>46</sup> Frederick B. Sainty (1863-1947) visited COs in prison during World War I. See Frederick B. Sainty, "notebook of Quaker prison visitor, 1917-1919", Friends' House Library, London, MS VOL S 410. In an advertisement in *The Friend* he wrote: "As a Society, we are opposed to war against man; and should not our testimony also be borne against the war that is constantly waged against animals?". Cited in *Quaker Quotations on Animals, An anthology from the time of George Fox to the present day*, pamphlet (Essex: Quaker Concern for animals: 1990 – date of introduction). Woodbrooke Library, Birmingham, F59.

<sup>47</sup> *Jubilee Report of the Friends Vegetarian Society*, March 1952.

The more recent newsletters of the Friends' Vegetarian Society have been edited by Charles Ryder of Stourbridge, West Midlands. The Society seems to have gone through difficult times in spring 1988 and a request was made for committee members and for help with mailings to share the workload. In autumn 1992 there were plans for a visit to Oxford and for a pre-Christmas meal. In the spring 1993 number, described as the centenary issue (although this is evidently incorrect as the Society was founded in 1902 and celebrated its 50 year Jubilee in 1952), several references were made to the centenary of the Society along with much berating of the membership for not responding to the secretary's request for letters to the editor and for not booking to attend trips he has organised. In autumn 1993 the secretary cancelled the Christmas meal owing to lack of interest, although he says he would be happy to reinstate it if enthusiasm was revived.

In winter 1993 a circular was sent to all Particular Meetings regarding the high levels of slaughter throughout the country that took place to provide Christmas fare. In winter 1993 the Society sought a property to be used as a home for the elderly. However, the extra "mid-summer issue" of 1994 noted that no response was received to the request to hear from elderly people who would wish to transfer to "a home of our own where vegetarian dishes, Quakerism and spiritual fellowship would enrich their lives". Despite this, a large detached house in half an acre of ground in Sheringham, North East Norfolk, was to be purchased for the purpose. Ultimately, though, the winter 1997 edition reported that the home for the elderly had not been bought owing to a lack of potential wardens. The editor complained

that the membership are “leaving it to me” to sort out the property and other matters.

Also in 1993 the FVS took a stand at the London Yearly Meeting and its Annual General Meeting featured a talk by Robert Beaumont, a seller of organic foods, on “Food and Cancer”, based on the research of Dr Max Gerson.<sup>48</sup> The winter 1997 edition also contained a reference to alcohol and spirits. The editor asks that members bring alcohol and meat to the attention of Friends as in both cases there are “links to cancer and heart disease”.<sup>49</sup> This issue also contained reports of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the national secular Vegetarian Society, which the editor attended. All FVS newsletters contain information on the wider secular movement and their activities such as National Vegetarian Week, World Vegan Day, publications, events, World Vegetarian Congresses and vegetarian guest houses and retreat centres abroad.

## **Books of Discipline and Advices**

The first printed Quaker book of minutes and advices in 1783 includes a section on moderation and temperance which warns against excessive drinking, spirits and alehouses, but makes no reference to diet or to animals. By 1795 there is a clear statement against “vain sports”:

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<sup>48</sup> Max Gerson, M.D. (1881- 1959), born in Wongrowitz, Germany originally researched dietary therapy as a cure for his migraine and found that it was also successful at curing skin tuberculosis. He successfully used dietary therapy to treat lung tuberculosis, heart disease, kidney failure, and finally – cancer. His book *A Cancer Therapy – Results of 50 Cases* was published in 1958. The Gerson Institute, a non-profit organisation in San Diego, CA, provides education and training in the Gerson Therapy, an alternative, non-toxic treatment for cancer and other chronic degenerative diseases.

<sup>49</sup> *Newsletter of The Friends' Vegetarian Society*, No. 120, Winter 1997.

We clearly rank the practice of hunting and shooting for diversion, with vain sports; and we believe the awakened mind may see, that even the censure of those whom providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods, is but ill filled up with these amusements. Therefore, being not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let our leisure be employed in serving our neighbour and not in distressing the creatures of God for our amusement.<sup>50</sup>

Whilst the concern expressed might be about the misuse of time that could otherwise be spent on Christian duties, or perhaps a concern about other immoderate behaviour that might stem from these interests, the use of the expression “distressing the creatures of God for our amusement” takes a strong moral tone about the rights of God’s creatures to go about their business unfettered by man’s desire to pursue them or take their lives for “amusement”. It seems to recall the sense of Woolman’s call that Friends should not “lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation which the great Creator intends for them”.

The same reference to hunting and shooting as vain sports is repeated in the 1802, 1813 and 1829 editions of the “advices”. The text changes in 1851 to read:

We do in love desire that no one of our members may be in the practice of vain sports – that no one may take pleasure in destroying the creatures of God for self-gratification; such pursuits are an occupation of time which we believe the faithful steward of that responsible trust will find ought to be turned to a better purpose, and they are, we think, calculated not only to weaken our sense of religious impressions, but to harden the heart, and to leaven us into the spirit of the world ...

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<sup>50</sup> *A Selection from the Christian advices issued by the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends Living in London, 1795, 25.*

Variations on this theme appear in the 1861, 1864, 1871, 1883 and 1906 editions.

In 1911 the text in the “Recreations and Amusements” section changes and asks whether the activity might bring about a demoralising effect upon oneself or others:

While we deprecate any attempt to coerce the consciences of Friends in the matter of recreations and amusements, desiring that each one for himself may find and follow the Divine Guide, there are certain considerations that should be borne in mind in deciding whether any particular form of recreation is permissible or the reverse. Does it necessitate an undue and lavish expenditure of time or money? Does it involve annoyance or danger to others? Does it involve cruelty to animals? ... Such questions must be carefully considered by all who would follow Christ in the spirit of pure wisdom and of love to all men, and who would honestly use, for themselves and others the prayer, ‘Lead us not into temptation’.<sup>51</sup>

The 1925 edition repeats the statement on the use of leisure time that appeared in 1911. In 1928 we see the first strong statement of compassion for animals: “Let the law of kindness know no limits. Show a loving consideration for all God’s creatures.” In the 1960 edition of *Christian Faith and Practice* there appears, for the first time, a section in the chapter on “The Art of Living” entitled “The Animal Creation”. In addition to the 1928 statement there are three additional statements in this section including the Woolman text “that we do not lessen the sweetness of life.” One of these statements calls for a greater search for understanding of the suffering of animals and its causes. This statement also acknowledges that there will be a difference of opinion among Friends: “We need both to wrestle individually with the implications of this, and to be tolerant to each other’s findings, seeking unity in spite of differences in interpretation.” By the 1995 edition a whole

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<sup>51</sup> *Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends of London Yearly Meeting, Part II Christian Practice*, approved and adopted by the Yearly Meeting of 1911, London: Headley Bros., 1911, Ch. III, Recreation and Amusements, 105.

chapter on the “Unity of Creation” has appeared along with a section entitled “Leadings” which reflect on contemporary issues. However, despite the existence since 1890 of a specifically Quaker Anti-Vivisection Society, the first statement on vivisection to appear in the books of discipline and advices is penned by Ralph Rowarth, in 1994, and published in the chapter on the “Unity of Creation”:

It is said that all great movements progress through three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption. For the anti-vivisection movement the stage of ridicule is passing, the stage for discussion has begun. Will the Religious Society of Friends condemn vivisection before or after its abolition? Our yearly meeting at present is not a participant in this unfolding humane drama but a silent spectator to it ... Should a search for unity with the anti-vivisection movement not be our concern?<sup>52</sup>

This statement appears in both the 1999 and the 2005 edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice*. The section on the “Unity of Creation” in the 1995 edition contains a vegetarian statement for the first time.<sup>53</sup> John Woolman’s statement that “to say that we love God ... and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature ... was a contradiction in itself” is reproduced, also for the first time, in this edition.<sup>54</sup> The 2005 edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice* contains the same statements on the “Unity of Creation” and vivisection as those found in the 1995 edition.

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<sup>52</sup> *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1995, “Leadings”, 29.04.

<sup>53</sup> No. 25.06. This statement by Vera Haley dated 1988 appears at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> *The Journal of John Woolman*, 1772, Moulton ed., 178 - 9

## Other Quaker writings about animals

Pamphlets reflecting on animals and diet include the proceedings of conferences such as the Compassionate Living Conference, held in 1986, when Friends Fellowship of Healing, Friends Vegetarian Society, and Quaker Concern for Animal Welfare joined in a common cause. In a talk entitled “Famine and Affluence” given by Kathleen Jannaway (a former General Secretary of The Vegan Society and the co-founder of the Movement for Compassionate Living in 1984), she called for a move towards veganism if the greatly increased world population was to be fed.<sup>55</sup> World food resources and the difficulty of sustaining an increasing population was a theme of increasing concern among some Quaker vegetarians in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>56</sup>

Unlike most Christian vegetarian groups, only one Quaker pamphlet considers biblical justification for vegetarianism. This short work marshals the Old Testament support of Gen. 1:29-30, Isa. 11:6-9 and the story of Daniel’s vegetarianism. From the New Testament, John the Baptist’s diet of locust beans and wild honey is cited, as is James’s vegetarian diet. The author, Terence Lane, reflects on whether Jesus may have come from a vegetarian Essene household and claims Peter and Matthew were both vegetarians and, on the strength of Rom. 14-21 and 1Cor.:8-13, that even Paul may have been, although most Christian

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<sup>55</sup> Kathleen Jannaway, *Famine and Affluence, Compassionate Living, proceedings of the Compassionate Living Conference at Romford Friends’ Meeting House on 13 September 1986*, 10. Woodbrooke Library Archive.

<sup>56</sup> See the Vegetarian Society pamphlets: Hazel Brothers, *Feeding the 5,000 Million*, 1979 and Kathleen Jannaway, *Making the Most of World Resources*, 1985.



vegetarian groups have difficulty with Paul's other statements on dietary laws.<sup>57</sup>

Lane concludes that the Last Supper was not a Passover feast and Jesus was in all probability a vegetarian. He laments the loss of the "many other works" referred to by Luke and John which he feels would have substantiated this view of a vegetarian Jesus: "Vegetarianism may have been more widely spread in the early church than is apparent in the New Testament."<sup>58</sup>

Another personal experience of vegetarianism is revealed in a pamphlet by Victoria Leveson Gower who in a description of her journey to vegetarianism notes:

If we think of God's love abiding within us as being akin to the quality of imagination, and that it is God's purpose for man that His Love should be revealed through and develop in him during his short span of earthly life (in fact this is the only way that god's love can be known) then the tormenting, exploiting and killing of the weaker and more helpless members of His creation would simply be an impossibility.<sup>59</sup>

Not all Quaker literature on the subject of animals and vegetarianism was written by confirmed vegetarians. In 1950 a pamphlet was issued by a group of biologist members of the Society of Friends in response to a leaflet from the President of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society, which the biologists described as "regrettably

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<sup>57</sup> Terence Lane (1893 – 1982) was a conscientious objector who spent three year in military prisons during the World War I. In the latter part of his life he was secretary of the Friends' Vegetarian Society. See <http://www.middlessexquakers.org.uk/terence-lane.php>, accessed 25 July 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Terence Lane, *Vegetarianism and the Early Church*, pamphlet, publisher and date unknown c.1970s. Woodbrooke Library, Birmingham, F59 LAN.

<sup>59</sup> Victoria Leveson Gower, *Why I am a Vegetarian*, pamphlet, publisher and date unknown c.1970s. Woodbrooke Library, Birmingham, F59 GOW. Leveson Gower is presumably the Quaker vegetarian of the same name of Berkhamstead, Herts., who advertised in the Autumn 1947 edition of *The Vegan* for an educated woman to share her home in return for help in the house.

one-sided and ill-informed”.<sup>60</sup> In addition they expressed concern about an “entirely unjustified” accusation of cruelty made against a Cambridge Friend who had recently died. The pamphlet discusses man’s responsibilities towards other animals, emphasizing the greater value of human life with a scriptural quotation (Matt.10:31) and the cruelties to be found in the domestication of animals for food or as “pets” as worthy of consideration alongside vivisection. The biologists considered that an animal’s experience of pain should not be confused with human notions of “suffering”, as animals living almost entirely in the present do not suffer anxiety or imaginative anticipation of further pain. They also believed animal experimentation was rigorously controlled and inspected by the Home Office. Finally, they concluded that “in the fight against human suffering, animal experimentation is a necessity and the moral problem posed by this has always been of concern to those engaged in medical and biological work.”<sup>61</sup> The benefits of vivisection, they noted, were not only enjoyed by Friends who needed anaesthesia or penicillin or whose children had been protected from smallpox, but “by animals themselves as veterinary progress is even more dependent on animal experimentation than is human medicine.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Quaker Journals and animals**

Whilst issues involving animal welfare or animal rights appear in *The Friend* from time to time, vegetarianism and animal welfare are rarely discussed there. In some

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<sup>60</sup> *Animal Welfare*, A letter from a group of biologist members of the Society of Friends, Printed by Foister and Jagg, Cambridge, 1950.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

recent editions of *The Friend* the only indication of the link between a vegetarian diet and Quakers is to be suggested by a regular advertisement offering accommodation for elderly vegetarians at special homes for them.<sup>63</sup>

In the 1890s the pages of *The Friend* indicated a concern among some Quakers for the growing trend towards vivisection. A minute of the Yearly Meeting of 1898 suggests that Friends should seek to learn more about the subject.<sup>64</sup>

This minute ultimately led to the founding of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society in 1891. There is much correspondence and reports of the meetings in *The Friend* at this time. Prior to the foundation of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection group there were active anti-vivisection groups within the Society of Friends which had been formed by Quarterly or Monthly Meetings. In particular there were regular reports of the meetings of anti-vivisection Friends in Bristol and Yorkshire. Although there is no suggestion that this is a topic on which all Friends are agreed, there is the hint in the editorial that Quakers might be thought to be in sympathy with the anti-vivisectionists. Why else would *The Friend* report a news item supplied by the news agency Reuter reproduced from *The Times* newspaper which revealed that two surgeons, Hahn and von Bergmann, had been accused by a third, Leidig, of inoculating hospital patients with the cancer lymph?<sup>65</sup> Leidig claimed that the results of these experiments had been published in medical journals from 1887. Dr Leidig asked whether Hahn and von Bergmann conducted these experiments

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<sup>63</sup> This charity later became the Vegetarian Housing Association before being wound up and its funds transferred to a newly created charity for older vegetarians, Vegetarians for Life.

<sup>64</sup> See Minute of London Yearly Meeting, 1898 cited on 155 n.18.

<sup>65</sup> *The Friend*, 1 August 1891, 227.

with the knowledge and permission of their patients, whether the patients knew that these experiments had no curative purpose and whether they increased the suffering of the patients. Dr Hahn and Professor von Bergmann admitted to the charge of experimenting on their patients and claim that “in every case the patient so operated upon was past recovery. They also affirm that it was necessary for them to select human beings for experiment, in as much as none of the lower animals would have been suitable for their purpose.”<sup>66</sup> *The Times* reported that this story has spread great unease about “surgical methods which apparently take so little account of human life”.<sup>67</sup> This article is entirely supportive of the concerns of the membership of the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Society in this period. It confirms their view that not only is vivisection harmful to animals but it is also “brutalising” to those who have to use animals in this way.<sup>68</sup> One of the arguments most frequently advanced by the Friends’ Anti-vivisection Society is that those involved in such work will not be fit to feel the appropriate compassion for the suffering of their patients. Here they have a tale which fully supports that view. Human beings with no useful purpose, as they will not survive, are put to the same use as laboratory rats without any apparent moral consideration. Furthermore, the remark by the surgeons that the lower animals would not have been suitable for this experiment also demonstrates another argument that has long been used by the anti-vivisection movement: animals are not a substitute for human biology and only limited information can be obtained by torturing them in the name of progress. The selection of this news item with no direct reference to

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Vegetarians in this period often made similar claims about the morality of meat eaters causing the brutalisation of those working in slaughter houses and butchers’ shops.

the Friends stands out and leaves one to wonder whether the editor of *The Friend* was against vivisection. To include such material would suggest that the editor is confident of a degree of sympathy for the tone of this piece.

In 1890, the year before the Friends Anti-Vivisection Society was formed: a Victoria Street Society<sup>69</sup> meeting was recorded in some detail.<sup>70</sup> A report of a “Conference on Vivisection” held by Friends of Bristol and Somerset, at the close of their quarterly meeting in May 1891, received scarcely any more space than the report of the secular society in 1890. The Quaker anti-vivisection meetings and conferences usually featured a guest speaker. At the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Conference to found the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Society on 24 May 1890 the guest speaker after the main business of forming the Society and electing officers was Mr Benjamin Bryan, Secretary of the Victoria Street Anti-Vivisection Society, reported on the position of the question in Parliament. This invitation to the secular Victoria Street Society would seem to suggest that there was a good relationship between the existing national organisation and the fledgling Quaker one. In the report of the Victoria Street Society’s meeting of 14 November 1890 reported in *The Friend* on 1 December 1890, Frances P. Cobbe speaks about vivisection in a decidedly religious tone. One wonders if there was a large contingent of Quaker anti-vivisectionists at the meeting that evening and whether

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<sup>69</sup> This was Frances Power Cobbe’s first anti-vivisection organisation, founded in 1875, which is now known as the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS). Cobbe (1822 – 1904) was an Irish writer, social reformer, anti-vivisectionist and suffragette. She founded a number of animal welfare groups, including the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) in 1898. She was a member of the executive council of the London National Society for Women’s Suffrage. For more information see Barbara Caine, ‘Cobbe, Frances Power (1822–1904)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32469>, accessed 24 July 2013]

<sup>70</sup> *The Friend*, 1 December 1890, 337.

Cobbe was particularly appealing to them when she reflects on the growth of compassion in society that has extended to slaves and now to animals:

As time has travelled on, the pity of God has entered into the ears of men, and the negroes and inferior races of mankind have been protected, and love and tenderness towards animals have grown. Has anyone in his worship of knowledge the right to subject innocent, helpless animals to torture? The mechanism of a living sentient being is like a delicate musical instrument.<sup>71</sup>

The Fall of Man is described by Cobbe as a desire for knowledge by evil means and she compares this to the vivisectors' thirst for knowledge at any price:

If the world had been made by an evil spirit, we could understand that possible tortures might be the appointed means to knowledge; it was under the plea that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was a thing to be desired to make one wise "that Eden was lost", and our Lord was tempted by the promise "of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them;" in this day the desire to acquire knowledge by evil means would seem a greater temptation of the evil one than ever before. Cutting open living bodies, and laying bare this perfect handiwork of God, without scruple, without compunction, regardless of the awful torture, the bitter agony, so great that only God Himself can know, - if we are asked if this can be in accordance with His will? We answer – never!<sup>72</sup>

This concept of the vivisectors as a 'new priesthood' setting themselves apart of the holy wisdom of a compassionate God was not uncommon in the rhetoric of anti-vivisection campaigners in this period. One technique involved placing Christ in the laboratory passing among the vivisectors' victims and asking what His reaction would be to these sights. Another was to identify the victims of vivisection with the crucified Christ.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> "Protection of animals from Vivisection", *The Friend*, 1 December 1890, 337.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> A full discussion can be found in Chien-Hui Li, 'Mobilizing Christianity in the Antivivisection Movement in Victorian Britain', 141-161.

The arguments advanced by anti-vivisection Quakers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are broadly the same as those made by the more secular organisations. This reflects the polemic of the secular Vegetarian Societies of the time that also featured regular articles about the bible and vegetarianism and reported talks where the moral and religious call to vegetarianism had been made. The key arguments advanced by anti-vivisection Friends are that one would wish to protect the weak (including lower animals) and not cause needless pain. This is seen by many as an extension of their testimony on justice and peace. Thomas Bevan Clark, Secretary of the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society wrote to the editor of *The Friend* in 1891:

We are compelled to regard war as an immoral system, notwithstanding that an occasional military demonstration, with quite bloodless result, may have effected a desirable and beneficent purpose. It is just because it cannot be limited to bloodless demonstrations, because the demonstration and the ensanguined battle-field are inseparable parts of the system we call war that that system stands condemned. Similarly, a trifling inoculation with no serious results, or an experiment rendered really painless by chloroform, are both conceivable in connection with vivisection, but the awful experiments of a Bernard or Paul Bert are inseparable parts of the same system. It is a method of research in which the two classes of experiment are interdependent and essential ...<sup>74</sup>

Some Friends felt that the practice of vivisection was contrary to Christ's will as well as demoralising to those involved in the practice. It was also felt that the experiments were of no value as animal experiments could not determine the human response to treatments or drugs. There was also distrust of the Government's Inspectors (appointed to ensure that the legislation on vivisection was enforced) and of medical men generally. Many felt that the Government's

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<sup>74</sup> *The Friend*, 1 May 1891, 112.

figures showing a decrease in vivisection were not to be trusted. All of these concerns were also expressed by those involved in the ostensibly secular Victoria Street Society. A report of a paper read at the Women's Quarterly Meeting of Bristol and Somerset, on 15 October 1889 ended with the reflection

It is urged that we may safely leave the matter [of vivisection] in the hands of members of the medical profession ...; but to do this would be to ignore the responsibility of each individual conscience to judge the law and morals, as well as of religious faith, in the light of God's will, so far as it is revealed to each one of us by His Spirit.<sup>75</sup>

Not all Friends were in agreement on this matter and from the pages of *The Friend* we can hear their voices at meetings or read their letters to the editor. At the Yearly Meeting of 1899 it was noted that some Friends thought that the law on vivisection was being duly enforced and that the Government Returns could be believed:

Other practices, involving equal pain to animals, were considered necessary to civilisation, and were not held contrary to Christianity; and various instances were given of the value of experiment on animals, in saving human and brute life.<sup>76</sup>

In response to the request that the Yearly Meeting should be asked to pass a resolution on vivisection Leonard Doncaster, writing to the editor of *The Friend*, in 1914, asked:

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<sup>75</sup> "Vivisection", *The Friend*, 1 March 1890, 74.

<sup>76</sup> *The Friend*, 7 June 1889, 164.



And if it is immoral to benefit by any suffering inflicted on animals, it is realised that the eating of meat, the wearing of animal clothes or the use of horses is equally condemned? ... The total amount of pain caused in all the laboratories in the country in a year is as nothing compared with that inflicted every 12<sup>th</sup> of August in the name of sport, and yet no protest against sport is made.<sup>77</sup>

At the 1914 Yearly Meeting there was a request by the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society to present a report to the Yearly Meeting. Formerly the Society had been able to hold its meetings on Devonshire House property at the time of the Yearly Meeting but this was now a privilege extended to those groups that had a right to present a report to the Yearly Meeting.<sup>78</sup> After much discussion permission was refused by the clerk in view of the "sharp difference of opinion". The final word in this report after the clerk's decision had been given reads: "EDMUND WRIGHT BROOKS recalled the time when the Friends' Temperance Union was not allowed a meeting on those premises, but was obliged to hold its annual meeting in the London Tavern."<sup>79</sup> This retort is as clear an indictment of a decision as perhaps will ever be found in *The Friend*. Friends who were campaigning for better animal welfare or animal rights were to do battle to have their voices heard at Yearly Meeting throughout the history of the Friends Anti-Vivisection Society and its successor Quaker Concern for Animals.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries vivisection appears to be the main – or only – animal welfare concern among Quakers. Single issue

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<sup>77</sup> *The Friend*, 22 May 1914, 367.

<sup>78</sup> Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, was the headquarters of the Society of Friends from 1667-1926 when the Quakers sold Devonshire House and moved to the newly built Friends House on Euston Road.

<sup>79</sup> *The Friend*, 5 June 1914, 429.

campaigning was common in this period, but with the exception of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (later the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and the Plumage League (later the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) concern for the suffering of animals was often focussed on vivisection. The nature of vivisection seems to have horrified the Victorians in a way that no other form of cruelty to animals did. Perhaps the idea of cruelty wrought upon the innocent by educated gentlemen was particularly abhorrent.

The rare coverage of animal welfare and vegetarianism in *The Friend* occurred with the more recent food crises in the UK. However, despite the huge BSE/CJD crisis in the 1990s, with a high level of consumer concern in 1996 when the government acknowledged a link between BSE and vCJD in humans, no reference was made to the crisis in *The Friend* in 1995/96. There is, however, correspondence about live export, and the consequences of dairy milk production for calves: another key animal rights issue of this period. Both sides of the debate are represented in *The Friend* with some correspondents demonstrating that they are clearly unaware of the way modern dairy products are produced. At the height of the “Live Export Debate” in February 1995, Mavis Timms wrote to the editor:

One cannot be sensitive to some cruelty and callous about the rest. You are either sensitive to suffering wherever it occurs, or you retain the possibility of hardening your heart by slow degrees until you share the mentality of an Auschwitz guard.<sup>80</sup>

Gill Sephton concurs:

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<sup>80</sup> *The Friend*, 24 February 1995, 246.

I feel like Mavis Timms that any abuse of any part of creation is wrong. It is as natural, for me, to think this as it is to breathe. And yet many dismiss this as just a side issue of little relevance. It is not – it is Truth in its deepest meaning ...Brutality not only causes suffering, it denigrates the perpetrators.<sup>81</sup>

*The Friend* in this period had a few references to vegetarianism. There was a report of the European Vegetarian Conference in Bratislava, Slovakia, supplied by the Secretary of the Friends' Vegetarian Society Charles Ryder; and a letter to the editor questioning the concept that a vegetarian diet was a more efficient way to produce food for the world and noting that economic pressures play a part in world food production. The author of this letter, J. R. Campbell, comments

To those who believe that vegetarianism is the solution to world hunger I would enter a caveat. Eat the production of your own country first and ensure that any product you eat from elsewhere is an exportable surplus after feeding the people of that country first, not before.<sup>82</sup>

Bryce Robson responding asks:

Is R. R. [sic] Campbell a farmer or an accountant? Has he never heard of the responsibility of stewardship? When God asks him how he cared for all of his creation what will he say? ... We should be able to put our minds to a system which would reintroduce compassion into the treatment of God's creatures which serve us so well. Now there's something Friends could work for.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 10 March 1995, 312

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 22 September 1995, 1218

Another respondent compares J. R. Campbell's argument to those made in defence of the arms trade, and nicely links the accepted disapproval of the arms trade found among Friends with animal welfare:

J. R. Campbell's letter in defence of meat is not dissimilar to some well-worn arguments in favour of the arms trade. 'Reduction of UK production will only increase production in other areas of the world (*other countries will grab our trade*) where welfare standards are not as high (*regimes don't have good human rights records*).'<sup>83</sup>

This comparison of the evils of war with those of animal welfare is echoed in an article in May 2001 by Angela Howard. She describes growing up on a farm with a milking herd and the distress of cows parted from their calves: "It was a terrible sight and during my childhood one which I witnessed constantly". Cows on their farm had names and were well cared for. They were a Quaker family which she hopes "speaks for itself", but

... it is sometimes difficult to see a practice which is such a well-established tradition for what it really is. I am sure that many of those who join the armed forces do not wish to kill but it is part of the job.<sup>84</sup>

Via the letters page Roma Foster asked what became of the progeny of animals used to provide milk (and milk products) for vegetarians. She feared they must go to the veal crates.<sup>85</sup> Those responding confirmed her fears and recommended contacting the Vegan Society.<sup>86</sup> In December 1996 Joanne Bower noted that the

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<sup>83</sup> Letter from Roderick Winfield to the editor, *The Friend*, 1 December 1995, 1546.

<sup>84</sup> Angela Howard, "The Cost of our milk", *The Friend*, 4 May 2001, 6.

<sup>85</sup> *The Friend*, 6 October 1995, 1280.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Canterbury Diocesan Synod of the Church of England had passed a motion calling upon the government to ban the export of animals for slaughter or calves to be reared in veal crates and asks whether it “might be too much to hope” that the Religious Society of Friends might do likewise.<sup>87</sup> Quaker Concern for Animals set out their stand on the live export debate at their 1995 annual meeting;

During the day, the major problems created by intensive dairy farming were raised several times. Milk has a pure, wholesome image and is considered a major food need. Its overproduction leads to the totally unacceptable veal calf trade and gross exploitation of the dairy cow. We believe the welfare of animals should come before financial gain.<sup>88</sup>

The same report noted that the “ethics of the restaurant menus at Friends’ House” continued to be discussed. This concern had been raised the previous year when it was decided that “To be consistent with our beliefs as Friends, the food available should be produced without involving cruelty or exploitation.”<sup>89</sup>

Far more correspondence appeared about animals in 2001 when the UK was beset by Foot and Mouth Disease. The tourism industry suffered, animals were shot, and as the countryside was covered in the smoke from the pyres of burning corpses for days on end, the Friends in Philadelphia wrote to express their sympathy to Friends in the UK.<sup>90</sup> There was much debate about the response that should be sent in reply. It was originally suggested that the response should thank the Friends for their concern but point out that things were not “as bad as some

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 13 December 1996, 23.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 30 June 1995, 816.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> See “Meeting for Sufferings”, *The Friend*, 13 April 2001, 12.

might make out, and not to be put off from coming to the UK”.<sup>91</sup> Some Friends felt that this did not take the crisis seriously enough. It was resolved to redraft the response to “reflect our awareness of and concern for the devastating effect of the food and mouth outbreak” but also the hope that Friends would not be “unnecessarily deterred” from visiting the UK.<sup>92</sup>

Correspondence on “Foot and Mouth Disease” varied from those expressing their sympathy and “holding farming Friends in the Light”<sup>93</sup> to a vegan Friend repenting that she had been so harsh in her previous criticism of those producing animals for food.<sup>94</sup> Although some expressed a desire that lessons might be learned from the tragedy of the Foot and Mouth crisis,<sup>95</sup> no sense of outrage was expressed by vegetarian or animal rights’ oriented Friends. The nature of Quakerism, of course, encourages Friends not to express anger or to criticise fellow Friends, but encourages them to reflect on other views. Just such an attitude can be seen in the debate about vegetarianism sparked by J. R. Campbell’s letter in 1995 when one correspondent pointed out that Campbell gave a factual response to an enquiry and that Bryce Robson, who responded to that letter, drew “not only improper but incorrect” conclusions. He continued: “Adequate information helps

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<sup>91</sup> Much was being made in the press at the time of the impact of lost tourism and this was particularly affecting American visitors, some of whom seemed, mistakenly, to believe that Foot and Mouth Disease had transferred to the human food chain rather like the BSE/vCJD crisis.

<sup>92</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, *The Friend*, 13 April 2001, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Harry Polley to the editor of *The Friend*, 6 April 2001, 16. See also article by Peter Tatton-Brown of East Devon entitled “The vale of misery”, *The Friend*, 13 April 2001, 6.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Elizabeth M. Angus to the editor, *The Friend*, 30 March 2001, 16-17.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from David J. Weston to the editor of *The Friend*, 6 April 2001, 16. See also article by Robert Straughton, warden of Rookhow Quaker Meeting house and clerk of the Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs Committee, *The Friend*, 8 June 2001, 13 – 15.

consumers to influence food producers to meet consumer choices and conscience needs.”<sup>96</sup>

### **Quakers and the secular vegetarian movement**

As we have seen, Quakers formed the second largest religious denomination at the foundation of the Vegetarian Society in 1847, which attracted 50 vegetarians and was chaired by a Birmingham Friend.<sup>97</sup> In 1880 the Vegetarian Society addressed the Quakers noting that “This Association, we are glad to say, has never been without its supporters among the Society of Friends.” Vegetarian journals report that Quaker meeting houses were sometimes used as venues for meetings for Vegetarian Societies in the latter half of the nineteenth century, suggesting that these groups perhaps had at least one member in common or that the Quakers were “in sympathy” with the vegetarians.

Quaker involvement in the secular vegetarian or animal welfare movements today is difficult to assess. Clearly some individual Quakers have been involved in the secular societies. Kathleen Jannaway was a General Secretary of the Vegan Society before founding The Movement for Compassionate Living. In more recent times, Charles Ryder, the secretary of the Friends’ Vegetarian Society, has clearly

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<sup>96</sup> Letter from Peter Wales to the editor, *The Friend*, 24 November 1995, 1512.

<sup>97</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 46.

maintained links with the secular Vegetarian Society and provided information about its campaigns to the Quaker community. In 1964 Ruth Harrison, a member of the Westminster meeting, came to the attention of the Friends' Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection Society when her book *Animal Machines* was published. Harrison's book was the first to be written on the subject of intensive farming; the roots of modern day terms such as "factory farming" and "factory farmed animals" can be found there. Harrison was apparently unknown to the Friends' Animal Welfare Society at that point, suggesting many of those moved by the plight of animals were not members of the Society.<sup>98</sup> She later became involved with the Society and was one of four Vice-Presidents in 1965 – 1966. Harrison had also known such well known vegetarians as George Bernard Shaw (he was a friend of her father who wrote several books about Shaw) and Gandhi (whose portrait was painted by her mother).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the editor of Quaker Concern for Animals Beryl Spence had strong links with other animal welfare movements, and through those with the wider animal rights movement. Spence was one of the "RSPCA rebels" elected to the RSPCA governing body at that time. The rebels were members of a watchdog committee which had five members of the RSPCA expelled, including a ruling council member, after accusing RSPCA leaders of financial mismanagement. The group also attacked the agreement between the RSPCA and veterinarians which prevented the Society from neutering dogs and cats. They also expressed concern that too much money was being "hoarded" by the

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<sup>98</sup> 74<sup>th</sup> annual report of The Friends Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection Society, 1963-4.



RSPCA rather than being spent on its charitable objects. One of Spence's fellow council members on the RSPCA governing body was Robin Webb, Assistant Director of Animal Aid, an animal welfare/rights campaigning group. Animal Aid also organised vegetarian campaigns (although their literature would actually be vegan) and its staff was entirely vegetarian or vegan. During this period Quaker Concern for Animals' newsletters made frequent references to items in *Outrage*, the magazine of Animal Aid. In spring 1992, Quaker Concern for Animals featured an interview with Webb following his announcement as the new press officer to the Animal Liberation Front, an animal rights group involved in direct action which is often described as "terrorist activity". The two previous post holders of this position – Ronnie Lee and Robin Lane (Lane would later go on to found the Way in the Wilderness Christian vegan group) – had been imprisoned for doing the job.

The interview with Webb started by noting the *Evening Standard* headline on 31 October 1991: "Anger as RSPCA man joins militants". Spence's editorship of QCA clearly led to a more radical period for the organisation, not just in the type of editorial but also in its encouragement of members to be active in campaigns such as Animal Aid's "whistleblower campaign" in which campaigners distributed cards to laboratory workers asking them to inform on experiments and conditions. The QCA journal contained information about the wider secular animal rights movement and its campaigns. Spence's contacts in the RSPCA provided a supply of speakers for meetings such as Bill Jordon, the veterinary surgeon and founder of Zoo Check, Care for the Wild and member of the RSPCA council, who spoke at QCA's Annual General Meeting.

## Conclusion

The Friends' Vegetarian Society, in common with other denominational vegetarian organisations, appears to have arisen out of the concerns of a small group of individuals. Frederick Sainty's inspiration was the concept of the "oneness of all creation" and that all life is God given. The FVS grew quickly although it is not clear what motivated the membership. Some may have shared Sainty's philosophy but others extended the Quaker peace testimony of non-violence to humans to animals.<sup>99</sup> The highest membership of the FVS that can be confirmed was around 600 people in the 1950s. However this, in common with membership of the secular vegetarian societies, bears little relation to the number of Friends likely to have been vegetarians – a fact noted frequently by the FVS officers over the years. The FA-VS progressed from single issue campaigning to a concern for a wide range of animal welfare and animal rights issues, which was broadly in-line with the progress of the secular movement.

Anti-vivisection societies thrived long before similar campaigning activities were considered for other animal welfare or rights groups. However, the Friends were the first denominational organisation to form a vegetarian society, which is perhaps not surprising given the long relationship between Quakerism and abstinence from flesh. As with other Christian organisations, a small number of Quakers were actively involved with the secular organisations, but they had an impact on wider society. The focus on "inner light" rather than scripture to inform

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<sup>99</sup> See Vera Haley, 1988, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1994, revised May 2004, 25.06.

one's relationship with the divine is likely to have promoted vegetarianism within Quakerism. Biblical justifications are fraught with difficulties for Christian vegetarians, but Quakers are largely freed of these constraints and allowed to follow their own conscience on such matters.

In recent years environmental issues have played a larger part in the concerns of the Quakers. This can be seen as an extension of the peace testimony to all of creation rather than just to the sentient beings. There is, however, a note of concern to be found in recent journals of Quaker Concern for Animals, that environmental concerns may lead Friends to seek to protect endangered species and neglect to focus on the suffering of animals that are not threatened with extinction.

## b. THE ORDER OF THE GOLDEN AGE

It has been truly said that ‘food-Reform is the basis of all Reform’, and it is, therefore, related to the work of the Christian Church in evangelising and uplifting humanity. The success of such work depends largely upon the spirituality of professing followers of the Christ, and whilst all that is carnal in them, and in those to whom they minister, is fostered and fed by the consumption of the flesh and blood of animals, their labour to attain higher planes of spiritual experience, and to lead others thither, will naturally be rendered to a great extent unproductive of result.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to explain why the Order of the Golden Age should have such a low profile in the history of vegetarianism once one comes to understand its scope and productivity. Standard texts on the history of vegetarianism such as Spencer’s<sup>2</sup> make no reference to the Order of the Golden Age, although several times he alludes to the classical “Golden Age”. The oversight is not unique: Twigg makes no reference to the Order either, in her otherwise comprehensive study of nineteenth and twentieth century vegetarianism.<sup>3</sup> However, more recent study of Victorian vegetarianism by Gregory acknowledges the Order’s accomplishments, as does Gilheany, who notes its importance as the precursor to many animal welfare societies that followed later:

Over the first two decades of the twentieth century *The Order of the Golden Age* acquire notable status within the humane reform movement. The society established a professional relationship with the national press from prestigious offices at 153 & 155 Brompton Road, London. By 1909, *The Order* was active in 47 countries whilst capable of organising domestic fundraising concerts at the Albert Hall – which attracted 6,000 guests on one such occasion. *The Order’s* campaigning peak probably occurred around 1911; by which time the organisation

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<sup>1</sup> Sydney H. Beard, *Is Flesh Eating Morally Defensible?*, (Paignton: Order of the Golden Age, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 1908).

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, *The Heretic’s Feast*.

<sup>3</sup> Twigg, “The Vegetarian Movement”.

had 300 advertisements situated at locations throughout the London Underground.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike subsequent Christian vegetarian groups, the Order of the Golden Age actively reached out to the wider Christian community, as well as society at large, with their vegetarian and animal welfare message.

The Order of the Golden Age was originally created by the Reverend Henry John Williams (1838 – 1919) in 1881 and constituted a year later. H. J. Williams was a clergyman who, at the age of around 40, was persuaded to become a vegetarian by his brother, the humanitarian Howard Williams (1837-1931) and the author of the widely respected book on ethical vegetarianism *The Ethics of Diet, A Catena of Authorities Deprecatory of the Practice of Flesh Eating*.<sup>5</sup>

Two announcements appeared in the vegetarian press in 1881 about the Order's establishment. In March *The Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger* reported that

The new Anglo-Catholic Guild, the 'Company of St James', seeks to promote the glory of god and the good of man – 'by living and inculcating a life of simplicity in eating and drinking and 'encouraging self-denial in each other in regard to diet', and 'remembering man's fellowship with the lower animals'.

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<sup>4</sup> John Gilheany, [www.resources.homecall.co.uk/home/pag27.html](http://www.resources.homecall.co.uk/home/pag27.html) 22/11/2006 page 1 of 3. See also [www.ordergoldenage.org](http://www.ordergoldenage.org) and John M. Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers, The Church and the Vegetarian Movement in Britain*, (Cardiff: Ascendant Press, 2010), 100-117.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Williams, *The Ethics of Diet, A Catena of Authorities Deprecatory of the Practice of Flesh Eating*, (London: F. Pitman, 1883). This text along with the material from the 1896 edition is reprinted in a University of Illinois edition published 2003. *The Ethics of Diet* was influential in the lives of many well-known vegetarians such as the reformer Henry Salt, the author Leo Tolstoy (he provided a preface to a Russian translation of the book in 1892) and Gandhi read it during his time in London. Howard Williams, a vegetarian and humanitarian, was the son of a minister and the brother of H.J. Williams the original founder of the Order of the Golden Age.

In October of 1881 the *Dietetic Reformer* noted the founding of 'the Order of Companions of the Golden Age, dedicated to the memory of 'St James the Less'.<sup>6</sup> However, a lack of funds prevented the Society from progressing, and the Order lay dormant until 1895 when Sidney H. Beard (1862 – 1939), H. J. Williams and others met to reform the specifically religious food reform society. Sidney Beard had retired from the Stock Exchange at a relatively young age. Beard was to devote much of his time and energy to the Order of the Golden Age and he edited its journal *The Herald of the Golden Age* from its first issue in January 1896 until its final issue in October 1918. There was, however, another Order of the Golden Age, founded by the Reverend Gideon J. Ouseley (1834 – 1906) who was to become famous following the publication of his *Gospel of the Holy Twelve*.<sup>7</sup> Ouseley's Order, also founded in 1881 and then "promulgated" in 1888 with a "literature of forty various publications", was also known as the Order of Atonement and United Templars Society. Following the re-establishment of Williams' Order a dispute broke out in the vegetarian press between Beard and Ouseley about which was the original Order of the Golden Age. Ouseley concludes that

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<sup>6</sup> St James was said to have drunk no wine or strong drink and eaten no animal food.

<sup>7</sup> G. J. Ouseley's *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* is a disputed apocryphal text first serialised in *The Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star* newspaper between July 30, 1898 and March 10, 1901. The Gospel presents vegetarian versions the canonical New Testament. The first collected volume was issued by The Order of At-One-Ment and United Templars Society—a publishing imprint which the author had established in 1881. The explanatory preface referred to an ancient source manuscript "preserved in the Monasteries of Thibet [sic]" which was never produced or proven to exist. In subsequent editions the anonymous editors revised their claim and stated that the text was "communicated" by departed mystics "in dreams and visions of the night".

The most that can be truly said is that the same name, “Order of Golden Age”, occurred to two individuals – ours in 1881, Mr Williams 1882 – independently of each other”.<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately the two organisations seemed to come to an accommodation, as neither wished to “lessen the influence of the latter order for good”.<sup>9</sup> Reverend Ouseley returned to early titles for his work – the Order of the Golden Age (Paris) was Ouseley’s organisation and publishing imprint and was not connected with the Order of the Golden Age in the UK. Ouseley later contributed an article to *The Herald of the Golden Age*, the journal of H. J. Williams’ British Order of the Golden Age, which became one of the first tracts to be published by the Order: *The Voice of Scripture in Favour of a Bloodless Diet*.

It is difficult to assess the size of the Order of the Golden Age’s membership from its journal. At the founding of the Order, and following the early editions of its journal, the *Herald of the Golden Age* published a list of those who had sent “cordial expressions of sympathy to the Order of the Golden Age”. It included some well-known food reformers of the day: C. W. Forward, the author of a history of the vegetarian movement; W. E. A. Axon, a Bible Christian and the historian of the Bible Christians and the Vegetarian Society; H. S. Salt, the humanitarian and reformer; and Albert Broadbent, a member of the Vegetarian Society’s staff. The Reverend H. S. Clubb, a Bible Christian who was very influential in the American vegetarian movement also features. Several overseas correspondents are listed and two members of the aristocracy: Lady Gwendoline Herbert and Lady

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<sup>8</sup> See correspondence between I. G. Ouseley and Sidney H. Beard in *The Vegetarian* 8, 22 and 29 February 1896.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to *The Vegetarian* from I. G. Ouseley on 29 February 1896.

Coomara-Swamy.<sup>10</sup> Membership numbers are not given but each month a list of donors was published along with the amount of money donated, including other members of the aristocracy – although not in large numbers. Based on the sizable sums listed, the membership must have been predominantly middle class. The largest single donor was Sydney H. Beard, who regularly donated £50 - £100 each month. The impression of middle class membership gains strength from the assumption that members could have servants who require instruction in the benefits of the preparation of a reformed diet:

If you explain to your servants why you wish to adopt a bloodless diet, and give them some literature to read upon the question, you will find probably, that they will be very pleased to join you in making the trial.<sup>11</sup>

### **Aims of the Order of the Golden Age**

The first meeting of the Order of the Golden Age was held in London in 1897. At the meeting the Reverend J. H. Napper Neville articulated the aspirations of its membership for the Order: “We want a definite religious society to meet the definite religious yearning of those living in the practice of that true humility, which finds expression in vegetarianism.”<sup>12</sup> The founding document of the Order of the Golden Age makes clear that the organisation is for Christians with a grave concern for vegetarianism and the welfare of animals. The Order was founded:

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<sup>10</sup> “To our members”, *Herald of the Golden Age*, March 1896, 40.

<sup>11</sup> “Our domestic column”, *Herald of the Golden Age*, 25 January 1896, 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January, 1897.



To promote a more general recognition of the obligation which rests upon all who call themselves Christians; - To make some practical endeavour to bring about the fulfilment of those beneficent purposes, to accomplish which, the Founder of Christianity lived and died, and to hasten the advent of that promised Era, when love, mercy, and goodwill towards all fellow creatures shall reign in every human heart.<sup>13</sup>

It also aimed to draw the attention of the Christian churches, and of all religious and humane persons, to the following facts:

That the practice of eating flesh has been pronounced by our highest Scientific Authorities to be an unnatural habit, as man was undoubtedly created a Frugivorous or fruit-eating animal: therefore, it is a violation of one of God's Physical Laws, and totally unnecessary.<sup>14</sup>

It was also seen as a responsibility of members to

lead Vegetarians and Social Reformers to realize more fully: - Their responsibility to consecrate themselves to the work of enlightening those around them on this subject, and to engage in this enterprise as a holy and religious crusade.<sup>15</sup>

Strongly emotive and religious language was used to describe the Order's initial work:

To hasten the coming of the Golden Age when love and goodwill towards all fellow creatures shall reign in every human heart, to advocate the adoption throughout Christendom, of a bloodless and natural diet, to plead the cause of the weak, defenceless and oppressed, to deprecate War, Slaughter, Gluttony, Intemperance, and Cruelty, and all that is opposed to the true spirit of Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Order of the Golden Age, printed by Twiss & Sons, n.d. bound in the front of the 1896 volume of the *Herald of the Golden Age*, (Exeter, W. J. Southwood & Co.).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## **Strategy of the Order: administrative, literary and platform**

At the second convention of The Order of the Golden Age later in 1897, described as an International Convention, Sydney Beard emphasized that “leaders – men and women who possess administrative, literary or platform ability ...” were needed to accomplish this “great work”.<sup>17</sup> This was to form the strategy of the Order’s activities for many years. In common with the secular vegetarian organisations of their time, the Order sought to give talks, write, and publish and distribute pamphlets and tracts. It also aimed to contact churches and reach both clergy and laity, to encourage them to see that changes were required by the Christian communities to bring about the Golden Age.

The Order’s work with the Christian churches was perhaps the least successful element. Members contacted their pastors asking them to consider the subject of “Flesh eating, morality and its results upon individual and natural welfare and progress” and then to speak to their congregation on this matter. With letters signed by clergy of all denominations, the Order also asked ministers to read and respond to enclosed pamphlets.<sup>18</sup> However, from the earliest days of the Order, Beard seemed to realise that this was not the route that would bring about the mass vegetarianism which the Order expected to happen shortly. In 1899, in an editorial entitled the “Silence of the Pulpit”, Beard comments:

On more than one occasion we have sent hundreds of those who occupy the pulpits of our land a consignment of pamphlets, accompanied by a courteous letter

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<sup>17</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, Vol.2, No.10, October 15, 1897, 116.

<sup>18</sup> “Announcement”, *Herald of the Golden Age*, January 1898, 6.

bearing the signatures of a considerable number of ministers of various denominations, asking for some expression of their opinion and their sympathetic co-operation, without receiving a single word of response from more than one hundred of them.<sup>19</sup>

The Order was aware of the difficulties which it faced in spreading its message.

To accept the Order's message was a challenge to orthopraxy as much as orthodoxy:

They do not sit down in the attitude of being willing to learn. If they were willing to be convinced they would have to change their method of living, and would have to modify many of their sermons and enlarge their theology – and this means much personal trouble, and therefore it is easiest to jog along in the old style and ever leave new teaching to the next generation.<sup>20</sup>

Beard remained persuaded that the Christian communities would eventually be won over, but thought this would happen through “the young amongst the laity of Churches, and in those who are outside the Churches altogether, rather than in ‘the masters of Israel’.”<sup>21</sup>

Beard was also aware that “the press is rapidly taking the place of the Pulpit as far as the work of moulding the destinies of our race is concerned.”<sup>22</sup> In response to this perceived power of the press the “Literary Brigade” of the Order of the Golden Age began to take their message to the Church and pulpit alike through the correspondence pages of regional newspapers. Beard felt that this area of the Order's work was successful:

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., January, 1899, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., November 1902, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., ‘Editorial Notes’, May 1899, Vol.4, No. 5, 54

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., ‘A Golden Opportunity’, September, 1900, Vol.15, No. 9, 99

Whereas ten years ago such letters were generally consigned to the waste paper basket, they now get printed, and many of our most influential journalists are actively in sympathy with the work of the Food Reformation.<sup>23</sup>

The *Macclesfield Courier* gave many column inches to the work of the Order of the Golden Age. This may well have been influenced by the presence in Macclesfield of a prominent member of the Order of the Golden Age: the Reverend John Todd Ferrier, a Congregationalist minister, who regularly wrote for the Order from around 1901. In the summer of 1899, a lengthy correspondence appeared in the *Macclesfield Courier*: the Reverend A. Mitchell, a member of the Order, responded to questions raised by members of the local clergy:

The Christ gave His principles to the world, committed them to His Holy Church, and left centuries to do their work. The evolution of the Christ principles leads on to vegetarianism, as surely and truly as it does to Universal Peace. Vegetarianism needs no express command from Christ – it is, I submit, the inevitable development of the principles of mercy.<sup>24</sup>

The “platform” element of the Order’s work came with the advice to members that they should:

... go straight to the point with some such question as ‘Is Flesh Eating a Sin’. Hostility is better than indifference and the more ‘dust’ we can stir up the better, provided that we do it in a courteous manner – say as you think, and speak it from your souls!<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Vol.10, No.1, January, 1905, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., September, 1899.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., March 1898.

## **The Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Cross**

In 1903/04 the Reverend John Todd Ferrier left his congregation in Macclesfield to devote himself full time to the work of the Order of the Golden Age, first undertaking a nationwide lecturing tour of 45 venues including church halls, and theosophical, spiritual and temperance meeting places. Prior to this Ferrier had published a series of articles in the *Herald of the Golden Age* that formed the basis of *On Human Carnivorism*, a book first published by the Order in 1903, and republished as *On Behalf of the Creatures* in 1926. It examines the case for vegetarianism marshalling the evidence and the conclusions of a range of well-known philosophers and doctors to support Ferrier's case. Ferrier left the Order of the Golden Age to form the Order of the Cross, a quasi-Christian vegetarian organisation, which was a temperate, pacifist, Gnostic sect which continues to this day.

The Order of the Cross had much in common with the Order of the Golden Age and, at first glance, it is difficult to see the need for a new group. The foundation of the Order of the Cross was reported in the vegetarian press as the successor to the Order of the Golden Age, giving the distinct impression that the Order of the Golden Age had ceased to exist. This was not the case. The Order of the Golden Age initially welcomed Ferrier's new group – proclaiming in its magazine that there was much humanitarian work to be done and a brethren group should be warmly welcomed. However, only a few months later the Order of the Golden Age took pains to distance itself from the Order of the Cross. In July 1905 the *Herald of the*

*Golden Age* made a clear distinction between its work and that of the Order of the Cross:

I shall be glad if our Friends and Readers will take notice of, and make known the fact, that the Order of the Golden Age is not in any way connected with a Society entitled the Order of the Cross, neither is it associated with certain extraordinary doctrines which are officially presented in one magazine of the said society.

Ferrier certainly had a number of heterodox beliefs which might have been unpalatable to mainstream Christians, but this does not explain entirely the distance placed between the two organisations. After all, Sidney Beard, an “ardent spiritualist”,<sup>26</sup> and an honorary member of the Psychical Research Society from 1882, was also the main force behind the Order of the Golden Age and the sole editor of the *Herald of the Golden Age*, which by this time regularly featured essays on re-incarnation, auras, mind-reading and other esoteric views.

The main difference between the Order of the Cross and the Order of the Golden Age might be that Order of the Golden Age stopped short of a complete re-interpretation of Christianity. In the Order of the Cross, Ferrier challenged the heart of Christian beliefs, and could be said to have created alternative gospels by re-interpreting the New Testament stories and even the person, divinity and resurrection of Christ - Ferrier’s “Master” is the person identified as John the Baptist in the gospels. However, it seems likely that there was some other dispute between Ferrier and other members of the Order of the Golden Age who left to form the Order of the Cross, on the one side and Beard and the rest of Order of

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<sup>26</sup> Obituary, *Vegetarian News*, December 1938, 56.

the Golden Age on the other. The Executive Council of the Order of the Cross included three members of the Order of the Golden Age who had previously held the same positions in the prior organisation. Ferrier was clearly a charismatic character but he was also someone that many of his acquaintances found challenging, which may have led to a division between the two groups.<sup>27</sup> Neither organisation mentions any co-operation, or even acknowledgement of the other, in their respective journals after 1906.

### **Development of the Order of the Golden Age**

The offices of the Order of the Golden Age were at Exeter, in Devon, before moving to Paignton in 1900. The receipt of a legacy combined with difficult economic times devaluing property prices allowed the Order to lease prestigious London offices at 153 and 155 Brompton Road in 1909. Within a year of the move, Sydney Beard reported a “tenfold multiplication” in the organisation’s influence:

Our propaganda has grown to such an extent that we have the greatest difficulty in keeping pace with the incessant demands that are forthcoming in connection to it; and are often regretfully obliged to forego the utilisation of many opportunities through lack of administrative and clerical workers.”<sup>28</sup>

Unlike the two national vegetarian societies in London and Manchester which became reliant on salaried staff, the Order of the Golden Age relied on local

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<sup>27</sup> For more information on the character of John Todd Ferrier can be found in the next section.

<sup>28</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, January 1910, 5.

members to volunteer time to the Order. The Order also published its journal and other pamphlets at cost-price or less (by reducing the cost of the literature through subsidy) and this, combined with the loss of members in the trenches, the lack of donations and losses in investments due to the war, led to the discontinuation of the *Herald of the Golden Age* after World War I.

During 1909, the Order of the Golden Age issued a total of 87,340 bound books and booklets and 132,000 pamphlets. From April 1910 the Lecture Room at the Brompton Road offices hosted fortnightly talks regularly attended by journalists. A Fruitarian Restaurant was opened at Harrods in the winter of 1909. By 1914, Beard felt that the mood of the nation was changing and that the Order had increasing influence on opinion formers:

When the Order of the Golden Age was founded in 1895 vegetarianism was ridiculed in almost every newspaper in this country, and regarded as a mild form of insanity in almost every home. Now almost every public journal is sympathetic, and many are co-operating with us.<sup>29</sup>

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s entry on 'Vegetarianism' in 1929 noted:

In former years the 'Vegetarian Society' was the most active in producing literature, but since about 1901 the Order of the Golden Age has come to the front with new and up-to-date books, booklets and leaflets, and the Ideal Publishing Union has reprinted much of the earlier literature. The chief periodicals are the *Vegetarian* (weekly), the *Herald of the Golden Age* (monthly), the *Vegetarian Messenger* (monthly), the *Vegetarian* (American monthly), the *Children's Garden* (monthly).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, October 1914.

<sup>30</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*: 'Vegetarianism'. 14<sup>th</sup> edition (Sept 1929), William Benton, (Illinois: 1959), Vol. 23, 27-28. This entry was written by Josiah Oldfield, a lawyer and friend of Gandhi, who took over the editing of the *Herald of the Golden Age* in 1900 when Beard was suffering from exhaustion caused by his commitment to the Order.



Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Order produced a large number of pamphlets and tracts largely distributed by the Vegetarian Society. Nevertheless, the inter-war period saw more growth for the Order in Natal, South Africa, than in Britain. The Order of the Golden Age's President between 1927 – 1959 was Professor A. H. Allsopp. Allsopp was the principal of a teachers' training college in Natal and in 1939, the year following Beard's death, the Order of the Golden Age moved its International Headquarters to Natal. The Order seems to have enjoyed reasonable success in Natal initially. *The Animals' Champion and Medical Freedom Advocate*, the journal of the World League against Vivisection and for the Protection of Animals which became the World League for Protection of Animals, recorded the Order's annual report

The activities recorded include vegetarian propaganda at the Royal Show, Pietermaritzburg, and during Centenary Week, lectures to natives, letters to the press and clergy re World Day, and a Christmas appeal concerning humane diet, to which more than 100 persons responded. The President took part in the debate on Diphtheria Immunization at the City Parliamentary Debating Society.<sup>31</sup>

By the late 1950s the Order, an organisation once capable of filling the Albert Hall with 6,000 people for a fundraising concert, had all but disappeared.<sup>32</sup> A movement whose leader is the driving force often founders with that leader's demise and by the time of Beard's death, in 1938, the Order was receiving little coverage in vegetarian journals and yearbooks. A period of post war deprivation made people loath to give up animal foods. At such times, the vegetarian cause struggles as people seek scarce – and therefore perceived as “luxury” – foods,

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<sup>31</sup> *The Animals' Champion*, September to November 1939, <http://ordergoldenage.co.uk/assets/documents/OGAAnimalchampion.pdf>, accessed 5 August 2013.

<sup>32</sup> The Royal Albert Hall is England's largest purpose built concert hall with a maximum capacity, depending on the performance, of 5,500. Its original capacity was 7,000.

such as meat and animal products. It could also be said that many people would still consider animal products as essential for good health in this period. However, the rationing of the war years had demonstrated that it was possible to be very healthy (the nation was at its healthiest during the war years) on small quantities of meat and other animal products. Yet there was still an increasing demand for these foods in the post war years which led to a requirement to produce more animal products through intensive farming.

### **Beliefs and practices**

The Order of the Golden Age, unlike Ferrier's Order of the Cross which it inspired, was never an alternative denomination or faith community. It existed to promote humanitarian values to the Christian churches of all denominations. Its members were the faithful of all churches and some were themselves clergymen. However, the Order did not have its own ministers, ordain priests, or have rituals of initiation. Its structure better resembled the Victorian humanitarian campaigning groups, rather than a religious institution in its own right - it existed solely to target the Christian community with a vegetarian and humanitarian message. The *Herald of the Golden Age* and other publications were one of the main routes to these communities:

Only a very limited number of vegetarians purchase the various Food Reform journals which are published, and consequently they are left from one year's end

to another without influence being brought to bear upon them, as an incentive to zealous effort.<sup>33</sup>

Beard clearly saw some comparisons between the Salvation Army and his own institution. The language of the *Herald of the Golden Age* sometimes contained the military rhetoric that is better associated with the Salvation Army. Many Christian vegetarian groups espouse pacifism as wholeheartedly as vegetarianism but this was, perhaps surprisingly, not the case with Beard's Order. Yet Beard, as editor, of the *Herald*, was keen to encourage his readers to bring an end to "the reign of militarism" and encouraged them to support international peace efforts. However, he also used expressions such as "the triumph of our holy cause" to encourage the Order's membership to become more active in its aims. At one point he makes the comparisons between the Order and the Salvation Army clear:

If only our members would display a tenth part of the devotion and zeal in circulating literature which members of the Salvation Army manifest in circulating and selling their journal, *The War Cry*, we would soon arouse society from its apathy ...<sup>34</sup>

Beard was concerned that poor nutrition was behind so many young men being declared unfit for military service:

The danger which threatens our country at the present time through the increased strenuousness of the struggle for existence, international rivalry, and increase of military armaments abroad, make it almost a patriotic duty for every Briton to advocate and support such reforms as tend to combat physical deterioration and to increase the fitness of our race. Only by our health, stamina, industry, discipline

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<sup>33</sup> *The Herald of the Golden Age*, January 1897.

<sup>34</sup> *The Herald of the Golden Age*, February 1899.

and enlightenment can we expect to uphold our Empire and to maintain its great traditions, responsibilities and opportunities.<sup>35</sup>

The outbreak of war was deeply regretted by the Order of the Golden Age but was also regarded as a necessary evil “in this struggle against organised exploitation and brute tyranny.”<sup>36</sup> Matthew 26:52 was interpreted as permitting Britons to kill German “hordes of marauders” that had “wantonly drawn the sword”.<sup>37</sup> On the whole, the editorial notes of the *Herald of the Golden Age* enjoined volunteers to seek service in various Medical Corps. One of the Order’s well-known members, the fruitarian Dr Josiah Oldfield, reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve East Anglian Field Ambulance Unit. However, a letter from a volunteer soldier which appeared in the *Herald of the Golden Age* in October 1914 was determined in tone:

One day, no doubt, brotherly love will triumph over physical force; but unfortunately, it is not yet. I shall go into this war with no hatred in my heart, but the feeling that I am taking part in a great and noble crusade against the forces of brutality and military domination.<sup>38</sup>

The Order anticipated that the widespread destruction and loss of life would create a generation of people who would truly value peace:

Men would realise more than ever that Might is not Right, that the weak ones of the earth have equal rights with the strong, and that all needless shedding of blood belongs to the dark night that is passing rather than to the coming Day which will usher in a new era of fraternity, kindness and Goodwill.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “England’s Need”, *Herald of the Golden Age*, January 1910.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

War did however, lead to a lack of interest in social reform, which the Order noted:

The attention of the public is so focused upon the War, and the complications arising therefrom that all questions of social reform are perforce standing somewhat in abeyance.<sup>40</sup>

A similar situation was also noted by the Order's secular counterpart, the Humanitarian League. War did bring about some changes which the Order would have welcomed: the highly influential Ministry of Food recommended the observance of "No Meat Days", leading to more meat free options on restaurant menus and in popular magazines. The Order also saw a marked increase in the demand for its recipe books during 1915:

The Food Reform Movement is now making rapid strides owing to the exigencies of the situation created by the war. Substitutes for flesh-food have to be found – whether people like it or not.<sup>41</sup>

However, at the same time the Order also experienced a 40 per cent increase in its publishing costs owing to the national war effort. As a result the majority of orders received at Brompton Road were met with "sold-out" slips.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., July 1916.

The first edition of Beard's *Herald of the Golden Age* opens with an article entitled "Is it only a Dream?" which attempts to outline the will of God for Man according to the Order's beliefs:

To live in perfect harmony with God's Physical and Spiritual Laws, is the only sure method of attaining the highest and the best that is possible to us, and nearly all the suffering and wretchedness that we see in this world, is directly or indirectly *the result of their violation*.<sup>42</sup>

The author, quite possibly Beard, believed that by living to satisfy his own selfish desires rather than the will of his creator, man lost the friendship and communion with God which will alone satisfy his "immortal nature". By eating the "dead bodies of slaughtered beasts", man had brought upon himself "a number of diseases and afflictions to both body and soul". In this way man had violated both a physical and moral law and was responsible for his own miserable condition. Similar rhetoric and concepts can be found alive and well today within Hallelujah Acres, a little known Christian vegetarian sect in America.<sup>43</sup> They believe that illness is caused entirely by man's unwillingness to follow the laws of nature provided by the creator.<sup>44</sup>

So far as one can tell from its journals, Beard's Order of the Golden Age – for although it was not a one-man organisation it was predominantly his creation –

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 25 January, 1896, 1.

<sup>43</sup> See Part IV of this work for more information on Hallelujah Acres.

<sup>44</sup> This differs from the Christian Science and New Thought philosophy relating to sickness which teaches that the material world is an illusion as is sickness which is caused by mistaken beliefs. Malkmus accepts the reality of sickness but believes that it is a result of not following God's laws in relation to diet and lifestyle. For Christian Science and New Thought the 'cure' is 'right thinking' for Malkmus it could be said to be 'right living'.

demonstrates a slight theology with little depth and a few biblical or religious references. There is little to distinguish it from the secular vegetarian organisations of the period (although they also included Christian vegetarian articles from time to time). There is much moralising to be found in the journals about food reform, its value and the horrors and deficiencies of the slaughter-house and flesh food.

In common with its successor *The Order of the Cross*, *The Order of the Golden Age* lamented that food reform was promoted on the grounds of economy, or as a way to avoid disease, rather than as a duty. John Issac Pengelly of Exeter cried,

‘What is my DUTY in this matter?’ Should we not seek to be directed by sentiments which will lift us out of the deep mire of Custom and Expediency, and direct us towards a realisation of the blessing to follow the holy aspiration. ‘Whether we eat or drink, let us do all to the Glory of God’.<sup>45</sup>

Some writers in the *Herald of the Golden Age* argued that flesh eating was a violation of apostolic teaching. In a specific reference to the Jewish dietary practice of draining blood from an animal before it is consumed The Reverend J. H. Napper Nevill, Vicar of Stoke Gabriel in Devon, argued that

The eating of blood was never permitted the children of God from the beginning of the world. After Christ’s coming no-one ever attempted to repeal this decree, until the Bishop of Rome did so about the middle of the eighth century. From that time those churches which acknowledge his authority held the eating of blood to be an indifferent thing. But in all those churches which never did acknowledge the Bishop of Rome’s authority it never was allowed to eat blood; nor is it allowed to this day. This is the plain fact, let men reason as plausibly as they please on one side or the other.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., “Land Ahead”, 7.

Along similar lines writers in the *Herald* frequently claimed Christ was himself a vegetarian. The Reverend Gideon Jasper Richard Ouseley (1834 -1906) – the future author of the *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* – claimed a long Christian tradition of vegetarianism stretching from the Early Church fathers. Later, he argued, the Church forbade meat “for more than half the year through her fast days and days of abstinence”.<sup>46</sup> However, appeals to “reason” rather than to scripture are the norm, although there is the usual re-interpretation of scripture common among Christian vegetarian sects, in favour of a vegetarian diet. Many gospel stories have been misunderstood it is claimed, including Peter’s dream about clean and unclean foods. The biblical teachings do not cover every eventuality in a person’s life: the gospels do not forbid the consumption of meat, but nor do they forbid slavery, or war, which are generally accepted by Christians as evils. The teachings of Paul on dietary matters must be interpreted in the light of his desire for gentile conversion. Paul, according to this line of thinking, clearly did not appreciate the importance of the dietary laws. Ferrier and the Order of the Cross later took up this anti-Pauline theme, casting doubt on an apostle who had never met “the Master” and did not know, in Ferrier’s opinion, the Master’s true teachings.

The *Herald* also makes frequent appeals to the intellect. Readers are asked if they could imagine the embodiment of all that is love and compassion to all creation raising an axe to a lamb? And if not, is it any better to imagine that God

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<sup>46</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, 15 June 1896, “The Voice of Scripture in favour of a bloodless diet”, 86.



would allow this butchery to take place on His behalf? There is no evidence, we are assured, that Christ ate meat. Therefore, we must assume he did not; as it makes no sense to suggest that he did so. Flesh eaters were seen as using – or perhaps more accurately abusing – scripture for their own ends to avoid the inconvenient need to change their lifestyle: “With the hammer of bigotry and the nail of selfishness, he fastens a text of scripture to the blood splattered walls of the slaughter-house and goes on his way rejoicing.”<sup>47</sup>

The Order appears not to have been an abolitionist society; it was able to accommodate a wider selection of views and practices than might be expected, given its narrow agenda. In June 1896, the *Herald* gave details of a humane cattle killer and a home for lost and starving cats which were humanely put to sleep in the “lethal chamber” at Battersea. Members were encouraged to support both of these ventures, the former by encouraging butchers in the locality to use them. A similarly ambivalent position is taken on alcohol. The Order issued pamphlets and published articles on how vegetarianism can reduce the craving for alcohol and so reduce drunkenness (a commonly held belief in Victorian England, especially amongst food reformers). One assumes that Beard and the Order of the Golden Age membership would have been abstainers but, at the opening of a vegetarian restaurant at the Criterion, in London, in 1911, it was noted in press reports and advertising that wine was available. Wine was served to guests at the official opening lunch at which Beard addressed the assembled diners on the benefits of

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<sup>47</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, October 1906, “The Bible and Flesh-Eating”, 66.

food reform. Many who attended were not food reformers; so alcohol may have induced them to try the reformed diet for the first time. However, one could not imagine the Bible Christians tolerating a situation where a food reform lunch was accompanied by anything but “plain water”. As discussed earlier, war was another issue that was problematic for the Order: they were idealistically opposed but decided it was a necessary evil.

### **The Order’s influence on the growth of vegetarianism**

Several Christian vegetarian sects have Gnostic influences and, as a result, show little interest in promulgating their beliefs in the wider community. The Order of the Golden Age is not one of these groups. It was founded to reach out to the wider Christian community. Although it sought to bring new members into its fold, that was primarily as a source of income and labour for the “cause” rather than because it wished to segregate Christian vegetarians from the wider community. What campaigning and educational organisations now call “outreach” was key to the Order’s work. From the outset the Order’s members were intended to be “workers” in the cause of Christian vegetarianism: the first issue of the *Herald* called for men and women to become “Pioneers of The Order of the Golden Age”.<sup>48</sup> In January 1896, in an “Address to our members” Beard made clear that the Order’s primary duty is to aid its members in their “efforts to make the world

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<sup>48</sup> *Herald of the Golden Age*, 15 January 1896, 11-12.

happier and better in every way which circumstances may suggest as desirable.” He also suggested that the *Herald* be the principal weapon of the Order – 10,000 copies of the first issue were published, and Beard stated he could not “too strongly urge upon you the necessity of pushing its circulation by every means in your power”. Profits from *the Herald* were devoted to the purposes of the Order, and the type was to be retained for seven days from the date of publication, so that a larger number of copies could be printed if required. Beard asked members to order the number of copies they would be willing to sell or distribute, with 50 copies or more attracting a “trade discount” and free postage.

Beard – who in the early days of the Order held the title of Provost - believed strongly that the Order’s work was divinely inspired. The Order was the leaven introduced into society, according to Beard, and would eventually produce “a golden harvest”.<sup>49</sup> He was anxious to stress in the early days of the Order’s existence that the Order was not a new Vegetarian Society to rival those already in existence:

Our programme is a more comprehensive one, which includes practical Christian Philanthropy, and the advocacy of Humanitarian Settlement, Peace and Universal Goodwill, ... As however the more general adoption of a bloodless diet throughout Christendom must take place before many of the Social, Moral and Physical evils which afflict Society can be removed, we hope by God’s blessing and help to unite in combined and consecrated effort as large a number as possible of sincere men and women who share our convictions, or who can be led to embrace the same – and then to encourage them in every possible way, to proclaim far and wide the truths on which the Food Reform movement is based.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 25 January 1896, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 15 February 1896, “To our friends and readers”, 23.

In an early editorial, he encouraged members to support local vegetarian, anti-vivisection and other philanthropic societies, or to start them where they did not exist. This strategy may have been intended to provide members with a sympathetic audience for information about his Order's mission, but it certainly appears disinterested enough.<sup>51</sup> Beard was also happy to give publicity to other organisations in sympathy with the aims of the Order of the Golden Age. Reports in each issue of the *Herald* detailed meetings of vegetarian societies and anti-vivisection societies all over Britain.

As has been well-documented in Tristram Stuart's *The Bloodless Revolution*,<sup>52</sup> the Order was concerned that missionary activities in the East were unsuccessful because missionaries did not abstain from animal flesh. Meat consumption was held to be a stumbling block to the conversion of Hindus and Muslims.<sup>53</sup>

By 1896 a course of six cookery lessons led by Mrs Frances Boulton was advertised in the *Herald*. These were presumably given at her home, although cookery courses were also given at the Headquarters of the Order after its removal to Brompton Road. Secular vegetarian societies gave similar lessons.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., March 1896, "To our members", 40.

<sup>52</sup> Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution, Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of India*, (London: Harper Press, 2006), 259-274.

<sup>53</sup> Reverend W. D. Etherington, "A Cause of the Failure of Christian Missions in the East", *Herald of the Golden Age*, March 1896, 51.

By May 1896 membership of the Order of the Golden Age had extended overseas and there were attempts to spread the Order's message in Calcutta, Australia and Canada as well as all parts of the UK.<sup>54</sup>

In October 1906, the *Herald* noted Major Helen Hudson's visits to a number of Salvation Army projects. Her example led many officers and women at the establishments she visited to become vegetarians. Beard is clearly in awe of the influence of the Salvation Army:

I anticipate that the time is not far distant when this organisation, with its six hundred journals, will be wholly won over to our humane principles, and every officer will be known as an apostle of the humane and hygienic life.<sup>55</sup>

The Order was critical of the RSPCA, though, for its unwillingness to support Mr H. F. Luttrell's "Spurious Sports" parliamentary bill. The Order gave rabbit coursing as an example and included a quotation from the Humanitarian League by Dr R. H. Jude which describes the horrific way in which the rabbits were treated.

The Great War brought food reform to the national agenda - reform was suddenly an urgent necessity. Beard saw this as opportune for the Order to pursue its cause. Members were encouraged to seize the moment and distribute literature, hold meetings, and write to the press about literature available from the Order. In the quarter leading to July 1915, the Order held 40 cookery demonstrations at Battersea, King's Cross, the Minories, City Road, Edgware Road and elsewhere.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 15 May 1896, 76 – 77.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., October 1906, 74.

The Order held a competition for mothers to design a meal for 1s 3d. However, by July 1915 Beard noted that the Order was experiencing hard times and many who had supported the organisation in the past were suffering financial hardships during wartime – including Beard – as a result of which the London office might need to close. An appeal for support was made. In the event the organisation remained in London until Beard's death when its headquarters removed to Natal in South Africa.

The Order of the Golden Age issued its final publications in the 1950s at the behest of one of its surviving members, Josiah Oldfield. John Gilheany compares the demise of the Order of the Golden Age with the demise of the secular Humanitarian League. He notes however, that whilst the issues of the latter were picked up by the League Against Cruel Sports, founded in 1924, "the demise of the Order of the Golden Age was to leave a vacuum in religious vegetarian campaigning which would remain until the rise of the modern animal rights' movement of the 1970s."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [www.orderofgoldenage.co.uk](http://www.orderofgoldenage.co.uk), article 7, accessed 12 July 2009.

### c. THE ORDER OF THE CROSS

Would you be one of the sons of God? Would you manifest in and through yourself the Divine pity, sympathy, and love? Would you attain to the Angelic condition, and minister even as heaven ministers to you? Then recognize your kinship to the races beneath you, and realize your responsibility towards them. Eat them not any more than you would your kith and kin.<sup>1</sup>

This statement is typical of the strong call to compassion for the “creatures”, evident in the work of the Reverend John Todd Ferrier, who founded the Order of the Cross in 1904. The Order today has a membership of around 400 worldwide; the largest group of around 30 or so people met until 2012 at its Headquarters at 10 De Vere Gardens, Kensington each Sunday for worship, and a smaller group on Wednesdays. At the height of its popularity in the 1930s the Order had around one thousand members and its summer schools attracted around 400 to 500 people.<sup>2</sup>

According to official Order of the Cross literature the Reverend Ferrier

... so strongly felt the urge to do something to help the afflicted creatures who are the victims of man's ill-treatment that he laid down his pastorate and devoted himself to a work that was more radical and far-reaching than any denominational pastorate could be.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Todd Ferrier, *On Behalf of the Creatures*, (London: The Order of the Cross, 1926), 124.

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed information on the Order of the Cross and vegetarianism see Samantha Jane Calvert “On Behalf of the Creatures”, paper submitted as part of MA Religion in Society (University of Gloucestershire) and “A Taste of Eden: Modern Christianity and Vegetarianism”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol 58, No.3, July 2007, 461-481. 10 De Vere Gardens was sold by the Order of the Cross in 2012. The Order is now based at 27 Old Gloucester Street, WC1N. The Order also has a US contact point in Illinois.

<sup>3</sup> Reverend J. Harold Kemmis and Mrs E Mary Kemmis, *The Order of the Cross*, London: The Order of the Cross, n.d. but context would imply c.1974).

Its journal, the *Herald of the Cross*, was published from 1905. In these early years the writings of Christian mystics and theosophists Edward Maitland and Anna Bonus Kingsford were featured prominently, but in later years the *Heralds* mostly contain Ferrier's work and the posthumous editions comprise only the edited work of Ferrier.<sup>4</sup>

Ferrier's later accounts make clear that in these early years the Order was unsuccessful. The *Herald* ceased publication in 1911, and Ferrier had to rely on the hospitality of other organisations to publicise his ideas.<sup>5</sup> In the late 1920s and early 1930s however, Order of the Cross groups were established in London at Russell Square, Woodford Green and Streatham Common. By 1934 the Order had developed sufficiently to move to its present headquarters in Kensington, and was in a position to publish once again the *Herald*. During these years the Order centred on Todd Ferrier himself; and his teaching, that remains its basis. Anna Kingsford was born in 1846, the daughter of a prosperous city merchant.

Kingsford had an isolated and sickly childhood as described by Maitland in his biography of Anna. She married her cousin, the Reverend Algernon Kingsford although by amicable agreement they lived largely separate lives. Kingsford, against opposition, trained in medicine in Paris and became one of the first female doctors. Along with Maitland, Kingsford was converted to vegetarianism by her brother John Bonus and her thesis on the physiology of vegetarian diet was published in 1881 as *The Perfect Way in Diet*. With Edward Maitland she explored spiritualism, mysticism and the occult. They were involved in the Theosophical

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<sup>4</sup> see *The Herald of the Cross*, Vol. XXVII, 1953.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1934, 5-8.



Society but broke away in 1884 to found the Hermetic Society, dedicated to promoting the Gnostic, cabalistic and Pythagorean traditions. Maitland was older than Kingsford – he was fifty and Kingsford twenty-seven when they met in 1874. After leaving Cambridge, he abandoned his plan to take orders and set out to acquire ‘true knowledge’; this led him to the influence of Emerson, Carlyle, and later Swedenborg, Boehme and Plotinus.

“The Spiritual Aims and Ideals of the Order of the Cross” are laid out at the beginning of all issues of *The Herald of the Cross*, and at the front or back of each published volume of the Reverend Ferrier’s work:

The Order is an informal Brotherhood and Fellowship, having for its service in life the cultivation of the Spirit of Love towards all Souls: Helping the weak and defending the defenceless and oppressed; Abstaining from hurting the creatures, eschewing bloodshed and flesh eating, and living upon the pure foods so abundantly provided by nature; Walking in the Mystic Way of Life, whose Path leads to the realization of the Christhood; And sending forth the Mystic Teachings unto all who may be able to receive them – those sacred interpretations of the Soul, the Christhood, and the Divine Love and Wisdom, for which the Order of the Cross stands.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the Order of the Cross believe that Jesus has been reincarnated 40 times since his death in 49CE. The Order has a cyclic view of time – again in common with other vegetarian religions. Members believe that the Golden Age will return and the Lions will eat straw and wolves will lie down with lambs in a cyclical reprise of Genesis 1:29. However, perhaps the most distinctive aspect of

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<sup>6</sup> Various volumes published by The Order of the Cross, London from the 1960s to the present including *What is a Christian?*, *Life’s Mysteries Unveiled*, *The Logia or Sayings of the Master*, *The Master: His Life and Teachings*.

the Order is its commitment to vegetarianism. Ferrier was a prolific writer, penning some 40 volumes and a number of smaller pamphlets. Key works include *The Master: His Life and Teachings* and *The Logia or Sayings of The Master*. Through these works, the Order espouses that one can learn the inner meaning, “the spiritual truth”, of the teachings of Jesus, whom Ferrier called “The Master” and who is depicted by Ferrier as a strict vegetarian. Ferrier felt that the Church has been misled and has failed to follow the true teachings of The Master because it has relied on the testimony of evangelists and early church figures, such as Paul, who the Order believes was ignorant of The Master’s true teachings.

Although Ferrier was influenced by the work of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, his writings are essentially re-interpretations of the Christian tradition. For Ferrier, The Master was not the Son of God in the orthodox Christian sense, but a special being who achieved the Christ-consciousness towards which all men should aspire. Christ’s existence is believed to be entirely physical.

However, little is known about Ferrier’s life. No autobiography or biography has been attempted. What can be established with confidence is that, according to the 1861 census, Ferrier was born in 1855 in Greenock and by 1861 was living with his grandparents and a sister, Ann Jean, aged two. The 1871 census shows him working as apprentice blacksmith to his grandfather. By age 25 Ferrier lived in Barrow in Cumbria with William Maggies, an agricultural labourer and his wife Eliza, and is described as their “lodger” although the house had two other “boarders”. Ferrier is described as an “independent minister”. In 1891 Ferrier was

described as a Congregational minister, living in Preston in Lancashire with his sister, Ann, and brother-in-law John McDonald, a draper born in Scotland. By 1901 Ferrier, again listed as a Congregational minister, lived in Macclesfield.

Ferrier married twice, the first marriage in Shardlow in Derbyshire in 1883, and the second, to Amy Wright, following the death of his first wife in 1896, in Hampstead in 1901. The Wrights were said to be wealthy people in the church”.<sup>7</sup> He was educated at Nottingham, probably at the Congregational training college, and his pastorates are given in the 1906 *Congregational Year Book* as Wigton 1882-3, Grimshaw Street, Preston 1884-91 and Park Green, Macclesfield 1891-1903. A letter “P” next to his name indicates that he was at that time “professionally engaged but not as a pastor”, and it states that he was living in Paignton, South Devon in 1906. At this point he was working for the Paignton-based Order of the Golden Age.

Ferrier left his congregation in Macclesfield to join the Order of the Golden Age – a group very similar to the Order of the Cross. The first *Herald of the Cross* and other sources suggest the former was the latter’s predecessor, but as discussed earlier, this is inaccurate. The Order of the Golden Age was to distance itself from the Order of the Cross.<sup>8</sup> Ferrier was clearly a challenging minister for his Macclesfield congregation on 3 May, 1903 Ferrier notes his Farewell Sermons as

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis Whomsley, ‘Seventy-eight years at Park Green Church: Memories of Mr Will Allen’ in *Four Hundred Years of Nonconformity in Macclesfield: The Congregationalists*, Macclesfield URC, 1996, 59.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to John M. Gilheany author of *Familiar Strangers, The Church and the Vegetarian Movement in Britain (1809 – 2009)*, (Cardiff, Ascendant Press, 2010) for information regarding the relationship between the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Cross.

Morning The Highway to God Luke XIII 24

Evening A Divine Call Acts XVI 9 – 10

Here would I record my appreciation of all the kindness I have received from this people [sic] during my stay of twelve years amongst them, especially for the liberty to declare from the pulpit such truths as were given to me in illumination.<sup>9</sup>

This last sentence suggests that Ferrier had shared with his congregation in Macclesfield his 'illuminations' or 'recoveries'. This is also confirmed by a passage in a pamphlet produced by Park Green Church in 1977 to celebrate the centenary of their church, which notes

He preached a series of eighteen sermons on the Apostles Creed, which was a courageous thing to do in 1893, since Congregationalists, at that time, had 'an abhorrence of creeds'. He was also something of an eccentric: during the latter part of his Ministry he began to use his undoubted oratorical gifts to proclaim a highly mystical interpretation of the Christian faith; In 1903 he left to found the 'Order of the Cross', which apart from its emphasis on Christian mysticism, also embraced vegetarianism! There is no record that any of his members followed him into this meatless movement.<sup>10</sup>

A former member of his congregation recalls that "All the members talked about him as 'an autocratic mystic', in the clouds to some extent".<sup>11</sup> Ferrier's arrival at the Order of the Golden Age in 1903 is noted in its journal the *Herald of the Golden Age*.<sup>12</sup> The same edition also reproduces a copy of the article in the 'local press' of the farewell meeting for Ferrier. No indication is given that this is an edited article but the omissions by the editor of the *Herald of the Golden Age* suggest something of Ferrier's character and his reception from his congregation.

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<sup>9</sup> Park Green Congregational Church, Church Minute Book, May 1903.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Harrop, *Macclesfield United Reformed Church Centenary Handbook, Historical notes and reflections to celebrate the building of the Park Green Church 1877 – 1977*, Macclesfield URC, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> Dennis Whomsley, 'Seventy-eight years at Park Green Church: Memories of Mr Will Allen'.

<sup>12</sup> 'The Heavenly Vision, An open Letter to Christian Ministers, by one of them', *Herald of the Golden Age*, Vol. 7, No. 8, August 1902.

One of the ministers unable to attend sends apologies and blessings for Ferrier's work and writes:

He has had the courage of his convictions and did not hesitate to express them. And yet he has been kindly and considerate to others and did not intentionally crush them. May he live long and be increasingly useful in the cause of righteousness and truth."<sup>13</sup>

The phrase "and yet did not intentionally crush them" has been removed from the Order of the Golden Age's version of events. In a similar fashion many of the remarks of the chairman have also been omitted that indicate that, although well-respected and appreciated, Ferrier was a challenging minister to his congregation.

Ferrier was greatly influenced by Kingsford and Maitland from Christmas 1901.<sup>14</sup>

The library of the Order of the Cross holds a number of the works of Kingsford and Maitland, early editions of the *Herald of the Cross* give prominence to the writings of Kingsford and Maitland,<sup>15</sup> and it is to Kingsford and Maitland that Ferrier dedicates his *The Logia or Sayings of the Master*. Kingsford and Maitland had both stressed the importance of vegetarianism to enable them to receive messages and visions. Maitland believed that meat eating was the cause of our

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<sup>13</sup> *Macclesfield Courier and Herald*, 9 May, 1903, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Bates created a small schism in the Order of the Cross in 1974, when he created the "Followers of the Way" who follow the teachings of Ferrier and Bates. In one of Bates's books *Light on John, the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse*, he gives a brief, and often inaccurate, pen portrait of Ferrier in which he says that Ferrier read a book on Christmas Day 1901 which he had picked up at a bookstall in Macclesfield. He recognised in the story of Kingsford and Maitland "two of the most intimate disciples of the Master known as Jesus Christ in ages past."

<sup>15</sup> See *Herald of the Cross*, Vol. 1, (London: the Order of the Cross, 1905).

failing to reach our true natures: “since only when man is purely nourished can he attain clearness and fullness of spiritual perception.”<sup>16</sup>

*The Inner Meaning of the Food Reform Movement* makes clear that Ferrier sees the “innermost meaning” as spiritual.<sup>17</sup> He also reviled vivisection, as did Kingsford and Maitland and he published a pamphlet on vivisection in 1910 following a lecture that year given to members of the Theosophical Society.<sup>18</sup>

In 1903, in a series of articles for the *Herald of the Golden Age*, Ferrier first rehearsed in print the arguments which later formed the basis of his main text on vegetarianism, *On Human Carnivorism*, which was published as a book in 1903. It was revised in 1926 as *Concerning Human Carnivorism* and re-titled *On Behalf of the Creatures* in 1934, the title under which the Order publish it to this day.<sup>19</sup> However, Ferrier’s later works do not focus on vegetarianism to the same extent as his earlier material.

Links have always existed between the Order of the Cross and the more secular Vegetarian Society in the UK. The first publication of the *Herald of the Cross* was announced in *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*<sup>20</sup> and the *Fifty-eighth Annual Report of the Vegetarian Society* thanked the Order of the Cross and other

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<sup>16</sup> E. Maitland, *The Story of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland and the New Gospel of Interpretation*, (Birmingham: The Ruskin Press, 1905), 29

<sup>17</sup> John Todd Ferrier, *The Inner Meaning of the Food Reform Movement*, (London: Order of the Cross), n.d., 7.

<sup>18</sup> John Todd Ferrier, *Vivisection: An Enquiry into its Real Nature*, (Paignton: Order of the Cross, Paignton, 1910).

<sup>19</sup> The preface to *Concerning Human Carnivorism* is dated July 1903.

<sup>20</sup> *Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (7<sup>th</sup> Series), 57<sup>th</sup> year, Feb, 1905, 31.

kindred organisations.<sup>21</sup> Ferrier was often mentioned as a guest speaker at various gatherings of vegetarians and others with links to vegetarianism.<sup>22</sup>

The Order is essentially a Gnostic sect and is generally concerned with members' inner religious experience rather than conversion or evangelism. Members must be vegetarian, although not vegan (Ferrier was not a vegan), but need only support vegetarian organisations as they see fit, as long as their support is always peaceful: the Order is pacifist. Members of the Order do, however, seek to live without harm to animals, in the wider sense that many who are vegetarian for animal welfare or animal rights reasons might. Members object to vivisection and seek alternatives to products tested on or using slaughterhouse by-products. Over the years a number of members of the Order have also been members of the Vegetarian Society. At least one member of the Order, Brindley Flower, was a Trustee of the Vegetarian Society, another member of the Order, Dr Conrad Latto, was a prominent member of the Vegetarian Society and did much to promote the health benefits of the vegetarian diet. His brother Dr. Gordon Latto, also a member of the Order, was involved in similar work and was also president of the International Vegetarian Union from 1971 – 1990.

Many of the Order's current members are vegan - they see this as a natural extension of their compassion for the creatures. Ferrier died in 1943, before mass

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>22</sup> See The Ivy Leaf Society, *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, Vol. 2, No.1 (8<sup>th</sup> series) 57<sup>th</sup> year, January 1905, 28 and the same journal, Vol. 2, No. 4 (7<sup>th</sup> series), 57<sup>th</sup> year, April 1905, 110-111, "Lecture on Land Reform and Food Reform", and drawing room and Salvation Army meetings on various topics and Vol 1, No. 1, (7<sup>th</sup> series) 56<sup>th</sup> year, January 1904, inside cover, "Conference on Mind Culture" and "Body Building for the Young".

factory farming took hold in the UK, when eggs and dairy products were not such a controversial issue for vegetarians. Since the Vegan Society was founded in 1944 by a schismatic group of vegetarians unhappy with the Vegetarian Society's refusal to cease promoting dairy products, the issue of veganism was only raised in the closing years of Ferrier's life. A member of The Followers of the Way, Anthony Bates's schismatic group, told me most of their members see veganism as a natural progression from the teachings in the age of intensive farming of animals.<sup>23</sup>

The Order of the Cross has no objection to the keeping of domestic animals<sup>24</sup> – indeed the “higher animals” such as dogs and horses are considered very in tune with man (they are considered older souls) and very good companions.<sup>25</sup>

Vegetarianism, and a concern for the creatures, led Ferrier to leave his ministry in the Congregationalist Church and later to found the Order of the Cross, whose basic tenets continue to enshrine compassion for animals. Ferrier also addressed a major concern of Christian vegetarians – how could a compassionate Christ consume flesh – and found an explanation in the misinterpretation of scriptures. Although his rewriting of scripture would be considered heretical by many Christians, the integrity of his compassion for the “Creatures” cannot be doubted. Although Ferrier's main purpose is described by members as “to restore to earth

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<sup>23</sup> Personal correspondence with Sophia Howard of the Followers of the Way 15 September, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Some vegans and animal rights activists maintain that it is not appropriate or desirable to keep, in particular carnivorous, companion animals in a domestic setting.

<sup>25</sup> The Order has a cyclical view of time with souls having many incarnations. Whilst they believe that human souls are always reincarnated as human beings as not as non-human animals, non-human animals may be reincarnated as different species (but not as humans) with those closer to humans being ‘older souls’.



the Spiritual Teachings”,<sup>26</sup> he founded the Order to promote the welfare of animals, and his legacy lives on in the lives of its members to this day.

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<sup>26</sup> Gordon Latto quoted by Rynn Berry in *Food of the Gods, Vegetarianism and the World's Religions*, (New York: Pythagorean Publishers, 1998), 327.

#### **d. CATHOLIC CONCERN FOR ANIMALS**

Catholic Concern for Animals (CCA), formerly known as the Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare, began when a small group of Catholics considered forming a Catholic society for “kindness to animals” in light of “the need of a deepened attention to this matter among the Catholics of Great Britain”.

Today the membership consists of 1361 members around the world although the majority some 868 members are based in the UK and a further 61 in Ireland. The clergy are represented by 118 members. Australia and USA now have their own offices, so although the CCA still has members in those countries there are other members recruited in those countries. Membership is reported to be at its highest in the history of the organisation.<sup>27</sup> The CCA is not a vegetarian organisation but an organisation that has debated vegetarianism in the context of welfarism and Christianity.

The group first met with about 15 present, in West London in 1929, a mixture of lay people and clergy and the meeting considered the forming of a Catholic society for “kindness to animals”. At further meetings over the next three months a provisional committee was appointed with the Reverend W. N. Roche, Rector of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Marylebone as Chair. The other officers appointed at the meeting were lay female members. The objects of the proposed society were

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<sup>27</sup> Personal email correspondence from Frances Chalk, membership secretary of the CCA, 3 September 2013.

To bring our relations with the creatures of God into harmony with His will and purpose for them and us. To try to learn from the Holy Scriptures, the example of the Saints, the rules and customs of the Church how God would have us think of His creatures and treat them.<sup>28</sup>

The fledgling society sought “ecclesiastical sanction”, but Cardinal Bourne, to whom they appealed, felt that such a society was unnecessary and commended the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to those concerned with the welfare of animals. One of the group’s members, Prior Kuypers of Ealing, was actually co-opted and subsequently elected to the Executive Council of the RSPCA.<sup>29</sup> Catholic co-operation was welcomed by the RSPCA, but a special Catholic branch or department was considered but was not deemed feasible. However, the group pressed on without the desired sanction of the Catholic Church. Following Cardinal Bourne’s rejection, the Reverend Desmond Chute of Rapallo<sup>30</sup> suggested a study circle to “gain knowledge and experience”, and the resulting Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare aimed:

1. To see whether there be any *traditional* teaching concerning the nature of man’s relation to the animal world and to formulate that traditional teaching
2. To see whether there be any *authoritative* Catholic teaching on the subject.
3. To see what are the practical consequences of that teaching.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *The Ark*, No.1, February 1937, Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Dom Benedict Kuypers was Prior of Ealing from 1925-1935.

<sup>30</sup> Desmond Macready Chute (1895–1962), English artist and poet, who became a Catholic priest in 1927. He was born in Bristol, where his father James Macready Chute (1856-1912) ran the dynastic family theatre. He was educated at Downside School, and the Slade Art School in London. From 1918 became a close colleague of Eric Gill, the sculptor and lettercutter, and was co-founder of The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, an artists’ colony and experiment in communal living based on the medieval guilds and distributism, publishing poetry in *The Game*, the community’s magazine. Later Chute moved for his health to Rapallo, Italy, where he was a close friend of Max Beerbohm and Ezra Pound.

<sup>31</sup> *The Ark*, No.1, February 1937, Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare, 8.

Based on Cardinal Bourne's advice, the constitution notes that the Circle's aim:

...is knowledge, both of principles as above indicated and of actual facts, rather than action; inasmuch as there exist many humane societies for the amelioration of animal conditions, there is still need of one which will apply itself to basing such action on Christian principles.<sup>32</sup>

As such neither the group as a whole, or individual members, would take any "public action" in the Circle's name, although individual members could continue to work through non-denominational societies if they wished.

By the end of 1931 around one thousand priests, monks, nuns and teachers had been approached "and many offers of help and promises of prayers had been received". The members had distributed 8,000 copies of *Kindness to Animals for Children* and *Great Saints and Little Animals* by Mrs Armel O'Connor, as well as 1000 copies of Mr Armel O'Connor's lecture, and 2,500 leaflets, 2000 prayer-cards and 3,000 Christmas cards.<sup>33</sup> The total cost of this activity was £144 17s and 6d, the vast majority of which had already been subscribed.

At a meeting in Westminster in 1936, it was decided to draw up and circulate to lay members a questionnaire asking ways the members might be capable of "rendering assistance" to the Circle.<sup>34</sup> The results tabulated in the first newsletter

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Armel O'Connor wrote the preface to a book of religious poetry by Fr Henry E.G. Rope, *The City of the Grail and other verses*, (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1923). Mrs O'Connor was the author of much Catholic literature including *A Girl's Ideals* (Manchester: Magnificat Publishing Co, 1919) that were first published in *The Magnificat*, *The Idea of Mary's Meadow*, *Mary's Meadow Papers*, *The Door* and *Thoughts for Betty from the Holy Land*.

<sup>34</sup> *The Ark*, No.1, February 1937, Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare, 6.

show that the greatest response was to requests for prayer (52 members), followed by “acquainting themselves with and fostering devotion to, the Saints who showed mercy towards animals” (39 members). Other tasks involved preparing short papers to be discussed by the Circle, reading information about work being done on behalf of animals, promoting the Circle, and typewriting correspondence for the Circle.

The Circle’s “bulletin”, *The Ark*, was first published in February 1937, and several subsequent issues appeared each year until the outbreak of war. The first issue notes that the Chief Editor of the RSPCA, “a convert [presumably to Roman Catholicism] of some years standing”, had joined the Circle. Strong links with the secular animal welfare movement evidently continued. The rest of the first issue contained a paper on “Saints and Animals” by the Chairman, Ambrose Agius OSB,<sup>35</sup> which had been given at a meeting of the Circle in 1936.<sup>36</sup> Agius’ paper concludes with “six principles” which emerge from these legends of saints and animals which have a “religious and not merely sentimental foundation”.

In the January 1939 edition of *The Ark*, Agius, the editor, reflects on the Circle’s 1938 successes and calls for more participation in its work. He appeals, in what he refers to as the “current jargon”, for members to be “cells”: centres of energy in the diffusion of animal welfare and “especially in manifesting the opportunity for Catholics in this work”. He also asks that they bring new “contacts” into the

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<sup>35</sup> Order of St Benedict – a Benedictine monastic order.

<sup>36</sup> Dom Ambrose Agius was also Prior of Ealing from 1945-46. He was still a member of the Ealing community when the Priory obtained independence from Downside Abbey in December 1947.

movement and that “correspondents” write about animal welfare work in their vicinity.

The December quarterly meeting, chaired by Agius, took the “novel form of a competition on Animal Welfare questions between a team of men and one of women.” The recorded questions and answers reveal the Circle’s concerns and late 1930s attitudes toward various ethical issues, more than do detailed papers on philosophical issues about animal welfare that had regularly appeared in *The Ark*. One question notes that “In the education of children correction and punishment are sometimes necessary. Surely they are necessary also for animals?” The respondent, a Mr Scott-Mason, MA, says there is

no doubt that some animals must have punishment as it is the only form of correction they can understand. But it is very important that the punishment should be given in such a way that the animal understands what the punishment is being given for. The best way is to try to find out what the animal really likes and to refuse or curtail it for a time. It is not necessary to cause pain: disappointment is a better corrective. The chairman replies that schools ‘often find corporal punishment necessary but some people claim it is cruel to punish animals so’. <sup>37</sup>

A general discussion follows, after which it is decided that “animals should never be punished by a person when in a state of anger, that the best trainers never beat their animals, which animals respond best to a scolding.”<sup>38</sup> In a question about the cruelty of furs and whether a buyer bears any obligation to ask if animals have been obtained by “questionable means”, the prevailing view is that “trapping” is cruel. Doubts remain about whether anything can be known to have been

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<sup>37</sup> *The Ark*, No. 7, January 1939, Question 12, 131.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

procured humanely, despite the existence of “White Lists”. However, members were still able to conclude that “it is possible for animals to be killed humanely”.<sup>39</sup>

The questions make clear that the Circle was concerned with cruelty in a strictly animal welfare sense: the cruelty of docking horses tails; the danger to sea birds caused by oil production; the cruelty of pampering pets; how to care for animals on Guy Fawkes night; and whether or not money should be raised to promote the welfare of animals or given to the poor. These concerns were shared by the secular RSPCA of the day; in many respects the Study Circle’s rhetoric is reminiscent of the nineteenth-century RSPCA’s concerns for the moral welfare of humans. On cock fighting Mr. Scott-Mason says

Cock fighting as a regular show with betting is very different from cocks fighting among themselves. It should be stopped anyhow because of the degradation of the spectators.

Despite the references to hunting, fur and cock fighting the other animal welfare issue that was of concern to campaigners – vivisection – was not mentioned at the time. Perhaps vivisection was viewed among animal welfare campaigners as more controversial: the use of animals for the potential benefit to human health rather than a mere “adornment” such as fur or as a “pastime” such as hunting.

As the CCA was an animal welfare organisation, vegetarianism never raised its controversial head in the early pages of *The Ark*. Vegetarians were doubtless

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., question 18, 133.

among the CCA's membership, as in the early RSPCA, but they may have been made to feel guilty for taking "kindness to animals" to an unnecessary extreme. Early issues of *The Ark* devoted much space to "cruelty to animals", "dominion versus domination" (over animals), "kindness to animals", showing "compassion to animals" and – perhaps stereotypically for Catholicism of the period – whether cruelty to animals is a sin, and what category of sin certain acts of cruelty might be.

Issue No. 8 (March 1939) of *The Ark* also made passing references to the "controversial subjects" of blood sports and vivisection. In a review of Fr Aloysius Roche's book, *These Animals of Ours*, it was judged that Roche dealt

bravely with all the leading questions which divide mankind in the treatment of animals, vivisection, blood sports, and so forth. He does not pretend to settle them out of hand: for mostly they are too complicated and interwoven with alien threads that a simple and universal solution is out of the question. But he offers a sane, sober and intelligent view-point; and if only the fierce participants in argumentation upon these questions could be persuaded to debate Father Roche's principles before descending to detail, incalculable progress would have been made and much bad feeling obviated.<sup>40</sup>

In a discussion at the first quarterly meeting of the Circle vivisection and blood sports provoked "wide discussion and deep thought".<sup>41</sup> *The Ark* encouraged teaching of children on both sides of the question, and where there is doubt, said the Chairman, "the church will not condemn".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *The Ark*, No. 8, March 1939, 149.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



In issue 40 of *The Ark*, August 1950, R. M. A. Bocking considered the issue of “Vegetarianism, Consistency, Killing and exploitation”. His article explores how one might respond to an accusation of inconsistency when eating meat while espousing concern for animal welfare.<sup>43</sup> In terms very telling of his era – just six years after the Vegan Society was founded – Bocking noted that aspiring vegetarians and vegans may face practical obstacles. A desire to be *entirely* free of even indirect animal exploitation would find “difficulties and inconveniences multiplied to impossible proportions.”<sup>44</sup> Life without the use of fur, wool, glue, leather, bone and ivory would have been quite a challenge. Bocking’s paper acknowledges the animal welfare/animal rights divide by finding that “killing and cruelty are separate matters”. He claims animal welfare advocates “will divide when the absolutely humane method of slaughter has been universally made a practicable commercial proposition”.<sup>45</sup> After considering a range of vegetarian issues, Bocking concluded that

veganism is more ethically sound than lacto-vegetarianism ... meat-eating by carnivorous animals may be a symptom of a fallen world. Man, however, has been redeemed, and we therefore have at our disposal inexhaustible means of spiritual advancement to ultimate perfection. Vegetarianism (or better still, veganism) is one means to that end.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Mervyn Richard Bocking (1922-2011) was Chairman of the CCA from 1994-2002. He became a Catholic with the rest of his family at the age of five. He married May Florence Turquet – the CCA’s Honorary Secretary for 48 years – at the London Oratory in 1959. During World War II Bocking worked at the Admiralty, Whitehall and the royal Army Pay Corps. He later worked as a music teacher but returned to Government service in 1960. He taught piano and also gave organ and piano recitals and was a Fellow of the royal college of Organists. He obtained a B.Mus from London University in 1962. He was for many years the Chairman of the Cat Action Trust, the pioneer society for feral cats founded in 1977 promoting neutering as the humane way of dealing with the problem of the overpopulation of strays. See obituary in *The Ark*, Summer 2011, issue 218, 62.

<sup>44</sup> *The Ark*, No. 40, August 1950, 52.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Unlike earlier treatment, 1950s issues of *The Ark* contained a flurry of discussion about vegetarianism. In August 1956, Phyllis McCoy's article "A Better Way" takes up the theme of an editorial footnote in the April issue stating that "the Catholic Church teaches that animals are lawfully used for human food". Arguing that the sufferings of the slaughterhouse cannot be humanized, only abolished, McCoy called on the Study Circle to lead the faithful to a more humane diet.<sup>47</sup> However, the editor, Agius, followed this item by reaffirming that *The Ark* would give expression to every view, but still must point out Catholic teaching to guide ordinary individuals. The church teaches authoritatively that meat eating is lawful; otherwise Catholics would have to confess eating meat as a sin which would, in Agius's view, be "absurd". With a rather light-hearted tone he comments:

As to what is desirable, e.g., the abolition of the necessity of slaughter-houses and the provision of some small coloured tablets which would do instead of meat (as H.G. Wells envisaged), that is quite another matter.<sup>48</sup>

In its next issue *The Ark* published an article on veganism by a frequent contributor, Mrs E. Eyre-Smith, an anti-vivisection campaigner. Eyre-Smith accepted the editor's view of the lawfulness of meat eating despite a personal commitment to ovo-lacto vegetarianism - veganism is clearly the "better way" but is an "ideal difficult of attainment in the world as it is".<sup>49</sup> Eyre-Smith felt that restoring the Edenic vegan way of life is as much of a question of "personal

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., No. 58, August 1956, 67.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., No. 59, December 1956, 95.

sanctification” as of what we eat.<sup>50</sup> In the same issue Phyllis McCoy followed up on her previous article with a contribution entitled “Diet – Lawful or Humane?”<sup>51</sup> Amongst the other attacks, McCoy noted that whilst on the subject of unnecessary slaughter of animals for food, the editor was concerned with “the lawful rather than the desirable”<sup>52</sup>

in every other instance of animal exploitation, whether it be circuses or fur-trapping, zoos or vivisection, *The Ark* is clearly on the side of putting an end to these things, yet it would be difficult to prove that they were not all equally ‘lawful’.

She notes no necessity exists to wait for “small coloured tablets” as substitutes for meat when a vegetarian diet “fit for a king” is already available. The slaughterhouse was unnecessary, as proved by those who had for centuries lived adequately without meat, and also by the existence of the Vegetarian Society for over 100 years. McCoy also contributed an article to the next issue of *The Ark* on “Further thoughts in Vegetarianism” in which she responded to Eyre-Smith’s article on veganism.<sup>53</sup> With evident mounting frustration she concluded:

With Mrs. Eyre-Smith’s statement that the question of a more humane diet is one of gradual enlightenment all must agree, but what chance has such enlightenment to reach Christians in general when the whole subject is ignored by religious authorities and any attempt to break through the apathy and complacency is, in effect, stifled by friend and foe alike in an appeal to the teaching of the Church?<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 97-100.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 98

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., No. 60, April 1957, 14-15.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 15.

The next dispute also follows an article in *The Ark's* issue No. 63 - April 1958 - in which Mrs Eyre-Smith offered an apologetic for Pope Pius XII's talk to the slaughterhouse workers of Rome. According to the *Catholic Herald*<sup>55</sup>, the Pope had said that the killing of animals for food was not blameworthy but that the suffering of animals killed for food should be minimized, and that the moans of animals killed for just reason should not cause the slaughterhouse workers more than reasonable sadness. Eyre-Smith returned to the topic of veganism, saying that criticisms of the Pope's words generally came from humanitarians and vegetarians - not vegans - who appeared to have missed the point that their diet is equally responsible for the animal slaughter. The Pope - who she believes to be by habit a non-meat eater - had accepted the reality of the situation and, whilst calling for urgent reform in slaughterhouse methods, acknowledged the "distasteful work for the community" that "few of the critics would be prepared to carry out".<sup>56</sup> His was an "exhortation to mercy" while "consoling them in their ... unenviable task".

Eyre-Smith was again taken to task by Phyllis McCoy in *The Ark's* next issue in arguing that "slaughterhouses do not exist to provide meat but to meet the demand for flesh".<sup>57</sup> The way to abolish both cruelties, said McCoy, is to "advocate and popularise vegetarianism". She maintained that those who have excluded meat from their diet, while continuing to consume milk, are not hypocrites: most acknowledge that if vegetarianism was widespread the question of milk "would fall into its proper place". In an editorial footnote the Reverend

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<sup>55</sup> *Catholic Herald*, 22 November 1957.

<sup>56</sup> *The Ark*, No. 63, April 1958, 9.

<sup>57</sup> *The Ark*, No. 64, August 1958, 70

Agius commented: “We deprecate the author’s implied strictures on the Holy Father, which show a lack of realism in appreciating his functions and responsibilities.” In the same issue Paul Falvury, whose earlier article in *The Ark* precipitated the debate between Eyre-Smith and McCoy, discussed Alex Gunning’s response to the Pope’s talk to the Rome Slaughterhouse workers.<sup>58</sup> Falvury felt Gunning, in common with many animal welfare campaigners, went too far in using “pseudo-philanthropic notions that animals and humans are equal or upon a misinterpretation of one of the commandments”.<sup>59</sup> Falvury, himself evidently a vegetarian<sup>60</sup> noted that

... an appreciation of vegetarianism and fondness for the animal world should not lead us to take up an attitude of unmitigated hostility towards folk who – generally without much thought on the matter – eat meat, nor mislead us into supposing Christians must of necessity embrace the better life of the vegetarian; had this ‘counsel of perfection’ been essential to Christianity, that position would have inevitably been stressed from the early days of the church.<sup>61</sup>

A personal testimonial to the benefits both humanitarian and physical of the vegetarian diet appears in the Easter 1969 issue of *The Ark*.<sup>62</sup> August 1970 saw an article by the Reverend Fr Francis Hertzberg about Protoveg (at that time a new soya substitute for meat) accompanied by some Protoveg recipes.<sup>63</sup> More recent-coverage of vegetarianism included an article by the Circle’s chairman, environmentalist and theologian Dr Edward P. Ecklin, entitled “Meat Eating and

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<sup>58</sup> *The Animals’ Champion*, March-May 1958.

<sup>59</sup> *The Ark*, No. 64, August 1958, 74.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 63, April 1958, 27. Falvury’s poem “Vegetarian Feast” includes the lines “Non-fleshy foods were those decreed/whereon in Eden man might feed; they still remain to serve our need./Why then should sheep or cattle bleed?”

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 64, August 1958, 76.

<sup>62</sup> Moira Henry, “Being a Vegetarian”, *The Ark*, No. 96, Easter 1969, 37-40.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 100, August 1970.

Vegetarianism in the Ark” which encouraged food choices - whether vegetarian, vegan or the meat of humanely-reared animals - that least harms the animals and the environment.<sup>64</sup> In spring 2009 a report by Jan Fredericks, the Catholic Concern for Animals USA chairman, included a description of a Vegan Thanksgiving Feast by Sarah Schillaci in *The Record and Herald News*.<sup>65</sup> *The Ark*’s Winter 2009 edition included an edited talk given to the Ecumenical Animal Welfare Retreat 2009 by Don Gwillim, Co-founder and Chairman of the Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK), about the founding of the CVAUK and whether vegetarianism is a moral issue today.<sup>66</sup>

In 1987, the Study Circle published a volume of articles by the Reverend Basil Wrighton, MA, most of which was previously published in *The Ark*. *Reason, Religion and the Animals* contains twenty-three essays on various aspects of animal welfare and ethics including vivisection and sport. Chapter VI, “Man’s Food and Man’s Future”, is the substance of an address to the Birmingham Vegetarian Society in June 1960. In this paper Wrighton considers how one might approach vegetarianism from a Christian perspective. He feels more people are “coming to a spiritual maturity and realizing that the all the manifestations of cruelty are linked together, and that they will *all* have to go if there is ever to be a *real* civilization of mankind.”<sup>67</sup> He claims to be arguing from a position of “natural ethics” rather than religious dogma underpinned by the spirit of the Christian gospel: “- the spirit of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., No. 195, Winter 2003.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., No. 211, Spring 2005, 60-61.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., No. 212, Winter 2009, 17-21. More information on the CVAUK can be found in Chapter 4, section c.

<sup>67</sup> Reverend Basil Wrighton, *Reason, Religion and the Animals*, (CSCAW, 1987), 28.

charity, gentleness and treating others as one would wish to be treated oneself”.<sup>68</sup>

In language prescient of environmental activists at the turn of the twenty-first century, Wrighton notes

Vegetarianism, then ... is a very big step in the right direction. It is a step which will probably have to be taken eventually if humanity is to survive on this planet. It is a step which Christians might well be the first to take.<sup>69</sup>

In chapter X, “The Golden Age Must Return” (subtitled “A Catholic’s views on Vegetarianism”), Wrighton explores the ethical and religious roots of “our convictions”, i.e., there is “an essential and intimate connection between the carnivorous diet and the age of violence in which we live” and that as the violence becomes more “scientific and wholesale, the story of Man’s degradation may soon end in the extermination of the human race and of all other life on earth”.<sup>70</sup>

Wrighton consequently suggests that the only way of curing man’s addiction to violence would be the reform of his diet. On the other hand vegetarianism is rarely held up as the “diet of pacifists” in this period; Hitler’s alleged vegetarianism generally eliminated this argument from post-war discourse. Wrighton concludes that whilst the beasts of prey are “driven by sheer necessity”, humans are not so motivated: “When men’s eyes are opened to *this* fact ... The Golden Age will indeed have returned.”<sup>71</sup>

At the AGM of the Catholic Study Circle for Animals on 25 October 2003 the decision to change the name to Catholic Concern for Animals was carried almost

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 44.

unanimously. The current name was “such a mouthful and did not reflect the full range of interest and activity of the organisation (especially, as it was not just for ‘study’).”<sup>72</sup> Prior to the AGM there had been a postal ballot of members proposing the name change and requesting alternative suggestions. The result of this ballot was overwhelmingly in favour of the proposed change.

The Study Circle was never a vegetarian organisation. Its concerns were always firmly in the realm of animal welfare. It was often conservative both in the topics it tackled, in its response to them and in its determined support for the Catholic Church’s stance on any issue. This was perhaps inevitable in an organisation that from the outset sought the approval and the patronage of the clergy. Its president and the overwhelming majority of its patrons were members of the clergy. The issue of vegetarianism is not raised in the pages of *The Ark* until the 1950s, and even when discussed it seems a lively debate among only a small percentage of the membership. Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century vegetarianism did not feature prominently in the pages of *The Ark*. Whilst generally supportive of vegetarianism, a “note on vegetarianism” on the CCA’s website states:

Catholic Concern for Animals has no policy on vegetarianism – other than to recommend it. Some of our members are vegan, consuming and using no animal products at all, most will be vegetarian to some extent or other, while others believe that by buying organic, locally-sourced meat known to be reared to high welfare standards they are encouraging good practices in farming. All points of view are accepted by the committee, although we would all deplore the collaboration of factory-farming methods by buying meat produced intensively. However, we would never discourage people who have not yet become aware of the suffering of animals in so much of our farming from joining us and taking part in our activities.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Personal correspondence from Dr Deborah Jones, secretary of the CCA, email 21 May 2012.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.all-creatures.org/ca/who.html>, accessed 30 October 2009.



## CHAPTER 4: 1960 – 2009

Most vegetarians today, if asked, would probably say that the growth of vegetarianism, and the vegetarian movement in the UK, probably dates from the 1960s. They are unaware of the long tradition of vegetarianism that pre-dates this period, most likely because by the 1960s vegetarianism had become most commonly associated with youth culture and counter-culture and with alternative lifestyles. Christianity had become marginalised: although it was still an aspect of vegetarianism, the movement was now firmly connected with eastern religious traditions (already a significant factor in the 1890s). Many members of counter-cultures were vegetarian but not necessarily members of the Vegetarian Society or involved in “organised vegetarianism” such as local groups and societies. Creating or joining such groups was not part of the ethos of the counter-culture. Orthodox and established religions were similarly rejected in favour of Indian transcendentalism and a whole package of New Age beliefs, values and causes such as alternative medicine, organic gardening, co-operative working practices and communal lifestyles. This is amply demonstrated by the Beatles, huge cultural icons of the period, whose lifestyle embraced eastern religious traditions and vegetarianism. They took a well-publicised visit to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in February 1968 and, although the evidence is confused, they all spent time as vegetarians in the 1960s and 1970s. Paul McCartney has been a patron of the Vegetarian Society (UK) since 1995. However, vegetarianism, and the other ideas associated with it did not enter the mainstream: “the hippy image was again that of the outsider, and the counter-culture again is a graphic example of a group of

people criticising the status quo and imposing a form of self-exile upon themselves.”<sup>74</sup>

Vegetarians were often involved in a range of “reform” or “radical” movements.<sup>75</sup>

The modern vegetarian movement in the UK began with links to radical groups; this connection with society’s margins has been a recurrent theme throughout the movement’s history.

However, in recent years vegetarianism, and more particularly meat reduction, has become more commonplace and socially acceptable to a greater extent than ever before. The annual Gallup poll for the food manufacturer Realeat, for example, showed that levels of vegetarianism in the UK more than doubled from 2.1 per cent of the adult population in 1984, the first year of the survey, to 4.5 per cent of the population in 1995.<sup>76</sup> Further increases in vegetarianism appeared during key food crises such as the BSE/CJD crisis of the mid 1990s and the foot and mouth disease crisis of 2001.

Arguably the key change from the late 1980s is the advent of the Internet and its impact on every organisation, whether religious or secular.<sup>77</sup> The Internet and the World Wide Web has enabled suitably skilled and motivated individual vegetarians to make an unexpected and disproportional contribution to the growth of the

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<sup>74</sup> Spencer, *Vegetarianism*, 298.

<sup>75</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 115-119.

<sup>76</sup> Realeat Vegetarian Survey/Gallop poll. [www.gregorysams.com/realeat-survey.pdf](http://www.gregorysams.com/realeat-survey.pdf), accessed 15 March 2012.

<sup>77</sup> The material in this section is derived from Samantha Calvert, “The Internet”, *Cultural Encyclopedia of Vegetarianism*, Margaret Puskar-Pasewicz (ed.), (California: Greenwood, ABC-CLIO, 2010), 138-140.

vegetarian diet worldwide. They were quick to see its potential to provide an international platform and to offer their services to national vegetarian societies to create and maintain websites, and later, Internet discussion groups. As early as 1994, the Vegetarian Society of the UK had a web page created by Ben Leamy at the University of East London and hosted by Lindsay Marshall at Newcastle University. Leamy was also responsible for creating web pages for other vegetarian and animal rights organisations, among them Vegetarian International Voice for Animals (VIVA!) and Animal Aid. A Vegetarian Society member, John Davis, added a range of information sheets to the Vegetarian Society's pages in January 1995, which at first were viewed 500 times per month, and with the greater availability of web browsers, 45,000 times per month by the end of 1995 and 100,000 per month by the end of 1996. Davis also created the first European Vegetarian Union (EVU) web pages in April 1995 and, in November of the same year the International Vegetarian Union (IVU) web pages.<sup>78</sup> These placed vegetarian organisations clearly in the vanguard of what would later be referred to as an information superhighway revolution.

Another key benefit of the Internet's growth has been the reduction in minority groups' isolation. In a survey of 1249 vegetarians and vegans recruited via the vegan website [www.veganvillage.com](http://www.veganvillage.com) from 2000 to 2003, 82 per cent of respondents in 2003 agreed that the Internet made them feel less isolated. This was a substantial increase over 2000, when 54 per cent of respondents felt that

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<sup>78</sup> For more information on the early vegetarian movement on the Internet see John Davis's "A Bit of Veg Web History", International Vegetarian Union History News, [www.ivu.org/news/online/history/html](http://www.ivu.org/news/online/history/html).

the Internet had reduced their isolation as a vegetarian or vegan. As many as 94 per cent of respondents were using the Internet to search for vegan products and 67 per cent purchased vegan products online, suggesting that vegetarians and vegans were at that time more willing than most consumers to use the Internet to make purchases. This survey also demonstrated that 16 per cent of the respondents, almost all of whom were vegetarians or vegans, knew no other vegans.<sup>79</sup>

The development of the Internet in recent years has seen vegetarians, in common with other Internet users, promoting their cause either in films or campaigning websites such as PETA, on youtube.com, or on niche Internet TV stations such as [www.veggievision.tv](http://www.veggievision.tv). Specialist online shops continue to spring up; joining established online vegetarian retailers such as [www.vegetarianshoes.co.uk](http://www.vegetarianshoes.co.uk) and [www.veganstore.com](http://www.veganstore.com). Vegetarian campaigning organisations increasingly use blogs and social networking such as Twitter and Facebook as part of their integrated campaign strategies. The Vegetarian Society has integrated its membership database function with far greater facilities for members to interact with the Society online and reduce isolation. There have been recent moves to create specifically vegetarian social networks such as [www.vegpppl.com](http://www.vegpppl.com) and [www.volentia.com](http://www.volentia.com) which have the potential, if fully realised, to reduce the isolation of vegetarians yet further. To date, however, vegetarians have exploited the existing opportunities of the Internet more to promote their diet and lifestyle than to

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<sup>79</sup> The Vegan Research Panel [www.imaner.net/panel](http://www.imaner.net/panel), accessed 23 April 2009.

locate themselves in an exclusive network, resulting in vegetarian contributions to Facebook groups, Wikipedia, Twitter and [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com).

The Internet may have a greater impact on vegetarian organisations in the future. It has already removed the need for the traditional nineteenth-century organisation of societies – forming a group, allocating responsibilities, and raising membership subscriptions in order for the society to flourish – are things of the past. One person can competently organise a website, discussion group or Facebook page for a local organisation with minimal or no expense. Information on healthy eating for vegetarians and suitable shops and restaurants worldwide is freely available on websites (although there is no guarantee of quality control), making traditional societies obsolete.

Christian vegetarian groups, who constitute an even smaller minority than vegetarian or animal welfare groups, have also taken advantage of the Internet to gather a “virtual” group of people who share their values, among them [www.all-creatures.org](http://www.all-creatures.org).<sup>80</sup> This site, owned and maintained by the Hoffman family, hosts a number of small Christian vegetarian/animal welfare organisations, many of whom lack the resources to create and maintain a website themselves.<sup>81</sup> Another group, The Way in the Wilderness, itself created in the Internet Age, is predominantly a

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<sup>80</sup> For more information on the more popular vegetarian websites see John Davis’s “The Top One Hundred Veg Related Websites”, [www.ivu.org/members/weblis.html](http://www.ivu.org/members/weblis.html).

<sup>81</sup> [www.all-creatures.org](http://www.all-creatures.org) is the work of the Mary T. and Frank L. Hoffman Family Foundation. The Hoffmans, husband and wife, have a medical background (Mary as a Medical Technologist and Frank as a chemist) and own the F.L. Hoffman Corporation which specialises in the construction management of medical facilities. One of the aims of the foundation is its ‘Internet Archival Library’ ([www.all-creatures.org](http://www.all-creatures.org)) of educational materials to assist both teachers and students in the furtherance of cruelty-free living. Its aim of supporting like-minded organisations is fulfilled by hosting smaller Christian animal welfare and vegetarian groups’ websites such as the CCA’s at [www.all-creatures.org](http://www.all-creatures.org).

“virtual” link up of like-minded individuals. It recruits members and disseminates information about its London leaflet stalls via its Facebook page; only two or three members physically meet, and then only infrequently, to staff stalls in London.

Another recent development is the growth of veganism. The vegan diet has always been part of the vegetarian movement. Food scares in the twentieth century relating to eggs and dairy products and concerns that animal products are not particularly healthy foods have made some people consider eliminating them from their diets. However, in Britain vegans are generally concerned about animal welfare or animal rights rather than human health, although the latter might be a consideration. Most Christian vegetarian groups in the UK today do not make veganism a condition of membership, but will usually consider the ethics of ovo-lacto-vegetarianism versus veganism. The Way in the Wilderness is entirely vegan in its messages and publications, possibly heralding a move towards vegetarian groups interacting more practically with the ethics of animal welfare and diet.

#### a. THE ANGLICAN SOCIETY FOR THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS

We believe that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it (Psalm 24:1). We believe that God so loved the world (the cosmos), not just human beings, that he sent his son to redeem the whole of the created order and as St. Paul writes, through Jesus, God has reconciled all things to himself (Col 1:15 – 20).<sup>1</sup>

The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals (ASWA) was founded in 1970 following the report of the Church assembly entitled *Man in his living environment*, “to make Christians and others aware of the need to care for the whole of creation”.<sup>2</sup> The ASWA's agenda includes “Intensive farming, the food chain, experimentation, diseases associated with animals, the ill treatment of domestic pets and the killing of animals for pleasure”.<sup>3</sup> Citing Gen. 1:26, the ASWA's home page suggests that “dominion” is not domination and demands “loving care” and not “ruthless exploitation”.<sup>4</sup>

The ASWA believes humankind is particularly endowed with “unique powers of thought and feeling”. These heightened abilities allow moral reasoning and provide the human species with the opportunity to promote good or evil, placing a huge burden of responsibility on man.<sup>5</sup>

Several of the ASWA's founders were ministers of the Church of England, including the Reverend Ken Hewitt and John Austin Baker, former Bishop of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals, An Introduction*, ‘What do we believe?’, Kent: ASWA, n.d., 4.

<sup>2</sup> [www.aswa.org.uk/aboutanglican.html](http://www.aswa.org.uk/aboutanglican.html)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> [www.asaw.org.uk/aboutaswa2.html](http://www.asaw.org.uk/aboutaswa2.html)

Salisbury, who became the Society's president. Much Society literature is still written by clergy.

ASWA membership tends to be static, at around 700 members with 30 – 40 new members each year. At its height in 2003, membership was around 800, including free subscriptions to clergy. Such a small constituency means that the organisation struggles to fund its work. In Spring 2006 the Society's journal, the *Bulletin*, published an appeal to members to raise additional, much needed, funds by holding fundraising events at their churches, or by holding special animal services in their churches and donating the collection to the ASWA.<sup>6</sup> All but two of the 13 current committee members are vegetarian. ASWA's secretary, Samantha Chandler, assumes that many members are vegetarian, but as it is not a prerequisite of membership, she cannot be sure.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest ASWA publication was an "Introductory leaflet"<sup>8</sup> stating the Society's aims and objectives, summarized as "the promotion of prayer, study and action on behalf of the animals". Its objects concerned both the religious and the secular, and the leaflet sought to remind congregations of their "duty to be merciful to the

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<sup>6</sup> Animal Blessing Services are often held on the Sunday nearest to 4 October the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. Animal blessing services are held in many Christian denominations all over the world. The Ark discusses early animal blessing services "In an old copy of *The Ark*, from October 1939 in fact, there is mention of a blessing of pet dogs given by a Fr Bernard Whelan on 16 August at the church of St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage, London. The day chosen is the feast of St Roch, reputed to be fed by bread brought to him in prison by a dog. Apparently it was common to bless animals on St Hubert's Day in France and Belgium, and even throughout Mexico, according to an account in the December 1942 issue of *The Ark*. There animals of all sorts poured into the church to be blessed by the priest as being God's gifts to man. Then, in the issue of April 1947, is an account of an animal blessing service at the church of St Eusebio in Rome. This took place every year on 17 January, the feast of St Antonio Abbate." *The Ark* Number 208, Spring 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Personal email correspondence with Samantha Chandler, 29 May 2012.

<sup>8</sup> *The ASWA Introductory leaflet 1*, Kent: ASWA, n.d.



animals in their power” through prayer, sermons, discussions and animal blessing services. The ASWA set out to see inclusion of animals in the liturgy of the Church, in prayers of repentance and in prayers for those with responsibility for animals. The Society also sought to use lawful protest where applicable, and to make use of the media and the political process in the cause of animals, as well as to co-operate with secular organisations to make congregations aware of animal suffering. Whilst acknowledging the many animal welfare societies, the Society believed it important to promote a distinctive Christian perspective. The introductory booklet notes that members believe God holds all his creation as “good”. All creation is therefore valued by God in its own right and not only as it is useful to humankind. The ASWA also understand “dominion” to mean responsibility towards all of creation by humans who are made in God’s image. Just as Jesus was a “servant king”, so men should rule as a loving servant of all creation: “Our ultimate aim is to co-operate with God, in his plan to restore our true humanity through Jesus.”

ASWA’s bi-annual bulletins provide a list of patrons and officers of the Society as well as the Society’s aims, objectives and “fundamental beliefs”. In its early years the ASWA also published a “Creation Eucharist”<sup>9</sup> service and a “Litany for Creation”. The Eucharistic service’s Old Testament reading is on the creation of living creatures, either from Gen. 1:1-3; 24-31 or Gen. 2:4b)-9, 15-end. The Gospel is either Jn 1:1-10 (in the beginning) or Jn.1:11-16 (the Good Shepherd). The post-communion prayer is for the liberation of animals:

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<sup>9</sup> *A Creation Eucharist* [3] ASWA, Kent, n.d. Compiled by Reverend Hugh Broadbent.

Lord of all life, your creation groans in travail awaiting the sons of God; by your Spirit help us to free creation from its bondage, to heal its pain and obtain that liberty which is your gift to all creatures.

The Litany<sup>10</sup> is reminiscent of those of the Bible Christians, with litanies such as “Bless those who administer the law and uphold justice and truth, especially those who work to enforce our animal welfare legislation” and “Show Your pity on animals who are imprisoned by Man in cruel conditions and deprived of their basic needs.”<sup>11</sup>

Through “education and action” the ASWA works with other organisations, religious and secular with similar aims, to “advance the conservation and well being of animals”. As well as the *Bulletin* and a series of pamphlets about animal issues, the ASWA helps arrange major “services and events focussing on animal care” and “promotes awareness through exhibitions, meetings, talks and preaching”.<sup>12</sup> The majority of their activities would appear to be restricted to their annual animal welfare service and a Remembrance Sunday service for animals.

The ASWA makes the theological basis to its work clear. Its current introductory booklet cites the theological statement in the ASWA constitution – that while Christians acknowledge God as the prime mover of the all creation, God’s “ultimate purpose” is “an eternal order of goodness and love, where his glory will be fully revealed in the blessedness of his creatures as they rejoice in the perfect

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<sup>10</sup> *A Litany of Creation* [2], ASWA, Kent, n.d.

<sup>11</sup> *The ASWA Introductory leaflet* 1, published by ASWA, Kent, n.d.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

communion with him and with one another". Humankind is "endowed with unique powers of thought and feeling":

These not only enable us to be more aware of good and evil, but also give us unprecedented capacity to promote one or the other. As a result the fate and quality of life of other sentient beings, and indeed the very survival of life itself, turn on human behaviour.

Although its members are not required to be vegetarian, the Society's current introductory leaflet suggests Christians can help the ASWA's work not only through "prayer, study and action", but also via dietary choices: "We all eat – and we can all make sure that we buy food that has not been produced by exploitation and cruelty."<sup>13</sup> There is, however, no guidance as to what form this should take, i.e., choosing RSPCA Freedom Foods and free-range eggs, or organic meat and dairy products, or an entirely vegetarian or vegan diet. Presumably it is left to each reader to inform themselves about these issues and examine their own conscience as to what is acceptable.

One ASWA leaflet by the Reverend Hugh Broadbent, is entitled *Thinking About Vegetarianism*.<sup>14</sup> In the leaflet's introduction the former Bishop of Lambeth, Richard Llewellyn, says that while the ASWA has both vegetarian and carnivorous members and respects the rights of people to make a "conscientious choice", the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh Broadbent was ordained in 1979. In 2009 he became Rector of All Saints with Christ Church, Snodland. He became interested in animal welfare after meeting an ASWA member in his parish in Chatham when he was a curate. He joined ASWA and was later invited to join the central committee. Broadbent has written all the orders of service for annual services over a number of years as well as a number of discussion booklets. He was also responsible for the preparation of the *Animal Welfare Sunday Order of Service* publication and the *Animal Welfare Patterns of Worship*.

ASWA is greatly concerned about the animal welfare issues concerned with meat production and the “genetic engineering of new breeds of animals”. The five-page pamphlet focuses on theological reasons for vegetarianism as they relate to animal welfare, and is set out in the form of the case for and against eating meat. The former is discussed over one page under the headings “Human Dominion”, “Noah’s Covenant”, “Jesus’ Behaviour”, “St. Peter’s Vision”, “Creation in the Image of God” and “St. Paul’s Comment”. The response to these arguments is given over two pages under the same headings. The overall aim of this publication, according to the ASWA’s secretary, Samantha Chandler, is to provide a balanced approach to the issue of vegetarianism. Its format and the greater space given to the defence of the vegetarian diet, though, leads to a slight imbalance in the favour of vegetarianism.

The leaflet concludes with a discussion of the text Rom. 14:17 and 21: “For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit ... It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble.” This Broadbent sees as an exhortation to conform to the convictions of others, and not to insist on our own way, in so far as our own consciences allow us to do so:

So, for example, if someone is vegetarian on ethical grounds (e.g. animal welfare) but we are not, we should not only respect their position but also seriously consider whether we should refrain from eating meat in their company.

The biblical texts are used to demonstrate that “dominion” over animals means service to creation (Mk 10:42-45, Jn. 13:13-16) and that whilst “Jesus almost certainly ate meat” now might be the right time for a change in dietary behaviour (Mk 1:15) in the light of “cosmic redemption” (Rom. 8:19-21). Other pamphlets in the same series include *Hunting with Hounds* and *Shooting* by Louise Clark, *The Use of Animals in Laboratory Experiments* and *Worshipping with the Whole Creation* by Reverend H. Broadbent and *Live Exports* by Barry Miles.

The ASWA also produces packs for Animal Welfare Sunday, which it promotes as part of the Anglican Church Calendar each year.<sup>15</sup> This consists of three leaflets: a general introductory booklet, an order of service guide, which remain the same each year, and a different booklet each year on a chosen theme of animal welfare. These themed booklets are described as “sermon notes”, but are actually eight to twenty page leaflets outlining main issues with reference to relevant scripture citations about compassion for animals. There is also a practical call to action where the reader is given advice on how to make a contribution to change. A pamphlet on *Birds Born to Suffer* gives advice on compassionate shopping to avoid eggs from caged birds and indoor reared poultry meat. A fur leaflet even has a guide on how to distinguish fake fur from real fur (as the ASWA argue that much of it is not labelled and the public are often duped into thinking that real fur is, in fact, fake) using microscopes, pin tests and burn tests! The sermon notes and the leaflets on particular issues do not, though, provide both sides of the

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<sup>15</sup> ASWA has promoted the introduction of a Sunday devoted to Animal Welfare. Animal Welfare Sunday is always the nearest Sunday to St Francis Day (4th October). Parishes supporting Animal Welfare Sunday might hold an animal blessing service on this date or they may only hold an animal welfare themed service on this date.

argument in the same way as the pamphlet on vegetarianism attempts to do. This suggests vegetarianism is seen by the ASWA as a more contentious issue and that a strongly pro-vegetarian stance might alienate some of their members.

Animal Welfare Sunday was established in 2000 and all the materials were in published leaflet form and not available to download online. For the first two years some 400 packs were requested, and more recently any church has been able to download a pack, or the current year's new theme booklet, online. Online access has led to a reduction of requests for a postal pack to around 100. The Animal Welfare Sunday page is said to be one of the most visited pages online, but no statistics are available to confirm this.<sup>16</sup>

The ASWA has made a contemporary attempt to address the issue of a special animal liturgy in its pamphlet *Animal Welfare Patterns of Worship*.<sup>17</sup> This leaflet runs to 38 pages and covers the full liturgy from greetings through to the "Liturgy of the Word" to "Closing Prayers" and "Blessings". A number of hymns are recommended, including some additional verses which could be added to "emphasise the theme of animal welfare", such as this additional last verse by Broadbent to "O Lord, My God (How Great Thou Art)":

When Christ completes His reconciliation  
Of all in heaven and all on earth below,  
I'll join the worship of redeemed creation,  
My heart with love and joy shall overflow.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Personal email correspondence from Samantha Chandler, 29 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Reverend Hugh Broadbent, *Animal Welfare Patterns of Worship, Material for Animal Welfare Services*, ASWA, Hampshire, n.d.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

New hymns are also included, explicitly written on the theme of animal welfare and cosmic redemption to be sung to traditional tunes, such as this one by Linda J.

Bodicoat sung to the tune of “Highwood”, “O Perfect Love” or “Lord of the Years”:

To You, O God, we lit our supplications,  
Confessing all that we may try to hide.  
Take to Your arms our Grief for all creation.  
Suffering through war, injustice, greed and pride.

The liturgy refers to animal suffering in abattoirs and in intensive farms, but there is no specific reference to vegetarianism or eschewing or even reducing flesh foods in the diet. This is, perhaps, in line with the ASWA’s stated objective not to take an official line on vegetarianism.

The *Bulletin*, as well, has few references to vegetarianism. A survey of 31 issues from 1987 to 2008 reflects no specific references to vegetarianism in the early editions, although occasional references are made to vegetarianism from 2000. In spring 2000 (*Bulletin* 55) a member advocated a vegetarian diet for Lent 2000.<sup>19</sup> In spring 2001 a short extract from *The Golden Age Must Return* by Reverend Basil Wrighton (1900 – 1988) was included, claiming “an essential connection between the carnivorous diet and the age of violence in which we live”.<sup>20</sup> No explanation of the extract’s background is given, but this piece is quite out of place

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<sup>19</sup> Letter from Anthony Neesham of Lincolnshire to the editor, ASWA *Bulletin* 55, Spring 2000, 42.

<sup>20</sup> ASWA *Bulletin* 57, Spring 2001, 17.

with the usual conservative attitude towards vegetarianism expressed in ASWA journals.<sup>21</sup>

The autumn 2003 *Bulletin* had an article by the ASWA's President the Rt. Reverend John Austin Baker entitled "The Early Christians and vegetarianism". A reader had sent a cutting about the Brotherhood of the Essenes who teach compassion to animals and practice vegetarianism, leading Baker to reflect on early Christian groups that practiced vegetarianism or dietary moderation – the Essenes, the Qumran community, and the Ebionites.<sup>22</sup> He notes that as early as the third century the Ebionites believed the scriptures must have been tampered with to remove the vegetarian message of Jesus. Although there are still texts circulating that claim, Baker suggests, there is "no need to resort to this kind of fiction":

Jesus's message and practice of compassion for every kind of suffering is surely sufficient authority for us to extend that to all creatures, and to take whatever practical decisions we think are necessary to show that compassion in the circumstances of today.<sup>23</sup>

In the letters to the editor in same issue, Neville Fowler copied his "letter to a Christian Minister" to the *Bulletin's* readers. This is Fowler's answer to the question "May Christians be vegetarian?" He took the minister who had posed the

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<sup>21</sup> The Reverend Basil Wrighton was a Roman Catholic priest. See Catholic Concern for Animals, Part II, Chapter 3, Section d. of this work.

<sup>22</sup> The Brotherhood of the Essenes ([www.essenes.org](http://www.essenes.org)) is a Gnostic and millenarian sect based on the original Essene communities but founded in England some 90 years ago. Their principles include accepting the sanctity of the animal kingdom and "preventing cruelty to such creatures wherever possible". They hold an Annual Convocation and Divine Service at Glastonbury on 21 June (summer solstice).

<sup>23</sup> "The Early Christians and vegetarianism", ASWA *Bulletin* 62, 2003, 21-23



question to task over many of his statements in support of the view that Christians may be vegetarian but there are “very good arguments against vegetarianism”. In so doing Fowler supplies very strong arguments in favour of vegetarianism. While his view is clearly a personal one and not the view of ASWA, it is perhaps the first time that the organisation had given space to so strong a pro-vegetarian statement as: “May Christians be vegetarian? Not only is it permissible, it is, imperative that they should do so!”

Further vegetarian-friendly material followed. In the spring 2005 edition of the *Bulletin* a news item announces the foundation of the Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK) and outlines the CVAUK’s plans.<sup>24</sup> In 2009 a three part series appeared in the *Bulletin* by Mary Linda Price entitled “Meet Your Meat”. The second article in spring 2009 considered the welfare issues associated with intensive farming. This is a vegetarian, or even vegan, article, but it still suggested that one can make a contribution by buying organic, ethically reared meat and free-range eggs. However Price considered the health effects of meat on the human body to be so detrimental that all meat should be avoided. Although this article stays within the usual ASWA guidelines of asking members only to consider animal welfare issues, Price’s views were freely expressed in the article, demanding that the reader consider a more abolitionist stance rather than the usual “welfarist” one.

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<sup>24</sup> ASWA *Bulletin* 65, 2005.

The ASWA remains a niche organisation within the Anglican Church and is sought out by those seeking like-minded individuals within the church. The group receives four to five requests for information from Christians each week as well as enquiries from students. However, Chandler notes she continues to come across many clergy and Christians who have never heard of ASWA:

I think that is largely because animal welfare is still considered very much a 'fringe' issue in the church. In my own church, I am very much a lone voice – the eccentric woman who is a vegetarian and is always talking about animal issues! I know that most of my colleagues on the ASWA committee have similar relationships with their churches. My own church is an evangelical one and very human centred – they do not offer me any encouragement at all in my work. I have to get that from my ASWA colleagues and the ASWA members. Unless you are a Christian who is interested in animal welfare (still as far as I am concerned quite a rare breed) you will probably not seek out an organisation like ASWA.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Personal email correspondence from Samantha Chandler, 29 May 2012.

## b. THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE

Sometimes I wonder if it is this very matter of killing animals for food that comes between Christians and their God, preventing them from finding the lasting inner peace of reconciliation with him, as it was with the rich ruler who was told by Jesus to go and give his wealth to the poor. Certainly, the Church is waking up environmentally, but it is out of love for God and all His creation, or is it the instinct of self-preservation? How many of its leaders care enough about what happens to the animals to give up eating them and their products?<sup>1</sup>

The Fellowship of Life (FoL)<sup>2</sup> is a Christian-based vegetarian group founded in 1973 by Margaret Lawson (1919-2006) with the aim of promoting “a Christian way of life which is beneficial to All Creation, human, animal and environmental.”<sup>3</sup>

Today the Fellowship aims to

encourage vegetarianism as a Christian way of life and unite believers of all religions, or none, in a lifestyle which neither hurts nor destroys needlessly any part of creation; human, animal or environmental.<sup>4</sup>

Lawson was raised by church-going parents but claimed she was “well over thirty years of age before I became a fully-committed Christian - and literally a new

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Lawson, *Fellowship of Life newsletter*, Christmas 1988.

<sup>2</sup> The Fellowship was originally called the Churches Fellowship for the Promotion of Reverence for All Life but quickly became known as the Fellowship of Life. See John Gilheany <http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/hist.html>, accessed 13 January 2010. The Fellowship of Life has no connection with the Fellowship of the New Life founded, a nineteenth-century British organisation, most famous for its creation of a sub-group, the socialist organisation the Fabian Society. It was founded in 1883 by the Scottish intellectual Thomas Davidson with an idealistic ambition to transform society into one less beset by selfishness, rivalry and ignorance. Fellowship members included poets Edward Carpenter and John Davidson, noted vegetarian Henry Stephens Salt. Many of the members, influenced by Leo Tolstoy advocated pacifism and vegetarianism.

<sup>3</sup> *Fellowship of Life newsletter* 1977.

<http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/hist.html>, 13 January 2010.

<sup>4</sup> The mission statement was expanded to this version in 1983, [www.allcreatures.org/fol/index.html](http://www.allcreatures.org/fol/index.html) accessed 13 January 2010.

person with a deep, abiding faith, filled with love for God and Man”.<sup>5</sup> Lawson had a sudden realisation one day about the inappropriateness of killing animals:

I became interested in meditation and faith-healing, and one day I found the phrase ‘Thou shalt not kill!’ ringing in my heart and suddenly it dawned upon me that it referred to animals as well as to humans. I knew nothing of vegetarianism and veganism was an unknown word to me, but after two weeks of inner wrestling I knew that I had finished with eating meat. Eighteen months later I took the plunge to veganism.<sup>6</sup>

Lawson hoped that “someone in the church” would do something to about “the terrible state of affairs” as she did not feel qualified to take the lead as a “fringe member”.<sup>7</sup> However, she was disappointed in this and she finally resolved to do something about it herself. At the same time she heard of the Society of United Prayer for Animals and became its Honorary Secretary for Scotland.<sup>8</sup>

The Fellowship of Life grew out of the counter-culture of the late 1960s and its desire for peace and a communion with nature. Articles in an independent journal, *The Vegetarian* (later known as *World Forum*) which was published from 1947, were a source of inspiration for Margaret Lawson.<sup>9</sup> According to Gilheany the

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret Lawson, *Why a Fellowship of Life, An Address to AGM of the Vegan Society in 1984*, later republished as a FoL pamphlet, <http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html>, accessed 13 January 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> The Society for the United Prayer for Animals has its roots in the Society for the United Prayer for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Especially with Regard to the Practice of Vivisection which was founded in 1876. See Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers*, 247 n. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Although the London Vegetarian Society and the Vegetarian Society have both had journals called *The Vegetarian* at various points in their history and the Vegetarian Society's current membership magazine is once again called *The Vegetarian* at this point the title known as *The Vegetarian* was independent of either society. This independent publication briefly became the official journal of the International Vegetarian Union (IVU) when its editor Geoffrey Rudd became the IVU's general secretary.

Fellowship “emerged from aspirations for a more active campaigning approach which arose within the Society of United Prayer for Animals”.<sup>10</sup>

The first campaign of the newly formed Fellowship addressed the mass slaughter of turkeys every Christmas. The first FoL leaflet was based on an address by the Reverend Mary Francis<sup>11</sup> and, in December 1973, Margaret Lawson wrote a letter to clergy pleading “Would it not be wonderful if Christmas day were to be one of ‘Carols and kindness’ not ‘Carols and killings’?”

The journal of the Fellowship of Life started as a bi-annual circular newsletter in 1974, and was issued in 1977 to coincide with Christmas, as it was for a further 24 years.<sup>12</sup> The newsletter contained reports on the progress of complementary medicine, ecology and disarmament.<sup>13</sup> In an early issue Lawson writes

The Fellowship of Life is not an animal welfare society, as such, nor is it a vegetarian society. Its function is to promote a better way of life for humans, based on justice, mercy and compassion, and faith in God, which is beneficial to ALL CREATION (including themselves).

By Christmas 1974 Lawson was writing to the *Church Times* about her cause with the offer of humane recipes:

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<sup>10</sup> John Gilheany, <http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/hist.html>, accessed 13 January 2010. A number of leaflets of the Fellowship of Life have been published on the [www.all-creature.org](http://www.all-creature.org) website along with some excerpts from the newsletters of the Fellowship.

<sup>11</sup> The Reverend Mary Francis, DD, Ph.D, O.S.H. was a member of the Order of St Helena. The Order of St. Helena is a religious order for lay and ordained women in the Episcopal Church. This leaflet was the text of an address given by Francis at a carol service at the Church of St. Hubert and the One Life at Cusworth, Doncaster, on Sunday 23 December, 1973. The church is administered by the Orthodox Church of the British Isles.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., accessed 13 January 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., accessed 18 January 2010.

Our prayer is for this Christmas to see the beginnings of true humaneness with a festival based not on the slaughter of God's creatures, but on justice, mercy and compassion.<sup>14</sup>

This letter received no criticism from the readership, nor did a letter on the same theme the following year by the same author.<sup>15</sup>

By the mid 1970s the FoL had published several leaflets and pamphlets, undertaken direct mail to the clergy and promoted its work in parish magazines. By 1977 the FoL had grown to include 27 patrons, 18 of whom were from the clergy. In the same year a joint travelling exhibition with the ASWA and the Friends Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection Society (now known as Quaker Concern for Animals) was created, entitled "Man, Exploiter or Guardian".

In 1984 Lawson gave an address to the AGM of the Vegan Society entitled "Why a Fellowship of Life?" later published as a FoL pamphlet. In this address she speaks of her motive in founding the FoL:

... firstly to establish vegetarianism as a Christian way of life and, secondly, to unite believers of all religions or none in a way of life which neither hurts nor destroys needlessly any part of creation, human, animal or environmental. Always there is a tendency to limit compassion – some condemn one particular cruelty whilst turning a blind eye to others, and the majority refuse to face up to the cruelty inherent in the production of fish, meat, eggs and cheese. The Christian Church,

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<sup>14</sup> Letter to editor from Margaret Lawson, *Church Times*, 6 December 1974, <http://www.all-creatures.org/fo/let-19741206-ml.html>, accessed 13 January 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Margaret Lawson to the *Church Times*, 12 December 1975, <http://www.all-creatures.org/fo/let-19751212-ml.html>, accessed 13 January 2010.

which one would expect to be sensitive to the barbaric cruelty inflicted on God's creatures, bears a heavy responsibility for its lack of guidance down the ages, but I cannot condemn its ministers because I believe they are the victims of past mistakes, the falsifying of the true teachings of its Founders.<sup>16</sup>

Much of this rhetoric is reminiscent of the views of Ferrier, the founder of the Order of the Cross, who believed the Gospels had been tampered with to remove the true message of the "The Master". In her address to the Vegan Society AGM, Lawson notes that her own "reasoning" told her Jesus would certainly have lived up to the highest ideals expressed in the Old Testament, which she felt included vegetarianism, as suggested by Gen. 1:29 and Isa. 11:9. However, she later came across

several books on the subject among them, *On Behalf of the Creatures* by the Reverend Todd Ferrier ... and also the *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* and various books on the Essenes, a strict vegetarian sect to which it is believed that Jesus belonged. It is believed that his humane teaching was edited out of the Gospels.

Lawson is clearly part of the Christian vegetarian tradition that believes that Christ's compassion for animals and vegetarian practice has been expunged from the gospels and the church's teachings. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Lawson supported Ferrier's heterodox views on reincarnation and the denial of Christ's death and resurrection.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html), accessed 18 January 2010.

In 1985 the FoL newsletter contained an article entitled “Christians, the Bible and vegetarianism”.<sup>17</sup> This plays out all the usual arguments made for scriptural vegetarianism (Gen. 1:29, Isa. 9:11) with a few additional ones such as Ex. 20:13 the commandment not to kill, which does not exempt certain species. The pamphlet also cites Prov. 6:16 and 17, “These six things doth the Lord hate, nay seven ... and hands that shed innocent blood.” Also Hos. 2:18:

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the field: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth and I will make them lie down safely.

Lawson is quite clear about the failings of the mainstream churches:

He Himself said that He came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it and He warned that His teachings would be betrayed and the elect deceived. And so it has proved to be, beginning with the Council of Nicea in AD325 when the manuscripts were considerably tampered with in the interests of what was regarded as orthodoxy. And so down to the present day, when the Orthodox Church, far from condemning killings for food actually encourages it, especially the mass-slaughter of millions of God’s creatures to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

However, Lawson is unusual in speaking out about vegetarians whom she feels are

missing the mark in their high calling, if they, because of the orthodox church’s failure to promote what they see as the ideal way of living deride all religion and do not acknowledge that they are what they are because of God’s spirit within them,

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<sup>17</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/foi/lit-Christians.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/foi/lit-Christians.html), accessed 18 January 2010.



and which is calling them to even higher things via the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the suffering of Jesus, to complete reconciliation with God – which is what religion is all about.<sup>18</sup>

A 1997 leaflet published by the FoL entitled *Christian Vegetarianism: A Biblical Approach to Life*<sup>19</sup> also attempts to outline the case for Christian vegetarianism with extracts from the Old Testament, New Testament and apocryphal material such as the *Gospel of the Holy Twelve*. It concludes:

Some Christians postpone till the end of time any cooperation with the Holy Spirit, in actualising the Peaceable Kingdom on earth. This suggests that the ethical demands of Christianity have no urgency or little value. No effort, however small, is lost within the divine plan. Christian sympathies should lie naturally with the 'crucified' and a choice for the Kingdom of God must be a choice for love and not slaughter. In Matthew 16:3 Jesus asks his contemporaries: "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Properly discerned these signs can tell us where the Spirit of God is leading. As stewards of God's animals the challenge facing mankind is to become a blessing rather than a curse on creation, to bring healing rather than injury.<sup>20</sup>

This leaflet cites amongst its sources two Order of the Cross publications: Ferrier's *On Behalf of the Creatures* and the Reverend V. A. Holmes-Gore's *Those We Have Not Loved*. Other FoL leaflets such as *Christians, the Bible and Vegetarianism* and *Are Christians Vegetarians?* take a similar tack as *Christian Vegetarianism: A Biblical Approach to Life*.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/fo/lit-christians.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fo/lit-christians.html), accessed 18 January 2010.

<sup>19</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/fo/lit-christianveg.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fo/lit-christianveg.html), accessed 18 January 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Lawson was keen from the outset that the FoL should have no subscription fees so that there would be no financial bar to assistance, but instead would “go forward in faith depending on donations”.<sup>21</sup> She took as a symbol of the FoL a brown cross super-imposed on a green tree, “symbolising the spiritual and the physical life – the sacrificial meaning of the cross must not be forgotten – the sacrifice of ourselves.”<sup>22</sup>

In her address to the Vegan Society AGM in 1984, Lawson reflected that she was sometimes asked “How is the Fellowship getting on? Are there any results?” She notes that she has “no idea” beyond the support that she received: “It is an act of faith, sowing seeds and leaving the results in God’s hands.” Gilheany agrees that assessing the contribution of the FoL on the mainstream Christian churches is difficult. However, he considers that,

It is nevertheless certain that the success of campaigns such as Veg4Lent and the emergence of CVAUK would not have been possible without the expertise and momentum which have been generated by the Fellowship of Life.<sup>23</sup>

Lawson retired from her role as founder-secretary of the FoL in 1990 and Clare and Tom Harral, who had backgrounds in human/animal rights and environmental campaigning, became the Honorary Secretaries in 1991. Writing in the spring 2010 issue of *The Ark* (the journal of Catholic Concern for Animals)<sup>24</sup> the Harrals reflect that the launch of the CVAUK (Christian Vegetarian Association UK) in

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<sup>21</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/art-why.html), accessed 18 January 2010 page 6 of 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 of 10 accessed 18 January 2010.

<sup>23</sup> [www.all-creatures.org/fol/hist.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fol/hist.html), 14 of 18, accessed 18 January 2010.

<sup>24</sup>“Veg4Lent and CVAUK”, *The Ark*, Spring 2010, 59

September 2004 led to the FoL becoming “somewhat redundant and often associated with the New Age movement”.<sup>25</sup> Following Lawson’s death in 2006, the Mary and Frank L. Hoffman Family Foundation (which manages the websites of the CCA among many other kindred societies) created a comprehensive FoL website to provide an archive of church–related resource material from animal rights and Christian publications between the 1970s and the 1990s. Today the FoL maintains stocks of leaflets available for a small donation, or in the case of more recent flyers, to be printed-out via its website.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. The New Age movement is a Western spiritual movement that developed in the second half of the 20th century. Although its roots can be found in nineteenth century theosophy and the hermetic traditions the contemporary use of the term appeared in the 1970s with the growth of communities such as Findhorn Foundation in Moray, Scotland and became widespread in the mid-1970s as reflected in the title of the *New Age Journal* first published in 1974.

### **c. CHRISTIAN VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION UK (CVAUK)**

The Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK) has 200 members including the committee and advisory board. It is estimated that perhaps ten members are also members of the clergy of various denominations. Members are not asked to declare their denomination but based on experience Don Gwillim suggests that the largest constituent are Roman Catholic followed by Anglican and other churches in the protestant tradition, one member is known to be a member of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Although no survey of the membership has been undertaken Gwillim believes that the likely breakdown of dietary preference is 60 per cent vegetarian, 30 per cent vegan and ten per cent eat no meat but eat fish. Gwillim suggests that 80 per cent of the membership would be following a vegetarian diet for animal welfare reasons.<sup>1</sup> The membership is entirely British but a map of the geographical distribution of members that the CVAUK has prepared shows that the majority of the members are based in the South East of England.<sup>2</sup>

The CVAUK was founded by Don Gwillim from Liphook in Guildford. Gwillim was influenced by his wife Audrie and daughter, Tracy, to view meat consumption and Christian compassion as incompatible. As a family they became vegetarian in 1990 and followed a mostly vegan diet by 2002.<sup>3</sup> Following his retirement in 1996 from a career as a Chief Engineer of B.E.L. Engineering, a contract design office

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<sup>1</sup> Personal email correspondence with Don Gwillim 1 September 2013.

<sup>2</sup> 'CVAUK Member Location Map and List', January 2012, 1 (map).

<sup>3</sup> Gwillim eats the eggs of rescue hens kept by friends and will eat cheese when he goes out for a meal "to be social and encourage others to go vegetarian". Personal correspondence 1 September 2013.

where he worked on government defence contracts in avionics, awarded to companies such as Plessey, Ferranti, and Marconi as well as listening equipment for GCHQ and maintenance documentation for radio equipment on the Falkland Islands Gwillim discovered his mission to raise awareness of “humankind’s violence and cruelty towards God’s other creatures”.<sup>4</sup> He was unsuccessful in raising these concerns in church circles where he was viewed as misguided. At this time he became aware of, and joined, Veg4Lent, a campaign to encourage Christian churches to return to the traditional Lenten observance of a meat-free diet. Gwillim joined the founder, Tony Neesham, a graphics designer, in 1999 to help him to progress the campaign.

Gwillim was raised in the Church of England in Wales where he was a choirboy and was confirmed in 1945. After the war he moved to London but did not join a church until 1986 when his second wife, a Catholic refused the sacraments of the Church because of her marriage to Gwillim a divorced man, encouraged him to join an Anglican Church in Blackmoor in East Hampshire. In 1988 they felt that the Spirit had called them to join The Three Counties House Church, an Evangelical Church in Haslemere in Surrey. When Gwillim’s wife became disabled in 1998 he joined his local Anglican Church in Liphook, to be near to her. He also felt that the Three Counties Church became “very dictatorial and told a vegetarian family to give up vegetarianism or leave the Church”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Brenda Ryder, *A Short History of Christian Vegetarianism in the UK*, John Ryder and Don Gwillim, eds., CVAUK, n.d., 9.

<sup>5</sup> Personal correspondence, 1 September 2013.

The Veg4Lent campaign targeted members of the clergy to explain the benefits of a plant-based diet and to suggest that the clergy and their congregations reprise the Lenten tradition of abstinence from meat. Gwillim and Tony Neesham formed a partnership to promote vegetarianism to the church and from that partnership the Christian Vegetarian Association U.K. evolved in 2004 to developing an “ecumenical, autonomous organisation to provide resources and support to vegetarian Christians in the UK”. At this point Gwillim and Neesham received a considerable amount of help from Steve Kaufman the Chair of CVA in the United States.<sup>6</sup> His support and the free publications that he supplied proved invaluable to the CVAUK. In 2004 Tony Neesham married an American woman and moved to the USA. About this time the Reverend John Ryder, the vicar of All Saints, Godshill on the Isle of Wight became the spokesperson for CVAUK.

With support from the ASWA and Catholic Concern for Animals, Gilliam launched the Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK) in January 2005.<sup>7</sup> A new CVAUK website was created, funded by a donation from Gwillim’s daughter, Tracy, to sustain its running costs.

The CVAUK is affiliated to the international Christian Vegetarian Association (CVA), founded in 1999 by Nathan Braun, a college student in Canada.

The CVAUK’s booklet on the *History of Vegetarianism* sees the CVAUK Association as the spiritual heir of the Christian vegetarian truth. The booklet

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen R. Kaufman is an ophthalmologist specializing in retinal disease and a clinical assistant professor at both Case Western Reserve University and Northeast Ohio Medical University. He is co-chair of the Medical Research Modernization Committee (MRMC), president of the Cleveland-based group Vegetarian Advocates, co-chair of the Christian Vegetarian Association, and a founding member of the Society of Ethical and Religious Vegetarians (SERV).

<sup>7</sup> Gwillim retired from the CVAUK in 2012 aged 81 due to poor health.

surveys groups such as the Bible Christians, Orders of the Cross and Golden Age and the Fellowship of Life, concluding that the CVAUK has “re-established in the United Kingdom a society whose members are both Christians and vegetarians whose faith compels them to be advocates for suffering fellow creatures!”<sup>8</sup> The CVAUK also publishes an on-line six-week Study Guide for use by church groups during Lent, with material such as “Why a vegetarian diet?” or “God’s Perfect Will A Peaceable Kingdom” or “How would Jesus respond?” Other booklets published online by the CVAUK include: “Our response to this Fallen World”; “The Bible and Vegetarianism”; and “Was the Master a Vegetarian?” The CVAUK also distribute a booklet published by its American affiliate, the CVA (called *Are we Good Stewards of God’s Creation?* and a leaflet by the animal rights campaign group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), written by Fr John Dear, *Christianity and vegetarianism*.

The CVAUK’s online newsletter, unlike those of similar organisations, is more than a ‘round-up’ of vegetarian and animal rights activities, along with letters and prayers submitted by members. The CVAUK newsletter has a more reflective tone; it also documents matters such as – in the Winter 2009 issue - the text of a talk at the London Vegan Festival in 2009 by Don Gwillim, the Christian response to the environmental crisis, the CVAUK’s response to the Home Office consultation on EU proposals for a new directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, an item about the “startling effects of going vegetarian for

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<sup>8</sup> Brenda Ryder, *A Short History of Vegetarianism*, 10.

just one day” and notes a lecture by Lester Brown, the founder of the Worldwatch Institute, on “How can we feed the world and protect the environment?”<sup>9</sup>

Controversy occurred within the CVAUK in an article on the website entitled “Christmas for all creation”. Don Gwillim discussed a report he planned to post to the secular press criticising “anthropocentric Christians”. CVAUK patron Fr Derek Reeve challenged the mailing saying:

My problem is that I am not happy about washing our dirty linen in public and I don't feel that the press is the proper place for us to be taking the churches to task for their attitudes to the animal creation and the environment generally.

As a result Gwillim proposed adding a proviso to the CVAUK's code of practice to say that “when dealing with the secular press, we avoid criticising the church and only proclaim a creation caring Gospel to the secular world.” However, this censorship would not apply to the Christian press.<sup>10</sup>

Gwillim also discussed strategies for debating vegetarianism with Christians in his talk at the London Vegan Fair in 2009. In considering the reasons why some Christians are unsympathetic towards a plant based lifestyle, he felt the key question to pose to them is “Who is your neighbour?” Gwillim identifies two distinct groups, “human centred or anthropocentric Christians” versus “creation caring or Theocentric Christians”. Whilst Gwillim sees the hierarchy of the church

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<sup>9</sup> The Worldwatch Institute is a globally focused environmental research organisation based in Washington D.C. Its website is [www.worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.christianvegetarian.co.uk/>, not dated, accessed 5 August 2013.



“slowly moving away from a ‘Human Centred’ doctrine towards a ‘creation caring’ gospel”, he realises that Christians who wish to do so will find a Biblical passage or verse to repudiate one’s line of reasoning. As a result he recommends that vegetarians/vegans approach Christians with moral rather than Biblical reasons. He bases this advice on his contribution to a programme on United Christian Broadcasting’s hour-long “The Big Discussion”. In the first half hour he based his arguments on biblical reasoning. The programme received many telephone calls and emails from listeners who disagreed with Gwillim and some of these comments, Gwillim was informed by the presenter, were “too nasty” to be broadcast. In the second half Gwillim changed his tactics to moral arguments for vegetarianism. The number of the calls reduced considerably as he felt “dissenting Christians could no longer challenge my reasoning”. He feels that vegetarians/vegans will be more persuasive in speaking to Christians if they rely only on the “many powerful moral reasons they have for following a plant based diet”. Although Gwillim is able to make a scriptural case for vegetarianism he feels that a moral stance would be more successful in persuading Christians to enter into a discussion about vegetarianism. Scriptural texts are endlessly disputed by Christians but they found it more difficult to dispute his ethical reasoning.

#### **d. THE WAY IN THE WILDERNESS**

The Way in the Wilderness is the most recent Christian Vegetarian group to be established in the UK. The group was founded in early 2008 by Robin Lane on the social networking website Facebook, with “the aim of promoting veganism within the Christian community”. The group gained 134 followers after its founding, a small number by social networking sites standards even allowing for the fact that it was reaching out to only vegan Christians – a niche group.<sup>1</sup> The group’s name was inspired by “the cry of John the Baptist in the wilderness ‘Prepare the Way.’”<sup>2</sup> John, who had lived among the Essene community, is believed by many Christian vegetarians, to have himself lived on a vegetarian diet. The locusts mentioned in the gospels are believed by Lane to be locust bean (carob) and not insects. Lane claims Jesus was a vegetarian and that references to Jesus eating fish in the Bible are false. Lane points to the disciple James, Jesus’s brother, who followed a vegetarian diet and notes that God’s original requirement for man was that he did the same. For Lane, it is incongruous that the Jesus who urged us to be innocent like children, to turn the other cheek, to love our neighbour, to show mercy and to be pure in heart, could countenance the slaughter of animals for food: “The Killing of animals for food is a dereliction of our duty toward God’s purpose on Earth.”

Lane was raised a Christian by his mother, although she did not attend church. He was baptised at St. Stephen’s, Dulwich, but did not go to church until after his

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<sup>1</sup> By 2013 this number had only risen to 170 people.

<sup>2</sup> The Way in the Wilderness information leaflet, n.d.

mother's death in 2004, when he began to attend a spiritualist church. At one service he claims to have received a direct communication that the Bible held a message for him. He read the entire Bible between the winter of 2004 and December 2005 and had the unexpected experience of a "wave of peace and harmony" sweeping over him when reading the gospels. In December 2005, he began attending the Church of England, starting with the parish church in which he had been christened and working his way through almost every local denomination: Baptist, Catholic, Evangelist, Russian Orthodox, Methodist and Salvation Army. After four years, he "settled back" into the arms of St. Stephen's, a High Anglican Church.

However, long before beginning to attend church, Lane had a very active role in animal rights and vegan campaigning in a secular context. He became vegan in September 1982, and in early 1983 became a local contact for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV). He also became involved in the South London Animal Movement (SLAM). In 1984 Lane took over the running of the Fur Action Group. In 1985 he did voluntary work for the Animal Liberation Front Supporters' Group and became its press officer in 1986. In 1988 Lane spent four and a half months in prison in connection with his work as ALF's press officer and on his release he joined the group Life Before Profit. In 1989 he co-founded the Campaign Against Leather & Fur (CALF). In 1991, he took over as editor of *Arkangel*, an animal rights magazine, and was co-opted onto the Vegan Society council. In 1993 he joined the newly formed London Animal Action and in 1996, along with fellow Vegan Society council trustees, organised the first National

Vegan Festival (later to be known as the London Vegan Festival). This festival inspired a network of “grass roots” annual vegan festivals across the major towns and cities of the UK. In 2004 Lane became actively involved in Vegan Campaigns, a London based vegan campaigning group that now organises events such as the London Vegan Festival.

In January 2008 Lane met two other Christians interested in pursuing his long-held idea of holding street stalls to promote veganism amongst the Christian community. Their first stall was held in Croydon, South London, in 2008, and since then the group has regularly held stalls in London, usually outside churches. The stalls display a banner of Jesus holding a lamb above the words “The Way, The Truth and the Life” and the stalls display vegan recipe booklets, anti-meat leaflets, CVAUK literature and books. A variety of fresh fruit is also offered to the public. The group claims to have received good feedback from these stalls.

More recently Lane has launched an appeal for “Vegan Missionaries” who will encourage their own churches to become more compassionate by switching to vegan friendly cleaning products and offering vegan biscuits and soya milk in hot drinks after services; several Facebook group members have responded and become Missionaries. This is a revival of an idea Lane had many years ago but pursued unsuccessfully on his own. This demonstrates the role that the Internet might have to play in the future of minority Christian Vegetarian groups. It is far easier to find a virtual community to support your belief system than to find a local

cohort that shares your beliefs. The Internet offers a real opportunity for Christian vegetarians to gain support from one another and grow in confidence.

Information sheets issued by the Way in the Wilderness refer to Eden and the Edenic diet, with titles such as “Out of Eden” and “The Return to Eden”. In the latter the Way in the Wilderness insists that “It is our sacred duty to care for God’s creation,” for “only then shall we return to the Garden of Eden where God’s promise shall be fulfilled”.

In late 2008, the Way in the Wilderness and the CVAUK created the Christian Alliance for Love and Fellowship (CALF), allowing them to work together whilst maintaining their separate identities in a similar way to the Catholic Concern for Animals and the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals alliance. Unlike secular animal welfare, animal rights, and vegetarian groups, Christian vegetarian groups seem willing to enter into such strategic alliances and to seek common ground and interests. This may be because none of the organisations are so large, or wealthy, for there to be a sense of competition for supporters, as is sometimes found in the secular movement. Or it may be that this spirit of co-operation is what sets the Christian movement apart from the secular ones. There is, however, a divide between groups which accept a generally orthodox Christian teaching but who believe that Christians have a greater duty of care for all creation than has been demonstrated in the past, and groups who hold the heterodox view that Christ was vegetarian and that the gospels are not an accurate record of his vegetarian teaching and practice on earth. As a result mainstream Christian

denominational groups band together and other ecumenical groups of Christians – many of whose beliefs might be considered heterodox – are also willing to form alliances. Another distinction between the two groups is that mainstream Christian groups may recommend vegetarianism but not specify it, whereas the heterodox groups tend to comprise vegetarians or vegans.

The Way in the Wilderness is notable among the Christian vegetarian groups in the UK for promoting a vegan rather than an ovo-lacto-vegetarian diet. Its alliance with the CVAUK will presumably see the latter promote veganism more strongly in the future. This emphasis on veganism in the Way in the Wilderness doubtless stems from the personal beliefs and practices of its founder. Lane has already noted the need for a theological justification for an entirely animal free diet in order to broaden the appeal of the group, although the group has not yet addressed this.

British vegetarianism in the two centuries examined here can be seen to have developed from Christian vegetarian roots that were largely concerned with humanitarianism. This is still a strong theme among British Christian vegetarians today. For much of this period – and certainly during the long nineteenth century – the ostensibly secular vegetarian movement across the Atlantic was greatly influenced by the British movement and took its lead from the vegetarian movement in Britain. The Bible Christians were important to the development and continuance of both the British and American vegetarian societies and their transatlantic network was important to the development of vegetarianism in America. However, it is interesting to note that the American movement was to

develop a far greater emphasis on vegetarianism for health reasons and for reasons of bodily purity more than for humanitarian reasons. Even today an American vegetarian, and particularly an American vegan, is more likely to be following the diet for the health benefits that they expect to experience rather than for ethical reasons such as animal welfare. This difference can be traced to the early American proponents for the diet and their concerns. The next section of this work examines the American Connection and explores this important difference between the American and British vegetarian movements.

### Part III: THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

In the nineteenth century the Bible Christian Church in Salford had close links with its sister church in Philadelphia and the two organisations – and the secular vegetarian societies that they established often – developed in tandem. Ministers even travelled between the two churches when the need for a suitably vegetarian Bible Christian minister was great.

This chapter examines the transatlantic links between the British and American Bible Christian Church and considers how the influence of Sylvester Graham led to a Christian vegetarian tradition in the USA which has focussed on human health rather than humanitarianism as the main reason for advocating the vegetarian diet.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on Fruitlands, the pioneer vegetarian community near Harvard, established by Dr William Alcott and two members of the English Concordium<sup>2</sup>, Colin Spencer remarks: "There were always close ties with England. A kind of world brotherhood among vegetarians existed."<sup>3</sup> Such similar networks existed among Christian vegetarians on both sides of the Atlantic throughout the nineteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter considers the strong links between the transatlantic vegetarian movements and how and why they have such a different emphasis on humanitarian and health aspects of the diet. For a discussion of vegetarianism in Australia see Edgar Crook, *Vegetarianism in Australia - 1788 to 1948: a cultural and social history* (Lulu.com, 2006). The book is also available online at the International Vegetarian Union (IVU) website <http://www.ivu.org/history/australia/index.html>, accessed 7 August 2013. A brief history of the Canadian and New Zealand vegetarian societies can also be found on the IVU website <http://www.ivu.org/history/societies>, accessed 7 August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> After Alcott's return to America following a visit to the Concordium at Ham Common in Richmond.

<sup>3</sup> Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast*, 1993, 274.



The modern American vegetarian movement, in common with the British movement, has its roots in the eighteenth century. Benjamin Franklin became vegetarian at the age of 16 after he was influenced by the writings of Thomas Tryon. There were several small communities that were vegetarian in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Bible Christians in America**

Two thousand and nine saw the bi-centenary of the Bible Christian Church of Salford. At the centenary in 1909 the current incumbent, Reverend Alfred O. Broadley, had written in the *Manchester City News*:

In the year 1817 – one year after the death of our founder – forty emigrants from our church landed in Philadelphia and a little later founded a Bible Christian Church in that city. It was the beneficial results of the work done by that church in spreading the principles of vegetarianism which led Dr Kellogg to conceive the idea of the great sanitarium at Battle Creek, whose branches are to be found in almost every part of the world.”<sup>5</sup>

Whilst this claim may overstate the Church’s influence, a strong *prima facie* case indicates the existence of links between the two organisations. What can be more clearly established is the *sustained* links later – the two churches were intimately involved in the establishment of the Vegetarian Society in England in 1847 and, inspired by its success, the Vegetarian Society of America in 1850. The close

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<sup>4</sup> For details see Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 5-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Manchester City News*, 9 October, 1909, cited in D. Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 85.

relationship between the churches' ministers and key players and the officers of the vegetarian societies (in some cases these were the same), in both countries made for a transatlantic religious network that was to promote and sustain the vegetarian movement throughout its early decades.

The small band of 41 migrants from Manchester and Salford were led to America by two ordained ministers of the Bible Christian Church – James Clarke and William Metcalfe. They set sail from Liverpool on 29 March 1817, but their voyage of 79 days left only eleven adults and seven children faithful to the principles of the Bible Christian Church by the time they set foot in the New World. However, a small group of these Bible Christians under the leadership of Metcalfe managed to build themselves a church on Philadelphia's North Third Street in 1823. By 1844 the building required rebuilding, and in 1890 the site was sold and the Church built a new, gothic, style church on Park Avenue.

The 1832 cholera epidemic in the USA had an enormous impact on the population. As panic gripped the nation and newspapers reported daily death tolls from the disease physicians recommended laudanum, alcohol and a diet of meat, some vegetables and little fruit as well as a recommendation to have confidence in God's goodness and to perform His will in caring for the sick.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *The Providence Daily Journal*, 10 July, 1832, 2, cited in Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 16.

## The establishment of vegetarian societies in Britain and America

Following the founding of the Vegetarian Society in England in 1847, Metcalfe was inspired to call an American Vegetarian Convention at Clinton Hall, New York in 1850, over which he presided.<sup>7</sup> The convention established the Vegetarian Society of America, and Metcalfe was elected as the society's correspondence secretary. Delegates from the British Vegetarian Society attended the convention and were delighted with the formation of what they saw as the much wished for establishment of a world movement for vegetarianism. An early historian of the vegetarian movement records the joy with which the invitation was met by the British society:

We hail this communication of our brethren of America with the greatest joy ... we look on the adoption of the exchange [of delegates] as virtually forming, what was pointed to at our annual meeting on July last, ONE GREAT VEGETARIAN MOVEMENT.<sup>8</sup>

This convention brought together, on one platform the key vegetarian figures of nineteenth-century America: William Alcott, M.D., Sylvester Graham and Metcalfe himself. Alcott was appointed as the new society's first president while Metcalfe was elected to the post of corresponding secretary. Another Bible Christian, and Metcalfe's brother-in-law, Joseph Wright, was one of nine men appointed as vice presidents along with Graham and Joseph Metcalfe, one of William Metcalfe's

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<sup>7</sup> Howard Williams asserts that the American convention was inspired by the British society, *Ethics of Diet, A Cantena of Authorities Deprecatory of the Practice of Flesh Eating*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 263.

<sup>8</sup> Forward, *Fifty Years of Food Reform*: 32-3.

sons. In 1851 William Metcalfe also became the editor of the *American Vegetarian and Health Journal*. He returned to England on several occasions as the Vegetarian Society of America's representative at the UK Vegetarian Society's annual meetings. His first visit in 1851 coincided not only with the fourth annual meeting of the Vegetarian Society but he also preached at the Bible Christian Church in Salford and attended a tea-meeting, strengthening the transatlantic vegetarian links. At the tea-meeting, Joseph Brotherton, Salford's first MP after the Great Reform Act and a leading Bible Christian minister, spoke of his hope for the church and the vegetarian message in America:

It is difficult for any new principle to take root here, that is connected with religion, for it has not half the chance that it would have in a country where no religion is legally established, but where all persons are at liberty to worship God according to their own consciences ... This certainly enables one to look forward with hope, for we find that with regard to many sciences and discoveries, they very seldom obtain any great credit in the country in which they are first propagated.<sup>9</sup>

In 1855 Metcalfe was asked to return to Salford to act as the Bible Christian Church minister until a replacement could be found for Reverend John Booth Strettles, who had died in 1853. Reverend Joseph Wright took over the Philadelphia church in Metcalfe's absence, which extended until 1857. In 1859 Metcalfe was elected president of the Vegetarian Society of America after the death of Dr W. A. Alcott, its first president.

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<sup>9</sup> Cited in D. Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 89. He was to be proved wrong for the Salford church was to be the last to close in 1932.

The Bible Christians of Philadelphia, like their sister churches in Manchester, were involved with a number of campaigns: against war, capital punishment and slavery. However, they were perhaps most influential in the spread of the vegetarian message across the Atlantic. Through the Bible Christians' contact with Dr Sylvester Graham (1794-1851) and Dr. William A. Alcott<sup>10</sup>, who edited the *Moral Reformer* and the *Library of Health*, they had a great impact on the direction of vegetarianism in America. Like Alcott, Graham became a president of the American Vegetarian Society; Graham was also an enormous influence on John Harvey Kellogg.<sup>11</sup>

Colin Spencer claims both Graham and Alcott were “won over” by an essay entitled *Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals*, which Metcalfe published in 1821 and which was freely and extensively circulated. Other scholars suggest the young Graham might have come into contact with the Bible Christians when he came to Philadelphia as a travelling Presbyterian temperance preacher in 1830. He may have learned of the

vegetable eaters [who had] escaped a cholera epidemic that had recently ravaged the city and the nation: Apparently, Graham became a vegetarian during this time, perhaps only after becoming acquainted with the Bible Christians.<sup>12</sup>

Spencer claims Metcalfe initially wrote to Graham, Alcott and others to suggest that a Vegetarian Society should be formed in the United States, leading to the

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<sup>10</sup> Cousin of Branson Alcott and uncle of Louisa May Alcott, the author of *Little Women*.

<sup>11</sup> H.G. Powell, *The Original has this signature – W.K. Kellogg*, (New Jersey: 1956), 86, cited in Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 90.

<sup>12</sup> Karen Iacobbo and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America, A History*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 14.

American Vegetarian Convention.<sup>13</sup> However, no sources are given, making the nature of the connection between Graham and the Bible Christians difficult to assess. It is clear that Metcalfe convened the meeting that formed the Vegetarian Society of America and that he shared a platform with Graham and Alcott at this convention.

### **Sylvester Graham**

Graham had a difficult start in life with an erratic home life and indifferent health. He lived for a time with a tavern owner and helped out with work in the bar. An early experience of drunkenness left a lasting impression on him. He was eventually ordained as a Presbyterian minister, like his father and grandfather before him, and was well liked by his congregation until he began to preach against the consumption of alcohol. In 1830 he left the Church, although not the ministry, and was hired by the Pennsylvania Society for the Suppression of Ardent Spirits to lecture to the public on the health risks and moral evils of alcohol.

Graham was unusual in believing that alcohol was dangerous to man's physical health as well as his spiritual welfare. He recommended people follow the laws of life as he saw them: bathe frequently, exercise, take plenty of fresh air and drink plenty of pure water. Even more essential, they must exclusively eat foods of the plant kingdom, including whole grain and not white bread, and avoid all forms of

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<sup>13</sup> Spencer, *Heretic's Feast*, 260.

meat, alcoholic drinks, and tobacco. Graham is often celebrated as the father of vegetarianism in America.<sup>14</sup> In nineteenth-century America, a vegetarian was described as a follower of Grahamite principles and known as a “Grahamite”, rather than a vegetarian. The Jacksonian era was receptive to Graham’s message. Reformation was in the air and there were campaigns against slavery, for women’s suffrage and for the reformation of oppressive working conditions, prisons and the medical profession.

Graham died in 1851, at the age of 58. His death was a blow to the burgeoning vegetarian movement in America, coming only a year after the founding of the American Vegetarian Society. Vegetarianism was, however, slowly gaining acceptance and the diet was often promoted in water cure establishments across America.<sup>15</sup> One of the best known of these was in Kansas and owned by James Caleb Jackson, M.D., who had served as a vice president of the American Vegetarian Society. It was visited by a young Ellen G. White and her husband, James White, the founders of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in 1863. White claimed to have received visions from God in which she was instructed to tell people to abstain from meat. White also preached Grahamite principles such as abstinence from stimulants, including coffee, tea, tobacco and alcohol. In 1866 the Whites founded the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek, which

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<sup>14</sup> Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Water cure and hydropathy were used synonymously in the nineteenth century to refer to the curing of disease by the external and internal use of water. Water cure was introduced into America by Dr Shew in 1844. Hydropathy remained popular until at least the end of the nineteenth century. For information on the American hydropathic movement and vegetarianism see Iacobbo and Iacobbo *Vegetarian America* 74-78 and Harry B. Weiss and Howard R. Kemble *The great American water-cure craze: a history of hydropathy in the United States* (New Jersey: The Past Times Press, 1967). For information on the British movement’s relationship with hydropathy see Gregory *Of Victorians and Vegetarians* 70-73.

would many years later become a world famous health institution. Under White's guidance, the church over the next few decades founded a network of sanitariums<sup>16</sup> and institutions in the United States, and abroad, and instructed the doctors at these establishments not to give their patients meat.

### **Ellen G. White, Seventh-Day Adventism and vegetarianism**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's distinguishing features are its observance of Saturday, the original seventh day of the Judeo-Christian week, as the Sabbath its anticipation of the imminent second coming (advent) of Jesus Christ. The church grew out of the Millerite movement in the United States during the nineteenth century. The theology of the Seventh-day Adventist church does not differ greatly from that of other churches in the protestant tradition but its distinctive teachings relate to the unconscious state of the dead<sup>17</sup> and the doctrine of an investigative judgment.<sup>18</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is governed by a General Conference, with smaller regions administered by divisions, union conferences and local conferences. It currently has a worldwide baptized membership of about 17.2 million people.<sup>19</sup> In May 2007 the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the twelfth-

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<sup>16</sup> "Sanitarium" was the spelling favoured by the Seventh Day Adventist institutions.

<sup>17</sup> The belief that the soul is unconscious in the period between death and the day of resurrection of the dead.

<sup>18</sup> Also referred to as the 'heavenly sanctuary' or the 'doctrine of the sanctuary', the investigative judgment is believed to have begun with the Great Disappointment of 1844, when Christ did not return. Christ commenced a new phase of his ministry in the 'Most Holy Place' concerning the judgment of professed Christians.

<sup>19</sup> As at 30 June 2011, <http://www.adventist.org/world-church/facts-and-figures/>, accessed 7 August 2013.



largest religious body in the world,<sup>20</sup> and the sixth-largest highly international religious body with over 30 per cent of its membership outside of the USA.<sup>21</sup> It has a missionary presence in over 200 countries and territories operates numerous schools, hospitals and publishing houses worldwide, as well as a humanitarian aid organisation known as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Despite the arrival of the first Adventist missionary J. N. Andrews in 1874, Adventism was slow to take hold in Britain and the first baptisms did not take place until 1880. Today the British Union Conference contains 246 Seventh-day Adventist Churches.<sup>22</sup>

Ellen White wrote a series of six pamphlets on health reforms, produced as a bound volume entitled *Health: or How to Live*, and published in 1865. This volume covered topics such as hydropathy, fresh air, clothing, exercise, sunlight, etc., and included material written by White and other health reformers whose work she claimed to have consulted only after she had written up her own visions on these matters; and whose writings she was surprised to find to be so much in tune with the wisdom on health that she had received in her visions. However, her first published work on health was on a subject that was of great concern to health reformers of the mid nineteenth century: masturbation.<sup>23</sup> The temperance and dietary reformer Sylvester Graham had led the way with his “Lecture to Young Men on Chastity” in 1834 but it was a theme taken up by many health reformers

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_rb.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_rb.html), accessed 7 August 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ted-adventist.org/countries/europe/united-kingdom>, accessed 7 August 2013.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the history of onanism in this period see Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary sex: a cultural history of masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003). Robert H. MacDonald, “The Frightful Consequences of Onanism: Notes on the History of a Delusion” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 28, no. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1967): 423-431.

including Alcott, Coles, Trall and Jackson. Most reformers were “vitalists” and explained man’s vital force or energy interacted with the inanimate matter to produce vital functions. It was believed that the body had a finite amount of vital force and as it could not be replenished and, as sexual acts used up this vital force, those wishing for a long life must necessarily limit their sexual activities. White’s guidance on masturbation was published in a volume entitled *An Appeal to Mothers: The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time* (1864). White attributes this volume to her vision of 5 June 1863 in which her angel guide had directed her to consider the corruption of the world. Nineteenth-century reformers believed the “solitary vice” was responsible for ailments: dyspepsia and consumption, insanity and loss of spirituality. In her vision White sees “imbecility, dwarfed forms, crippled limbs, misshapen heads and deformity of every description”. These she learns are all the product of widespread masturbation.<sup>24</sup> In common with Graham, White believed that a plain diet was one of the best ways to subdue the passions and so the desire to masturbate. White proscribed such stimulating items as “mince pies, cakes, preserves and highly-seasoned meats, with gravies” such products were said to create “a feverish condition in the system, and inflame[d] the animal passions”. After the 1860s White wrote little about sexual matters. Her final major work on health *The Ministry of Healing*, published in 1905, makes no mention of masturbation or “marital excess”.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ellen G. White, *An Appeal to Mothers*, (Battle Creek: Seventh Day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 17, 24 and 25, cited in *Prophetess of Health*, 208.

<sup>25</sup> This was a subject of some concern to the Whites in earlier years. See the expanded version of *Appeal to Mothers* published 1870 under the title *Solemn Appeal Relative to Solitary Vice, and the Abuses and Excesses of the Marriage Relation*, James White, (ed.), (Battle Creek: S. D. A. Publishing Association, 1870), 200. This volume contained an essay by O. S. Fowler entitled “Evils

Ellen G. White's first vision on healthy living received in autumn 1848 instructed her that tobacco, tea and coffee should be rejected by those looking for Christ's Second Coming. Alcohol was not specifically mentioned. The reasons given for the avoidance of these items seems to be both that they were considered "injurious" to health and that they were expensive and unnecessary. Ellen White's second vision on the subject of health took place in 1854 when she claimed that Adventists were making "a god of their bellies" and that they should eat plainer food with "little grease"<sup>26</sup>: "I saw rich food destroyed the health of the bodies and was ruining the constitution, was destroying the mind, and was a great waste of means."<sup>27</sup> James White went as far as to calculate the exact level of waste: if one thousand families abstained from those items ten thousand dollars a year would be saved – an amount that would "sustain thirty Missionaries in the new fields of labor".<sup>28</sup> Whilst Numbers records that many Adventists did not follow the dietary reforms of the 1854 the question of whether or not swine's flesh should be prohibited in accordance with Mosaic practices by the Sabbath-keepers did vex the early days of the church. The Whites were initially clear that pork eating was not a test of fellowship. James White wrote in *Present Truth* that he did "not, by any means, believe that the bible teaches that its proper use, in the gospel

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and Remedy" in which Fowler warns that "to indulge, even in wedlock, as often as the moon quarters, is gradual but effectual destruction of both soul and body".

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 86.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 88.

dispensation, is sinful.”<sup>29</sup> The question was settled by Ellen White when she advised those concerned that swine’s flesh would be injurious to health and an unnecessary expense that in a vision in 1858 she had seen “that your views concerning swine’s flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourself; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine’s flesh, He will convict them on the matter.”<sup>30</sup>

Ronald Numbers suggests that many Adventists took up White’s call to vegetarianism following her 5 June 1863 vision. This testimony called for alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee to be joined by meat, eggs, butter and cheese as items best avoided by those seeking the Second Coming. As with her previous visions these prohibitions were because the physical body should be protected from degradation and ill health and because such items were unnecessary and expensive luxuries. The faithful awaiting the Second Coming would wish to live in a way that would make them deserving of salvation. He notes that White saw this as much “a religious as a physiological duty” as he notes that Ellen White repeatedly said that health reform was “as closely connected with present truth as the arm is connected with the body”.<sup>31</sup> The White family diet in the 1860s – and that advocated by White to Adventists – was a reformed diet of two meals a day (typically breakfast and lunch but no evening meal) at least five hours apart with no eating between meals. The diet consisted of fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts

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<sup>29</sup> James White, “Swine’s Flesh”, *Present Truth*, 1, November 1850, 87-88. Cited in Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 89.

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, 206. Cited in *Discussion and Review of Prophetess of Health*, Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference, Washing, D. C. 20012, 1976, 45.

<sup>31</sup> Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 219.

and milk (the Whites kept a family cow for this purpose). White's motivation for promoting a flesh-free diet was that it brought with it health benefits to those who pursued it and that it subdued the "animal passions" which were a cause of inappropriate sexual behaviour.<sup>32</sup> This connection between diet and sexual desire can also be found in the Salvation Army's use of the diet in its children's homes. Following her 1863 vision White forbade both meat and dairy products such as butter, eggs and cheese but allowed milk and sweet cream to be used in her home. Whilst this stance may seem illogical today White's views were not uncommon among nineteenth-century food reformers. Sylvester Graham viewed cream as more easily digestible than butter, and eggs as less acceptable than milk because they were "more highly animalized".<sup>33</sup> However, White was set apart from some food reformers who as well as meat, butter and eggs would also prohibit milk, sugar and salt. White presented the "poisonous narcotics" as tea, coffee, tobacco and alcohol all of which she believed had similarly "intoxicating" effects. Tobacco, White maintained, not only caused many deaths but encouraged the appetite for strong drink. Temperance was a key campaign of White's. She was a successful and passionate temperance reformer and appeared on many public platforms in support of the cause, addressing up to 20,000 people on one occasion.<sup>34</sup> In 1879 the Adventists founded the American Health and Temperance Association with Dr John H. Kellogg as president. This denominational organisation had two pledges a "teetotal pledge" of abstinence from "alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee and opium and all other narcotics and stimulants" and a less

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<sup>32</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, 1946, 179.

<sup>33</sup> See Sylvester Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, (London 1849), 226-243.

<sup>34</sup> Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 228-229.

demanding “anti-liquor and tobacco pledge”. By summer 1870 James White was able to report that Adventists from Maine to Kansas had rejected meat and evening meals “with hardly any exception”.<sup>35</sup> However, by 1875 she was already concerned by the backsliding of Adventists in matters of health reform. Evidence of these backsliding tendencies could be clearly discerned at summer camp meetings where stands selling meat and fish could be found. J. H. Kellogg would attempt to cleanse the meeting of these harmful substances by buying up the entire stock. On one occasion in Indiana he paid fifteen dollars to have meat, cheese and bakery items thrown into the river only to find that some conference ministers had later rescued the items and distributed them amongst themselves!<sup>36</sup> Adventist clergy were not always in favour of food reform and did not always set an example of good practice to their flock. At one point Kellogg estimated that only two or three Adventists ministers did not eat meat. Numbers claims that by the turn of the nineteenth century vegetarianism was more the exception than the rule in Adventist households.<sup>37</sup>

Numbers claims that Ellen G. White blamed this backsliding on “extremists in the church who had given food reform a bad name”.<sup>38</sup> He accuses Ellen G. White of being the “most prominent backslider of all”. Following on from her 5 June 1863 vision Ellen became a vegetarian. In August 1864 she wrote that she had been without meat for nearly a year.<sup>39</sup> On 6 March 1869 she wrote “I have not changed my course a particle since I adopted the health reform ... I broke away from

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<sup>35</sup> Cited in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 219.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts IV*, 153. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 482.

everything at once, flesh meat, and butter and from ‘three meals’”.<sup>40</sup> From some time in the early 1870s Ellen G White was eating meat from time to time. In 1892 she described in a letter the difficulties she experienced in Australia:

I am suffering more now for want of some one who is experienced in the cooking line, to prepare things I can eat. The cooking here in this country is in every way deficient. Take out the meat, which we seldom use, – and I dare not use it here at all, – and sit at their tables and if you can sustain your strength, you have an excellent constitution. Food is prepared in such a way that it is not appetizing, but is having the tendency to dry up the desire for food. I would pay a higher price for a cook than any other part of my work.<sup>41</sup>

White finally became vegetarian in January 1894, when following a temperance lecture in Brighton, Australia, a Catholic woman in the audience asked White whether she ate any meat. On hearing that White occasionally ate meat the woman fell on her knees and begged White to have compassion on the suffering of animals. White later wrote to friends in America of the incident:

when the selfishness of taking the lives of animals to gratify a perverted taste was presented to me by a Catholic woman, kneeling at my feet, I felt ashamed and distressed. I saw it in a new light, and I said, I will no longer patronise the butchers. I will not have the flesh of corpses on my table.<sup>42</sup>

White was concerned to tackle the backsliders. Numbers notes a 1900 testimony in which she blames the “low state” of the church on the apathy and opposition of its membership to health reform: “The Lord does not now work to bring many souls

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<sup>40</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies II*, 371-372, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Ellen G. White, Letter 19C, 1892, cited in Ellen G. White Estate, *A Critique*, 79.

<sup>42</sup> Ellen G. White, letter 73a, 1896, cited in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 233.

into the truth because of the church-members who have never been converted [to health reform], and those who were once converted but who have backslidden.”<sup>43</sup>

White would seem to have espoused all the major nineteenth-century arguments that were commonly proposed in favour of vegetarianism. These included a call for a diet that was more humane as well as a belief that meat consumption was responsible for many diseases. Throughout her life, White also maintained a belief, common in nineteenth-century food reform circles, that meat consumption inflamed the passions.

The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries were a period of change with increased urbanisation and an era of humanitarian activity with campaigns for temperance, anti-vivisection, female suffrage, and improvements in child labour laws. Vegetarianism benefitted from reputation of the work of John Harvey Kellogg and the movement experienced a period of growth.

### **The ‘San’ and John Harvey Kellogg**

The Battle Creek Sanitarium, better known to many of its guests as “the San”, grew in fame after Dr John Harvey Kellogg was appointed to manage it. It was through reading the works of Sylvester Graham that Kellogg decided to cut meat from his diet.

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<sup>43</sup> Ellen G. White, “A Revival in Health Reform”, *Testimonies VI*, 371 – 73, Cited in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 234.



In the late 1870s, J. H. Kellogg established the Battle Creek Sanitarium Health Food Company to produce granola, whole grain cereals and other types of crackers, along with Caramel Cereal Coffee, a coffee substitute. A decade earlier James Caleb Jackson had developed Granola, the first breakfast cereal; it was a success, but it had to be soaked overnight before eating. After developing additional meat substitutes, Kellogg formed the Sanitas Nut Food Company in 1899. In the early years, Sanitas sold most of its products to former patients of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, including the flaked cereal products developed by Kellogg. Several Sanitas products were nut-based substitutes for meat, including Nuttose. These were generically called vegetable or nut meats and, as demand grew in the 1890s, the company began shipping its products to health food stores and restaurants.

As the food company grew, and competitors and imitators entered the market, Battle Creek became the “home of health food”. Kellogg agreed that his brother, W. K. Kellogg, who had worked at the Sanitarium as an administrator, should run the food company, freeing J.H. Kellogg to concentrate on his patients, his writing and his inventions. A company was established with J. H. Kellogg as the majority shareholder. He gave shares to all his medical staff, in lieu of salaries, and, whilst he was in Europe, W. K. Kellogg bought up the shares and ultimately became the majority shareholder. The famous Kellogg carton legend, “The Genuine Bears This Signature – W. K. Kellogg” has the name not of its inventor but of his brother. Little love was lost between the two, and towards the end of J. H. Kellogg’s life, W.

K. Kellogg was involved in a plan by the Adventist Church to oust J. H. Kellogg from the post of Sanitarium Superintendent and take the San back into their control. The main attraction would appear to be the Sanitarium's wealth. Kellogg served an injunction on the Adventists to prevent them from "intermeddling or interfering with property, business or affairs" of the Sanitarium. During this stay of execution, J. H. Kellogg was taken ill and died. Although it is said by those that knew him well that Kellogg would never have "given an inch or a penny"<sup>44</sup>, his successors made a settlement with the church of \$550,000 and three farms valued at \$75,000.

### **The continuing relationship between transatlantic vegetarians**

During William Metcalfe's first visit to Manchester in 1851, he met Henry S. Clubb, who was then working as a secretary to James Simpson, President of the British Vegetarian Society. Clubb attended the first conference at Ramsgate at which the Vegetarian Society in the UK was established in 1847, and was later the first editor of *The Vegetarian Messenger*. In 1850 he was baptised into the Bible Christian Church. His contact with Metcalfe may have inspired him to immigrate to New York in 1853, where he worked as a journalist. Clubb wrote a series of abolitionist articles which led the pro-slavery lobby, at one point, to offer a reward for his capture! During the Civil War he felt compelled to fight for abolition, but his pacifist principles caused him some difficulties which he resolved by not carrying a gun. In

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<sup>44</sup> Gerald Carson, *Cornflake Crusade, From the Pulpit to the Breakfast Table*, (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1957), 252.

1876 he was invited to become the minister of the Philadelphian Bible Christian Church, a role he accepted and held until his death in 1921. Clubb was also president of the American Vegetarian Society for some time.

Correspondence continued between Reverend James Clark,<sup>45</sup> minister at Christ Church, Salford, and W. E. A. Axon, a member of the Church and a secretary of the British Vegetarian Society, in 1901, demonstrates the continuing links between the Bible Christian Churches and the Vegetarian Societies on both sides of the Atlantic. Reverend Metcalfe suggested an exchange of visits with Clubb, who was at that time living in America. Clubb proposed a visit to England in August of that year. Metcalfe wrote to Axon about the proposed arrangements for Clubb's visit and how Clubb should be received by "the Society" noting: "He belongs to us but as Pres. V. S. USA our V. S. would like to show its respects."<sup>46</sup> Correspondence between Axon and Clark, returning from a visit to America in 1901 demonstrates that the two churches retained strong links and that on both sides of the Atlantic the Bible Christians were still key players in the secular Vegetarian Societies they had helped to found.<sup>47</sup>

### **Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventist Institutions**

In 1904 and 1905 White helped to choose three sanitarium sites and was personally involved in establishing sanitariums near four other cities, seeing

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<sup>45</sup> This James Clark is not to be confused with the James Clarke who went to America. The latter was not successful in establishing a church but remained in America. For more information see Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast*, 85-86

<sup>46</sup> Letter from W.E.A. Axon to the Reverend James Clark, MCL MISC/1050/11

<sup>47</sup> Correspondence between W.E.A. Axon and the Reverend James Clark, MCL MISC/1050.

sanitariums as tools for promoting the Seventh Day Adventist message: “Our sanitariums are to be established for one object, - the advancement of present truth.”<sup>48</sup> She inspected locations and, on at least one occasion, personally borrowed two thousand dollars to help to buy property in Paradise Valley in California. She was also very involved in the financial and staffing arrangements for Loma Linda Sanitarium, also in California.<sup>49</sup> Bulthuis sees the call for medical missionaries and instruction in food reform as a move from the early message of temperance as a step toward purification for the Christian and toward food theology as external: “the carrot of good health dangled to bring others to the real truth of Adventism.”<sup>50</sup> This was a move away from the earlier message of physical puritanism as part of the Christian life that those awaiting the Second Coming must follow. The calls for medical missionaries and food instruction were about bringing others to the Adventist movement through the health message.

White also recommended that Seventh Day Adventist hygienic restaurants and treatment rooms be established in urban areas to act as “feeders” to the sanitariums outside the cities. White believed such restaurants would bring the third angel’s message to the people.<sup>51</sup> This aspect of the health ministry was not

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<sup>48</sup> Ellen G. White, *Letters to Sanitarium Workers in Southern California*, 1905, Special Testimonies Series B, No.3, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Dorcas Eugene Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., Nashville, Southern Publishing Association, 1965, 335-402, cited in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*.

<sup>50</sup> Bulthuis, “Food for Thought, Food for Action”, 95.

<sup>51</sup> The three angels’ messages in an interpretation of the messages given by the three angels of Revelation 14: 6-12. The Seventh Day Adventist Church teaches that these messages were given to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ and this is a central part of the SDA church’s own mission which is to proclaim the gospel in the light of the revelation of the three angels’ messages. The Third Angel’s message is understood by Adventists to be a warning to Christians who fail to keep the Sabbath on Saturdays that will receive the “mark of the beast”. This will only happen at some future date when everyone is made aware of their obligation to keep the Sabbath. White saw the establishment of SDA restaurants as a way of spreading the Adventist message and bringing people to sabbatarianism.

as successful as medical missionary work, and Numbers suggests that when early restaurants were not a success White's interest in this aspect of the work "began to flag noticeably".<sup>52</sup> However, many capital cities still feature successful Adventist owned and operated vegetarian and, increasingly vegan, restaurants that serve both city workers and tourists with a range of hot meals, salads and juices (but never alcohol). They are closed on Friday evenings and all day and evening on Saturdays – traditionally the busiest times of the week in the restaurant trade – in order to observe the Sabbath. These restaurants do not feature Adventist literature and are not part of any outreach programme today. They are nevertheless one of the few ways in which the non-Adventist public experiences Adventism, although the public may not be aware of it.<sup>53</sup>

The growth of Adventist health institutions led to an increasing need for skilled staff. Dr J. H. Kellogg established several training programmes at a school of hygiene at Battle Creek Sanitarium: from 1877 pre-medical training and health lecturer courses, from 1883 training in nursing, massage and electricity and from 1889 non-technical training for cooks and health missionaries.<sup>54</sup> However, what the Seventh Day Adventist movement really needed was qualified Adventist physicians. Kellogg initially tutored promising students at Battle Creek for a year prior to their attending medical school – in the summers they worked at Battle

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<sup>52</sup> Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 250.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Greenz of Tulse Hill, South London which closes all day on Fridays, serves no alcohol and explains on its website that "Greenz opens on Saturday nights during the winter months only. This is because the restaurant is owned by Seventh Day Adventists, who observe the Sabbath from sunset Friday till sunset Saturday. Given that the sun sets quite late during the height of the summer months, the restaurant is closed on Saturday nights from April till the end of October." <http://greenzrestaurant.com/>

<sup>54</sup> Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 251.

Creek as “cheap help”. However, this scheme proved problematic when the students were trained to use drugs but acquired, to Kellogg and White’s thinking, erroneous medical or spiritual teachings. Although originally reluctant to establish what might be considered a “second rate” medical school, by 1895 Kellogg became convinced he could offer an acceptable four year course with clinical work in Chicago, where the Adventists had several hospitals and a dispensary.

A 1903 schism between the Seventh Day Adventist church and Dr Kellogg led to Kellogg being thrown out of fellowship but winning from the church Battle Creek Sanitarium and the medical training school - the American Missionary College. The need for Adventist physicians became increasingly acute and, unwilling to send students to either an “outside” school or to Kellogg’s school, White finally resolved to create a new medical school. In 1910 the College of Medical Evangelists was established at Loma Linda. This institution is now part of Loma Linda University, making it the only medical school in America to have its roots in the hydropathic tradition.

Ellen White had long realized the potential of health work to spread the message of “the third angel”.<sup>55</sup> These thoughts crystallized during her time in Australia, and she came to realize that medical missionary work was a good way to break down prejudice towards Adventism and to make people more open to the church’s

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<sup>55</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, (Battle Creek: Good Health publishing Company 1890), 121, cited in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 246.

message.<sup>56</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the flagship Battle Creek Sanitarium, the church was running hydropathic institutions in half a dozen locations in America, Denmark and Australia. “God demands that the appetites be cleansed ... Flesh foods are injurious to the physical well-being, and we should learn to do without them.”<sup>57</sup>

During the Great Depression the vegetarian movement fell into a decline with the Battle Creek sanitarium’s fortunes mirroring those of the movement as a whole. In 1943 a Harris poll claimed that there were 3.5 million vegetarians in the United States but this is likely to be inaccurate as polling was an inexact science in that era.<sup>58</sup> The 1940s and 1950s were not successful decades for vegetarianism in the United States but, as in Britain, the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s was favourable to vegetarianism. The culture of the 1980s – conservatism, materialism and consumerism – did not seem promising for the vegetarian movement. However, concerns for the levels of cholesterol in diet, the environmental impact of meat consumption and animal rights were running alongside the self-interest of materialism in this period. PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) was founded in 1980 and went on to achieve a relatively high profile for animal rights in the United States. Although in the early twenty-first century vegetarianism had a higher public profile and was more socially acceptable than previously Americans had never consumed so much meat either: Meat consumption reached

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<sup>56</sup> Ellen G. received a request at the General Conference of the church in 1891 to go to Australia to give “give counsel and assist in church work”. She went to Australia in December 1891 with her son Elder W. C. White and several assistants and remained there from 1891-1900.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. IX, (California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002), 153.

<sup>58</sup> Cited in Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 158.

an all-time high in 2001: per capita consumption of red meat and poultry averaged 219 pounds up from 199 pounds in 1990 and 166 pounds in 1960. Poultry consumption made up a vast majority of this growth.”<sup>59</sup>

Although a high level of observance of vegetarianism among Seventh Day Adventists is generally perceived, as with the Society of Friends (Quakers), little research exists to confirm this. The limited statistics available indicate that in 1958 a study discovered that 27 per cent of children attending five Adventist schools in Southern California followed a vegetarian diet.<sup>60</sup> In the 1990s, about 28 per cent of church members always practised vegetarianism.<sup>61</sup> In 2000 only 30 per cent of those attending the General Conference session of that year - most of them church employees – reported they were vegetarian.<sup>62</sup> This is a relatively low figure when one considers that this was a conference of church employees who one might expect to be more likely to follow White’s dietary testimony. Lockhart notes that in “Adventist settings” food has “invariably” been vegetarian; to demonstrate his point he marshals varied testimony from Ellen G. White’s letter to her children about what she ate while travelling to General Conference dinners hosted by J. H.

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<sup>59</sup> Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 230.

<sup>60</sup> Irma Bachmann Vyhmeister, “A Survey of Children’s Food Attitudes and habits in Five Southern California Seventh-day Adventist Schools” (MS thesis, College of Medical Evangelists School of Graduate Studies, 1958), 57. Cited in Keith Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Bloomington, IN: Malcolm Bull and Indiana University Press, 2007), 179.

<sup>61</sup> Sahlin, “Trends, Attitudes and Opinions”. Cited in Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary*, 120, 80.

<sup>62</sup> “Health Survey Shows That Adventists Should Practice More of What They Preach”, *ANN Bulletin*, 15 March, 2001. Cited in Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary*, 179. Lockhart states that “The Adventist Mortality Study and the Adventist Health Study both give a higher vegetarian figure for the membership – around 50 percent. But given that less than 30 percent of the respondents in each case said that they never consumed meat there is nothing even in these studies to contradict the idea that only about a quarter of the membership has ever been strictly vegetarian.” This is in-line with much market research of consumer diets where the numbers self-defining as vegetarian are far higher than those who can confirm that they *never* eat meat, poultry or fish.



Kellogg and potluck suppers on the Sabbath in the 1870s. However he feels that church members are “less fastidious about what they ingest” in non-Adventist environments:

They are quite likely to drink tea and coffee for example, although as these beverages seldom feature in church surveys, it is hard to know the precise extent. A question about caffeinated drinks in the 1990s survey of grade school students, however, showed that only one-third supported the church’s traditional ban on them. Many Adventists also indulge in the odd glass of wine or beer. Only the church’s Hispanic members strongly adhere to this prohibition, with less than 5 percent indicating that they tend to, or definitely do, agree with consuming alcohol. More generally successful is the taboo on smoking. The GSS records an incidence of tobacco use in its Adventist sample of about 18 percent, and this is probably among the church’s more peripheral members. Among those who attend church every week, the figure is 0 percent.<sup>63</sup>

Current practice regarding the “health message” of Sister White varies considerably among Adventists. Some are strictly vegetarian, others mostly but not entirely vegetarian and still others what J. H. Kellogg termed “unregenerate meat-eaters”<sup>64</sup>. Similarly Adventists exist who drink caffeinated drinks, and a few drink alcohol in moderation or smoke tobacco (although non-prescription drugs are more of a taboo). An anecdotal suggestion has been made that surrounding non-Adventist culture seems to have a part to play in this - that vegetarianism is more popular in areas of the world where the population at large is more open to the vegetarian diet. Similarly, Adventists in wine growing regions are more likely to drink alcohol, in moderation, with food than in areas where drinking alcohol is not such an accepted part of the culture.<sup>65</sup> Writing in *The Adventist Review* in 1988,

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<sup>63</sup> Cited in Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary*, 179.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> This idea was suggested to me in conversation in 2009 with Roland Karlman, the former director of the Ellen G. White Research Centre at Newbold College, Bracknell, Berkshire, but there does not appear to be any research across the SDA worldwide membership to establish whether there

Elvin F. Adams, M.D., an associate director of the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference, complained that most Adventists were unaware of health studies of the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle demonstrating its benefits, and as a result, “the personal health practices of many of our church members are going the wrong way”.<sup>66</sup> The percentage of vegetarians among Seventh-day Adventists was “falling steadily” whilst the consumption of caffeine increased and even alcohol and drugs were “making inroads into our ranks”. Adams also felt the church administration had “gradually weakened its emphasis on health and temperance”. Only one medical doctor at the division level was serving as health and temperance director anywhere in the world; no full time health and temperance directors existed at the union level in North America; and the 58 North American conferences had less than ten full-time-equivalent directors of health and temperance.<sup>67</sup> He attributes this situation to the church’s focus on increased membership which had led to the health message being “deemphasized”.<sup>68</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists make clear their conformity to the Protestant ethic of being “people of the book”. For much of their history scripture was their only

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are differences in their practice regarding vegetarianism, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and non-prescription drugs.

<sup>66</sup> Elvin F. Adams, M.D., “The Health Vision: Faded, Fragmented, or Fulfilled? What 125 years have done to us healthwise”, *Adventist Review*, June 20, 1988, 9.

<sup>67</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized with a representative form of church government with four levels of Church structure leading from the individual believer to the worldwide Church organisation: the local church of individual believers, the local conference, or local field/mission comprising a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory, the union conference, or union field/mission comprising conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country) and the General Conference, the most extensive unit of organization, comprising all unions/entities in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

guide. The belief that Sister White's testimonies are the gift of the spirit of prophecy was never made a test of fellowship, although there was greater acceptance of White's prophetic role from late in 1855.<sup>69</sup> Although Ellen G. White had wanted to make the abstinence from meat, tea and coffee a requirement of membership in 1908, and suggested to the General Conference President, A. G. Daniells, that a pledge should be created for this purpose, these principles never became a "test of fellowship". Whilst members are required to accept that Sister White had the gift of prophecy and that her revelations were divinely inspired, and while members are required to act in accordance with the statement of belief, this does not condemn the consumption of all meat. Daniells did not share White's view, and in fact White's own position changed, perhaps as a result of the lack of support from Daniells – at the General Conference session of 1909 she notes that "we are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship". This is still Seventh Day Adventist policy although the 1981 statement of beliefs does demand that members should abstain from "the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures".<sup>70</sup>

In common with the founders of other Christian vegetarian groups, Ellen G. White made reference to scripture in support of her vegetarian ethic. Like many Christian vegetarians she noted that God had only allowed fallen man to eat flesh and he reaped his punishment for this: the sickness and disease that goes hand in hand with not following the natural laws of diet that God had created. However, only in the twentieth century was the New Testament view of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit which we are to "care for intelligently" promoted in place

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<sup>69</sup> Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Statement of Beliefs, 1981, 22. Christian Behaviour.  
<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>, accessed 16 June 2012.

of the “laws of health”.<sup>71</sup> Lockhart notes that the idea of clean and unclean meats according to Levitical law was only promoted to Adventists in the early twentieth century.<sup>72</sup> This notion appeared in the baptismal vows for the first time in 1951. This may be an attempt to anchor the food theology to biblical texts rather than to the revelations of Ellen G. White.

Kyle T. Bulthuis argues that whilst Adventist food theology has been scaled back in recent times it is “in some ways ... more important now than ever, for their more limited requirements are nevertheless more binding upon their members.”<sup>73</sup> Bulthuis notes that with the decline in hydropathy and its associated dietary reform, Adventist food theology appeared all the more distinctive and “a stronger indicator of identity”.<sup>74</sup> He sees the growth of secular interest in vegetarianism and healthy living in the late twentieth century as allowing Adventists to claim that their “religious beliefs were cutting edge, and still timeless.”<sup>75</sup>

## **Hallelujah Acres**

Another group whose central theme is the Edenic diet as a cure for sickness is Hallelujah Acres, founded by the Reverend George H. Malkmus in 1976. The literature of this group makes no reference to animal welfare or animal suffering. The mission of Hallelujah Acres is to tell Christians that by following the Hallelujah

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 178.

<sup>73</sup> Bulthuis, “Food for Thought, Food for Action”, 117.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

Diet - essentially a vegan, raw food diet with Hallelujah Acres' recommended food supplements - they will be able to recover their health and lead long and healthy lives. Malkmus's books include *Why Christians Get Sick* (1989) and *God's Way to Ultimate Health* (1995). Hallelujah Acres is not a church or a sect. Supporters of the group are likely to remain members of their own Christian community. In this sense it has much in common with earlier Christian vegetarian groups such as the Order of the Danielites and the Order of the Golden Age which were organisations of which one became a member or supporter and received literature and perhaps some outward badge of membership in the case of the Danielite regalia but otherwise continued to worship in one's own community. However, it is an organisation which has gathered followers, has a clear Christian message and health oriented mission and it is a group that is developing successfully. The development of a community with permanent residents is a testament to the strength of the message in attracting supporters.

Malkmus believes whole-heartedly that illness is the result of unnatural diet and that by following God's plan for man, health can be recovered. Malkmus gives regular seminars at Hallelujah Acres, the seventeen acre estate in Shelby, North Carolina, that he shares with his wife Rhonda, a fellow worker in the cause of the Hallelujah Diet. Hallelujah Acres also boasts a vegan/raw food restaurant where the Hallelujah Diet can be sampled. A more recent addition to the site is the development of a residential community of houses that can either be bought off plan or designed to the buyer's specifications. Condominiums are also available

and marketed to those who may not be able to live as a permanent part of the community but who might be seeking a second home.

The Reverend and Mrs Malkmus have chosen to live as part of this community. All of the homes are self-contained and there is no sense of communal living in the lifestyle's descriptions. However, the advantages of having a restaurant offering the Hallelujah Diet, an extensive health food store and a programme of Hallelujah Acres talks and cookery demonstrations onsite are clearly emphasised. The full development includes a lake, a shared swimming pool and various sporting facilities as well as opportunities for walking.

Regular training is provided at Hallelujah Acres for its worldwide team of "Health Ministers". The Health Ministers share Malkmus's message that Christians need not be sick. They also sell Hallelujah Acres' range of books, DVDs and food supplements in their own countries. With its simple teachings, slight theology and its optimistic message that health and longevity are but a raw salad and a glass of carrot juice away, Hallelujah Acres has proved a popular message in a western society where cancer and heart disease are the two major causes of premature mortality. Malkmus's recorded seminars, which include testimonials by people cured of terminal illnesses via the Hallelujah Diet, make for gripping viewing. Yet the Hallelujah lifestyle is a major commitment: not only is it very far removed from the Standard American Diet (S.A.D.) but it also requires distilled rather than tap, purified or bottled mineral water.<sup>76</sup> As might be expected, Malkmus considers not

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<sup>76</sup> The Standard American Diet (S.A.D.) is a term used by researchers to describe the typical American diet of around 50 per cent carbohydrate, 15 per cent protein and 3 per cent fat. This

only meat and dairy products but also alcohol as harmful to good health. As he claims:

Without realising it man has stepped into the arena in defiance of God and changed natural raw food made by God into a man-made artificial, non-living, processed product we call 'food'. All this because man thinks he must improve on the way God made raw food.<sup>77</sup>

The term "Hallelujah Diet" was chosen by Malkmus to express his "praise, joy and thankfulness" after he was healed not only of colon cancer but "all physical problems", following his change to "a more natural diet and lifestyle in 1976".<sup>78</sup> As a Baptist minister of 20 years, he felt compelled to share the good news. Many Christians were initially sceptical but the testimonials from those benefiting from the regimen have led to other converts. Hallelujah Acres was created when Malkmus bought a 50 acres mountain farm in Eidson, Tennessee in 1986 and continued his work from there. His wife Rhonda was one of his initial converts; she lost over 80 pounds within a year of taking up the diet and her arthritis completely disappeared. She became Malkmus's wife in 1992 and George and Rhonda opened a Hallelujah Acres restaurant and health food store in Rogersville in 1992. The couple's original restaurant in Rogersville, Tennessee, was just 11 feet wide and seated 16 people, but within 12 months demand had grown to such an extent that the Malkmuses had to relocate it to a new building with a 56-

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exceeds the dietary guidelines for the recommended amount of fat in the diet (below 30 per cent), and is below the guidelines for carbohydrate (above 55 per cent) and is at the upper end of the guidelines for the amount of protein (below 15 per cent).

<sup>77</sup> George H. Malkmus with Michael Dye, *God's Way to Ultimate Health* (North Carolina: Hallelujah Acres Publishing, 2005), 81.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, xx

customer capacity. However, the restaurant took up so much of their time that they eventually closed it in 1994 and relocated the ministry back to their ranch. They focussed on reaching large numbers of people through seminars, books, appearances, newsletters, video and audio tapes and radio and television appearances. In 1997 the Malkmuses relocated their ministry to its current location - a former Bible College set in 17 acres of land in Shelby, North Carolina.

Malkmus makes no discernible references to the rights, or welfare, of animals in his books. His emphasis is entirely on the health of the human body. References to God and biblical texts are few and the theological case for a vegetarian diet is made more from experience than from scripture. Malkmus cites the text that is most popular with Christian vegetarians, Gen. 1:29, as scriptural justification for a vegan, raw food diet. He also uses other scriptures in support of taking responsibility for one's own health, among them 1Cor. 3:16-18:

Do you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Whilst Malkmus's books and videos are peppered with references to Christianity, the bulk of his message is practical. He readily acknowledges that his programme is not a question of faith and that without faith one will still benefit from the change of diet and lifestyle. However, in a footnote to *Why Christians Get Sick* he cautions:

Although this book is written for Christians, it is possible, dear reader, that you are not a true Bible Christian. If not, please consider that you can apply all the



principles of this book and live a long, healthy life, but spend eternity separated from God and heaven!<sup>79</sup>

For Malkmus good health is a matter of following the natural laws and instructions given to mankind. In a video recording of one of his meetings he says that, just as there is a law of gravity that says that if you drop an object it will fall to the floor, there are laws that relate to other aspects of life that must be followed. Failure to do so will lead to negative consequences such as sickness. It is not a matter of God punishing with illness those who have not lived a good enough life, or who have lacked faith in Him, nor is it that dying of cancer, despite the fervent prayers of the Christian community, is merely “God’s will”. This quite neatly deals with at least one aspect of the eternal question of the “problem of evil”. Sickness is a consequence of a failure to follow God’s laws and his advice on how to live, and can be reversed.

Many similarities may be found between the teachings of Ellen G. White and those of George Malkmus. Malkmus briefly examines the attitudes of various Christian denominations in *Why Christians Get Sick* and notes of the Seventh Day Adventists that

One of the more interesting teachings is that they are to eat no pork and that it is best to eat no meat at all. Though the followers of this religion have not all followed these dietary teachings, statistics show that Adventists have less incidence of cancer and in general are healthier than the average American. Further, as a group, they live six years longer than the average American.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Malkmus, *Why Christians Get Sick*, 123.

<sup>80</sup> George Malkmus, *Why Christians Get Sick*, 16.

Malkmus, like White, teaches that alcohol, coffee and tea should be avoided, although he goes further and recommends avoiding carbonated beverages and all other soft drinks, artificial fruit drinks and canned juices. His recommendations are more demanding than White's. Whilst grains and herb teas, and some more naturally sweet items are tolerated on a "transitional" diet, the "ideal diet" should be entirely raw food, with everything prepared freshly and using no frozen, canned or bottled ingredients.

Like Dr J. H. Kellogg, Malkmus believes that exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle. He considers that God created man to be physically active and that from creation until relatively recently man laboured daily to grow his own food. This provided him with the necessary activity he needed. Whilst he believes it is beneficial to Christians to get back to the land and grow some organic food in their own gardens – however small – he argues that the lack of vigorous exercise is one reason why Christians get sick. He suggests that part of a healthy lifestyle would include a daily walk, optimally at four miles an hour.

One of the most common themes in Christian vegetarianism is the idea of vegetarianism bringing about a new Golden Age and the return to Eden. Malkmus invokes this imagery when he talks of his goal to "make 'Hallelujah Acres' into a modern 'Garden of Eden', from which God's natural ways for healing and health will flow to Christians around the world!"<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Malkmus, *Why Christians Get Sick*, 122.

Hallelujah Acres appears to be a loose affiliation of interested individuals. It has neither established a sect nor sought to become a church. Membership is not required; there is no liturgy and no mention of a place of worship at Hallelujah Acres. Health ministers, of which there are 5,700 from all 50 US states and 67 foreign countries, provide Hallelujah Acres' lifestyle information in a Christian context but, as with all Hallelujah Acres material, the emphasis is clearly on temporal rather than spiritual recovery.

The work of Hallelujah Acres has become increasingly commercialised over the past ten years with an increasing emphasis on products for sale and courses that can be purchased. There are now four 'Hallelujah Acres Lifestyle Centres' which offer courses in living the Hallelujah Diet. These centres are operated as franchises and both the franchises and the Hallelujah Acres Health Minister courses are partly promoted as business income. The information on the Hallelujah Diet is available on the site and although the supplements form part of the diet one could follow the principles of the diet without them. Although 'packages' at the Lifestyle Centres cost from \$1295 a week; research papers, online videos and online courses such as '60 days to eliminate sickness' are all available free of charge. The commercial aspect of Hallelujah Acres work is reminiscent of White's endeavours to bring health and faith to people through the Church's Medical Missionary work and its Seventh-day Adventist restaurants.

## Conclusion

From William Cowherd's concern for the poor, which led to the distribution of his vegetable soup and the opening of vegetarian restaurants in Manchester by members of the Vegetarian Society who were Bible Christians, to the invention of Graham flour, Christian vegetarians can be shown to have made a tangible and lasting impression on the diet of the UK and USA. In Kellogg the influence of Graham can be seen in the creation of new foods along Grahamite principles, which are still produced under the Kellogg name today. The Bible Christian Church may have had an indirect influence on Kellogg, but certainly not to the extent suggested by the Reverend Broadley. Rynn Berry, historical advisor to the North American Vegetarian Society notes:

To be sure Reverend Metcalfe did persuade Sylvester Graham, the food reformer, to become vegetarian, and Graham indirectly influenced Kellogg, but it was really Ellen White the founder of the Seventh Day Adventists who built the Battle Creek Sanitarium, not Kellogg, and it was Ellen White, and the Seventh Day Adventists who provided Kellogg with the physical setting (the Battle Creek Sanitarium), the education (Ellen White financed Kellogg's education) and the religious impetus to invent cornflakes – not the Bible Christians.<sup>82</sup>

However, there is an unbroken thread amongst vegetarians on both sides of the Atlantic, from 1817 onwards, which gave rise to a cross-fertilization of ideas amongst Christians with a concern for temperance, human health and spiritual well-being. This led to the development of a whole industry of foods in America which eventually made their way back across the Atlantic to the UK where they

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<sup>82</sup> Correspondence between Derek Antrobus and Rynn Berry, historical advisor to the North American Vegetarian Society, cited in Antrobus, *Guiltless Feast*, 91-92.

also proved popular. Cowherd sought to re-establish a new “Golden Age” and a return to the Edenic diet that would bring man closer to God. Metcalfe, Graham and Kellogg all played a part in influencing the eating habits of the UK and the USA. They did not bring about mass vegetarianism, but they certainly influenced the diet of their nations to some extent, and can be said to continue to do so.

The Bible Christian Churches of Philadelphia and Salford and, later, the Vegetarian Societies of America and Britain maintained a network of correspondence and visits throughout the life of the two Christian communities. They were sister communities in both their religious and their more secular vegetarian networks. The Philadelphian community and the American Vegetarian Society were clearly influenced by their English counterparts, and they published both histories of their church and cookery books in imitation of the Salford church. The network within America between the Christian communities espousing vegetarianism and the American Vegetarian Society was such that, in the late 1890s, the American Vegetarian Society was based at the Sanitarium in Battle Creek where it had a library and meeting rooms. Churches on both sides of the Atlantic continued to support the expansion of the vegetarian movement in their own and each other’s countries for the lifetime of the churches. The transatlantic vegetarian movement discussed here contributes to the more general understanding of transatlantic religious networks and their social and political concerns, in the period. Although a small nonconformist sect, the Bible Christian Churches had a great influence on their communities and, through the social and political issues they supported, in both nations. Many religious groups that set sail

for America maintained such networks and advanced social issues using a transatlantic network for the exchange of publications and dialogue on how to best take progressive movements forward.<sup>83</sup> The Bible Christian Church contributes to our understanding of this dynamic in religious communities and highlights how even small religious communities can have an impact on society disproportionate to their size.

The Seventh-day Adventists and Hallelujah Acres set themselves apart from other Christian vegetarian sects and churches in focussing strongly on the health benefits of the diet and the importance of taking care of the “temple of the holy spirit”. Both were founded in the USA and, unlike the main Christian vegetarian groups in the UK, neither places much emphasis on the diet’s humanitarian aspects. Animal suffering is sometimes mentioned in Ellen G. White’s writings, but ranks after the concern to subdue the passions with a vegetarian diet. She focusses on the need to lead a simpler life by having a simpler diet, to avoid those items of food that would harm the physical body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and to reduce expenditure on luxurious, and often less healthy foods, that could be better spent on missionary work. A possible explanation of this concern for health and longevity might be that Sylvester Graham was the main proponent of the modern health food movement in the USA. He greatly influenced James

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<sup>83</sup> See, for example, John Wolffe, “Transatlantic Visitors and Evangelical Networks 1829-1861”, [oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk), accessed 5 August 2013 and Yoon, Young Hwi, “The spread and transformation of antislavery sentiment in the transatlantic evangelical network : 1730s-1790s.” Ph.D thesis, University of Warwick, 2011.

Caleb Jackson who ran the water cure establishment and Graham led Kellogg to convert to the vegetarian diet. Although Seventh-day Adventists believe White's teachings were divinely inspired, she at the very least was exposed to contemporary thinking on food reform and lifestyle. In nineteenth-century America food reform was Grahamism. When Malkmus was diagnosed with cancer he sought advice from Lestor Roloff, an Evangelist friend in Texas. Roloff who was considered a "health nut" and styled "Carrot Juice Roloff" was exposed to a tradition that had its roots in Grahamism. Malkmus left the ministry and moved to a small town in Florida where he attended a nutritional institute and immediately felt the benefit of putting this new found knowledge into practice.

The British tradition of vegetarianism - the Concordium, the Cowherdite Bible Christians of Salford, the Order of the Golden Age and the Order of the Cross, for example – has its roots in the Christian mystic tradition of Jacob Boehme and Emmanuel Swedenborg. This tradition emphasises vegetarianism as a return to Eden and the Golden Age, of vegetarianism breaking down the barrier between man and God created by the Fall. For Swedenborg "Eating the flesh of animals, considered in itself, is somewhat profane".<sup>84</sup> In this tradition, whilst the health benefits of vegetarianism are often highlighted, they are not the primary reason for recommending the diet. There is also an element of pantheism in this tradition – that of God in all creation. This leads to more of a focus on the suffering that meat production causes to animals; all UK Christian vegetarian traditions have humanitarianism as a central theme. However, there are links between these two

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<sup>84</sup> Emmanuel Swedenborg, *Arcana Caelestia*, (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1983), paragraph No. 1002.

traditions of Graham and Swedenborg. The American Transcendentalists were connected with the Concordium at Alcott House, Ham Common (named after Bronson Alcott). Graham may have come to vegetarianism after meeting the Philadelphia vegetarians, and Dr J. H. Kellogg and Reverend William Metcalfe certainly shared a platform as prime movers in the American Vegetarian Society. Vegetarianism was always a small world and links – even transatlantic ones – were close. The secular vegetarian movement – the national vegetarian societies which were not denominational in membership – welcomed all vegetarians whatever their philosophical reason for promoting the diet. Yet Graham's influence on the American tradition and Swedenborg's on the British has evidently led to Christian vegetarian strands that, whilst they have much in common, led the American tradition to place greater emphasis on the benefits of the diet to human health. Although the Swedenborgian inspired tradition was upheld on both sides of the Atlantic by the Bible Christians, Graham's influence was more dominant in American culture than the influence of the Philadelphian sect and led to an American tradition that placed an emphasis on physical health.



## **PART IV: REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN VEGETARIANISM**

### **a. Key issues**

Christian vegetarianism in the UK developed in four main stages: the first beginning in the early nineteenth century and culminating in 1847 with the founding of the Vegetarian Society; the second in the late nineteenth century; and the third in the early twentieth century and the fourth from the 1960s. At each stage vegetarianism has been influenced by other important ideas in society.<sup>1</sup> However, vegetarianism's social location and religious connotations have changed with each phase.

In its first phase vegetarianism was linked to northern artisan and lower middle class radicalism. The role of sectarian Protestantism in particular was crucial to the development of the vegetarian movement. William Cowherd's Bible Christian Church in the North West of England and James Pierrepont Greaves's utopian community were responsible for the movement's establishment.

During this first phase a number of other sects were established which promoted vegetarianism to their flock either as a condition of membership or as a preferred and beneficial way of living the temporal and/or spiritual life. These included the Seventh Day Adventists, the Order of the Golden Age, the Salvation Army and the Order of the Danielites. Only the more mainstream denominations, for which

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<sup>1</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 59.

vegetarianism was not a condition of membership, the Salvation Army and the Seventh Day Adventists, have survived to the present day.

As the development of Christian vegetarian ideas moved into its second phase, the movement retained its established artisan, radical constituency, but also reached out to middle class progressives and advocates of “new thought” such as the theosophists.<sup>2</sup> The role of Christianity was reduced, although it remained significant. By the end of this second period most groups established in the first period no longer existed, and by the third period of vegetarianism, the 1960s, they were largely forgotten, even by the vegetarian community. The Order of the Cross was founded in October 1904, during the second phase, and although the Quakers existed from the 1650s, the first denominational animal welfare organisation, the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Society, was founded by Quakers in 1890. Twelve years later the first denominational vegetarian society was also established by the Friends. The Orders of the Golden Age, Cross and Danielites all flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, although small, the Order of the Cross has survived into the twenty-first century.

From the 1880s the enthusiasm for Eastern religions became widespread. By the 1960s vegetarianism had become most commonly associated with youth culture and counter-culture and alternative lifestyles, leading to the mistaken impression

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<sup>2</sup> New Thought movement developed in the nineteenth century as a belief system that brought together a collection of religious organisations, authors, secular organisations and individuals who developed the American philosopher, mesmerist, healer, and inventor Phineas Parkhurst Quimby’s (1802–66) teachings on illness originating in the mind as a consequence of erroneous teachings.

today that modern vegetarianism dates from this period. Although the market for health foods and vegetarian restaurants grew in this period, vegetarianism was not part of mainstream culture. The famous London vegetarian restaurant chain, *Cranks*, was founded in 1961 in the then quiet backwater of Carnaby Street: the name was a self-deprecating comment on how the founders felt followers of a wholefood vegetarian diet were viewed at that time. Vegetarianism in this period was, at least in part, influenced by the youth and counter-cultural interest in religions and practices of the East such as Buddhism, meditation and yoga, many of which had close ties to vegetarianism. From the 1960s individual Christians within mainstream churches sought support from their churches for animal welfare and vegetarianism. Frequently disappointed, some were inspired to set up a new wave of denominational or ecumenical animal welfare and vegetarian groups.

As well as specifically denominational Christian animal welfare groups, ecumenical groups of Christians exist seeking to promote animal welfare and vegetarianism, including the CVAUK and the Fellowship of Life. Although these small grass-roots groups may not have a great impact on the mainstream churches, they demonstrate that Christian vegetarians have always sought some outlet for their views and a like-minded fellowship. Without the option of joining a vegetarian church such as the Bible Christian Church, and perhaps uncomfortable with the heterodox aspects of the mystical alternatives such as the Order of the Cross, some Christians in the later twentieth century created new versions of the Order of the Golden Age – a specifically Christian response to the issues of animal welfare and vegetarianism.

Where more mainstream Christian groups promote vegetarianism, they do so for a range of reasons which usually grow out of the group's existing concerns including the Quakers' pacifism and reverence for all life, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Salvation Army belief that vegetarianism reduces the desire for alcohol and the Seventh Day Adventists' concern for human health.

One surprising aspect about Christian vegetarian sects is how little these groups' liturgy has reflected their dietary beliefs and practices. Vegetarianism and the protection of the animal kingdom might be expected to be a constant refrain in the liturgy. However, only the Bible Christians and the Order of the Danielites had a specifically vegetarian liturgy with some hymns and prayers reflecting the diet of the membership. Even in these groups the vegetarian aspect was relatively small.

Other groups such as the Order of the Golden Age never sought to create a separate church; their members continued to be active within their own Christian communities. The larger denominations in which vegetarianism was not a condition of membership might not have wished to be seen to be elevating dietary reform within their churches, why the Order of the Cross - a group that remains a fellowship of vegetarians - makes only a few slight references in hymns to animals remains a mystery. Hymns such as No. 133, "Make me a friend of helpless things/Defender of the weak" which could apply to animals, and hymn No. 141 "Creatures too, both great and small - /Father-Mother's children all" are two

examples.<sup>3</sup> Enquiries of a Trustee of the Order of the Cross about why there were so few references in the Order's hymns and liturgy to animals were met with surprise as though it was not a matter that she had previously considered. However, she was not able to offer an explanation. Perhaps when a community is in agreement on a matter it is not terribly important to inculcate that message at every opportunity.

Contemporary attempts have been made to create a modern day liturgy for animals such as *Hymns for Creatures Great and Small*, an ecumenical booklet of 40 selected animal hymns, set to well-known hymn tunes for use at animal blessing services, demonstrations and vigils. This is published by the self-titled "animal's padre", James Thompson, whose previous affiliations include being a minister in the Baptist, Congregational and Anglican churches. His own website describes him as the "most outspoken cleric on the subject of animal liberation within Britain today".<sup>4</sup> However such hymns as Thompson's version of "Onward Christian Soldiers", entitled "Against the Cull: A Hymn for the Care of Cows and Badgers", seem unlikely to win the hearts and minds of mainstream churches for some time:

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<sup>3</sup> *Hymns for Worship with Tunes*. London: The Order of the Cross, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cva.uk/homecall.co.uk/james/Page%201.htm>, accessed 5 June 2012. James Thompson (born 1930) in Holywell in clwyd. Studied at Glasgow Bible Training Institute in 1948 for a term, became a full-time Baptist pastor in Bradford, studied for four years at Congregational ministry and became a Congregationalist minister in 1962, in 1966 he received further training at Oxford University and became a Church of England minister in Doncaster. He first experienced vegetarian food in the halls of an American sect in London in 1954 The Pillar of Fire Christian Centre and the Alma White Bible College in Hendon. His concern for animal welfare grew over a long period through his contact with farming and hunting his parishes. For more information on Thompson see Gilheany, *Familiar Strangers*, 173-185.

Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war;  
Overcoming evils in Welsh farming law.  
Fighting for our bovine friends, tethered through their life;  
Fouly abused as milk machines: a terrifying plight!

*Onward Christian soldiers; Christ will be our light.  
We will fight this evil as champions for the right.*<sup>5</sup>

It does, however, have a certain continuity with William Cowherd's attempts at verse, in defence of vegetarianism, that were later set to music in the Bible Christian hymnbook in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Those groups where vegetarianism was mandatory were small sectarian ones, and by and large remained so. Vegetarianism never truly reached out into the mainstream churches like the comparable message of temperance which was taken up by all the mainstream churches – non-conformist, established, even Catholic – by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Advocates of vegetarianism often referred to their diet as the “higher form of temperance” in this period and spoke of a simple vegetarian diet as a “temperate diet”. However, while temperance moved from a secular movement to one which its original proponents felt had become wholly concentrated on preaching to the converted within the

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.all-creatures.org/ap/hymn-cows.html>. 28 September 2009

<sup>6</sup> For examples of Bible Christian liturgy see Samantha Jane Calvert, “The Beefsteak Chapel: A study of the influence of the Rev. William Cowherd's Bible Christian Church, Salford on the Modern Vegetarian Movement in England 1809 – 1932”, MA dissertation for the University of Gloucestershire, 2004, Appendix A, 50 – 52.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians, The Temperance Question in England, 1815 – 1872*, London, 1971, 165. Although Catholic teetotalism was quite limited, Father Mathew and a few other priests in Ireland achieved considerable success. For more information see Harrison, 165.

movement; vegetarianism remained, with a few exceptions, a secular movement that never infiltrated the mainstream churches.<sup>8</sup> Meat eating was not associated with the same evils as alcohol - the public house, gaming and drunken behaviour - and their consequent negative effects on society. As a result it was not seen as a particular challenge to the Christian life, either as a distraction from the spiritual life or an impetus to stray from the duties of hearth and home. However the temperance movement provided a social location for vegetarian activity; and female temperance workers, in common with their male counterparts, were drawn to vegetarianism. Women were active in both the secular Humanitarian League diet department and in the Women's Vegetarian Union established by Alexandrine Veigelé with the aim of "promoting a purer and simpler dietary".<sup>9</sup> Many Christian vegetarian sects in this period eschewed the gin palace and the ale house along with the "flesh-pots". The Booths believed vegetarianism reduced the desire for alcohol and in the 1920s a vegetarian diet was still mandatory in Salvation Army "homes for inebriates".<sup>10</sup> Amongst contemporary Christian vegetarian groups abstinence from alcohol is also quite usual, but the reasons for its adoption differ from the nineteenth century and are now most often connected with health benefits or the concept of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There was even an attempt at a junior league of vegetarianism, the Ivy Leaf Society, founded by Frances Boulton and journals aimed at children were produced such as *The Children's Garden* and later *The Daisy Basket*. However, these

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<sup>8</sup> The temperance reformer Joseph Livesey held this view by the end of his lifetime. See Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 192.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 167.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

secular vegetarian organisations for children were never so numerous, nor so widespread, as the temperance Bands of Hope.

This study set out to consider the influence of the religious on the secular and it was anticipated that many of these groups/sects would have had more impact on the mainstream secular vegetarian organisations. However, this is not the case. A strong relationship existed between the Bible Christian Churches and the Vegetarian Society both in the UK and USA, but the majority of groups concentrated on their own flock rather than carrying their mission to the outside world. However, individuals within these groups/sects have sometimes chosen to become advisers, spokespeople, or trustees of secular vegetarian or animal welfare organisations.

In October 2009 a leading story in *The Times* discussed Lord Stern's view that methane emissions from cows and pigs put "enormous pressure" on the world and his prediction of how much current attitudes and behaviours regarding meat eating must be altered in order to address climate change.<sup>11</sup> Such environmental concern, and the action taken by governments worldwide to provide sustainable solutions, might be what will finally bring society to reconsider the vegetarian diet in large numbers. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries environmentalism and animal welfarism often go hand in hand as a 'package' of beliefs. Although environmentalism was not a key issue for nineteenth-century vegetarians the

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<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 27 October 2009.



protection of the environment through a vegetarian diet will no doubt be a key refrain in the campaigning of future Christian vegetarians.

## **b. Conclusion**

This study has taken a prosopographical approach to the development of modern Christian vegetarianism over a period of two centuries. This allows for important points of similarity and difference to be noted among the founders and members of these groups. There has been little previous research in the field that has focussed exclusively on the beliefs and practice of Christian vegetarians.

This study demonstrates that the early Christian vegetarian sects were founded by charismatic leaders influenced by Christian mysticism and the writings of Swedenborg, Tryon and Boehme and that these groups led to the later development of the secular movement. Later groups either acted as a point of reference for Christians who remained members of their own churches or preached the vegetarian message to their own faithful. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of denominational groups, starting with the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Society and later the Friends' Vegetarian Society. The late twentieth century and early twenty-first century saw the creation of umbrella organisations for these denominational groups as well as the increasing use of the internet, including internet-only groups such as the Way in the Wilderness.

This research contributes to the current knowledge of the history of the vegetarian movement, and in particular the place that radical Christian groups have in the modern history of the movement. Due to the paucity of research in relation to some of the groups discussed here such as the Quakers, Seventh-day Adventists and the Salvation Army this study has little historiography to challenge. However, my research demonstrates a wide range of primary source material from a greater number of Christian vegetarian groups than even I had supposed to have existed at the outset, leading to a predominantly English focus on the subject. Some of the sects and denominational groups discussed have rarely been the subject of scholarly enquiry, and their beliefs and practices have not previously been analysed in detail, among them the more recent denominational and ecumenical animal welfare and vegetarian groups and some of the nineteenth century sects, such as the Order of the Golden Age, the Order of the Cross and the Order of the Danielites. The vegetarian teachings of the Salvation Army, the Quakers and the Seventh Day Adventist movement have also been largely neglected by academics.<sup>12</sup>

My research builds on the substantial doctoral work of Julia Twigg and James Gregory, and provides a more detailed description and understanding of the influences, beliefs and practices of a range of Christian vegetarian sects. It also examines those more mainstream groups for whom vegetarianism was an important aspect for a number of adherents. My work also considers the

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<sup>12</sup> With a few notable exceptions such as Ronald L. Numbers's work on Ellen G. White, *The Prophetess of Health*.

contribution of late twentieth and early twenty-first century denominational vegetarian and animal welfare groups.

This study further confirms the link made by Julia Twigg and James Gregory between vegetarianism and other radical reform movements, and individuals involved in the reform movements, of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It confirms Twigg's view that vegetarianism "rides upon the back of other movements", and demonstrates that the vegetarian movement's rise and fall is connected with the success and failure of other movements. The movement is also subject to macro-environmental factors such as war and peace, as much as internal factors within the movement such as the state of the vegetarian societies' funds or the dynamism of its leadership. Vegetarianism grew out of other reform movements to which the Bible Christian Church and the Concordists were also committed, such as temperance and hydropathy, as well as the various branches of the humanitarian movement such as food and diet and animal welfare and vivisection.

This study agrees with James Gregory that Julia Twigg's assessment of the Order of the Danielites as "light in tone" and reminiscent of the "artistic" circles of Bedford Park, and of the "Queen Anne" movement" is inaccurate.<sup>13</sup> The conclusion agrees with Gregory that the Danielites were a serious Christian vegetarian organisation based upon the Order of Good Templars. This study has also recovered the vegetarian history of the Salvation Army, much of which has been forgotten. The

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<sup>13</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 131.

Booth family's commitment to vegetarianism, the Army's recommendation of vegetarianism to officers in its Orders and its exclusive use of the vegetarian diet into the twentieth century in Salvation Army Homes for Female Inebriates and children as well in as the Salvation Army Hospital at Oriole is largely unappreciated by the Army today. The background of John Todd Ferrier, founder of the Order of the Cross, is unknown by most of his followers (although many would feel that Ferrier would have wanted it that way).

This study demonstrates how and why Christian vegetarianism developed in the nineteenth century and the extent to which it influenced the secular vegetarian movement and wider society. It contextualizes nineteenth-century Christian vegetarianism in the wider movement of temperance and considers why vegetarianism never made inroads into mainstream churches in the way that the temperance movement did. Julia Twigg notes

Although vegetarianism has been connected with sectarianism – notably in the Cowherdite period, though also through Seventh Day Adventism – its more common communitarian association is with groups whose basis is more fragile and whose consciousness of self is more weakly perceived... Vegetarianism is an extraction of certain foods from the generality of food; it is an extraction of certain persons from the generality of people. It sets one apart and gives one a sense of being set apart, while yet being in society. This sense of being in society is important because those who take up alternative ideas – pacifism, growth movement, socialism – find themselves within a minority within society, but unlike the sect, it is not a minority sustained by a community.<sup>14</sup>

Although there are social sub-groups that bring vegetarians together these bonds are weaker than those of kinship or of the sect or church. Social groups are a

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<sup>14</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 426-429.

collection of individuals with shared ideas. This idea of the vegetarian as “outsider” is also noted by Spencer, referring to the counter-culture of the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> Vegetarianism never became part of the mainstream of society and similarly was never a cause taken up by the mainstream churches, unlike temperance. For Gregory the vegetarian movement never stood a chance: meat eating was entrenched; animal-derived materials were too difficult to substitute; provision for vegetarians was lacking; and vegetarians suffered geographical isolation and family opposition.<sup>16</sup> All conspired to draw people back to the “flesh pots”, and the gin palace and ale house with their addictive wares were more likely to win back their customers. The key difference was that meat, unlike alcohol, did not take people away from home and hearth, cause financial hardship or ruin to families or provide them with an alternative to the church and chapel pews. The churches did not have the same motive to promote vegetarianism as a “social good” as they had with temperance and teetotalism.

The success or failure of the vegetarian movement, and particularly of Christian vegetarian churches and organisations, depended in part on the funds available – many finally foundered for lack of adequate financial support – and on the drive and ambition of charismatic, and often determined, leaders. Macro-environmental issues certainly played their part in the growth, or otherwise, of vegetarianism. War might impose food shortages or rationing, but peace might bring about a desire for the animal products that were in short supply in the war years.

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<sup>15</sup> Spencer, *Vegetarianism: A History*, 298.

<sup>16</sup> Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, 187.

Vegetarianism's failure to penetrate the mainstream is perhaps due in part to the humanitarian cause's relative lack of success. Humanitarianism was always a strong argument for vegetarianism. Society changed over the period studied; a number of humanitarian groups were established in the nineteenth century, but these represented Twigg's "minority in society".<sup>17</sup> Their concern for domestic animals and campaigns against vivisection, cock fighting and fox hunting was always from a position of the outsider and the minority hoping to influence society at large. Even within this humanitarian minority, vegetarianism was seen as extreme. Lewis Gompertz of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) - later the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - was a vegetarian who refused to travel by horse drawn carriage, for which he was roundly ridiculed by fellow SPCA members. Legislation on animal welfare often *followed* rather than *led* the change in public habits, and nineteenth century attempts to prevent cruel animal practices were often a fear of misrule rather than a genuine expression of horror at animal fights.<sup>18</sup> The same case could be made for late twentieth and early twenty-first century legislation.

Animal rights campaigners often acknowledge the "soft target" – one is more likely to persuade the public to reject an activity if it can be demonstrated to be cruel and if the majority of society has no stake in it. A recent example is the 2005 Bill that banned hunting with dogs. The League Against Cruel Sports had campaigned for this legislation for eighty years, and for many years opinion polls demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of the population was happy to see fox hunting

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<sup>17</sup> Twigg, "Vegetarian Movement", 429.

<sup>18</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, 245.

banned. They had been shown that it was cruel, and in any event only a small percentage of the population was actively involved in fox hunting or gained a livelihood from those that hunted. Most of the British population lives in urban or suburban areas where the urban fox that is often viewed as welcome wildlife rather than as “pest”. The Countryside Alliance rallied support for large demonstrations in favour of the “sport” of hunting with dogs, but this was merely a show of strength from those who were connected with hunting. The hunting fraternity was regularly identified by campaigners as being land owners, farmers, the aristocracy, gentry and upper middle classes - hunting was clearly associated with class, wealth and privilege, so the public comfortably rejected an activity in which they had no stake and probably never would.<sup>19</sup> Increasingly, the population felt that Wilde’s epigram of the “unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable” held true.<sup>20</sup> Thus the legislation, when it came, would have little impact on society as a whole. To what extent this represents a societal growth in humanitarian sensibilities is questionable. The number of people actively campaigning for hunting’s abolition was probably smaller than those participating in the hunts.

The famous Lynx anti-fur campaign was comparable. Lynx used class and wealth to persuade the public not to wear fur - the “Rich bitch, poor bitch” campaign of 1985 featured the blood-covered corpse of a trapped animal and the wealthy

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<sup>19</sup> An Ipsos Mori poll in December 2012 showed “no sign of opinion shifting in spite of a prolonged campaign by the Countryside Alliance and England’s 320 registered hunts ... It found that 76% are against fox hunting being legalised, rising to 81% for deer hunting and 83% for hare coursing, based on a survey of 1,943 people.” <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/dec/25/britons-fox-hunting-ban-survey>, accessed 5 August 2013. For an interesting discussion on class and the hunting ban see Allyson N. May, *The Fox-Hunting Controversy, 1781-2004: Class and Cruelty*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Oscar Wilde, *A Woman of No Importance*, Act 1. First performed in 1893 at London’s Haymarket Theatre.

woman wearing its pelt as a coat.<sup>21</sup> This campaign has often been cited as having had an effect on public opinion on the unacceptability of fur. However, its success rests as much on the vilification of cold, cruel, calculating, rich women - or perhaps on the vilification of women in general - as it does on the horror for the life taken to make coats for them. Most coats sold by exclusive furriers and top of the range department stores were well beyond the pocket of the ordinary middle or working class woman. Again, it is easy for the public to reject something to which they currently do not have access and which they never expect to afford. Envy, or a dislike of privilege, may play a further part in this rejection. Other animal welfare legislation on the conditions for farm (food) animals such as pigs and caged hens has had little or no effect on the population as a whole. People may welcome better treatment of animals as a salve to their conscience if it comes at no greater expense to their own pockets and does not prevent them from living as they had previously.

Vegetarianism demands much more of its adherents. Every time they eat they must choose from a more limited range of foods than previously, even when this is not convenient, is socially difficult, more expensive or time consuming to prepare. As a result, campaigns for vegetarianism are always a “hard sell” when compared to the “soft campaigns” of hunting or fur. Whilst Britain has always defined itself as a nation of “animal lovers” the animals they love are their companions, and with the exception of a small subset of society this compassion has never extended to all sentient beings. Animals are routinely divided into “pet” and “food”, prompting

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<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of this campaign see Julia V. Emberley, *Venus and Furs: The Cultural Politics of Fur*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998), 25-32 and Brian Luke, *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals*, (Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2007), 214.



the Vegetarian Society's "Puppy on a Plate" poster from 1992. Featuring an attractive and healthy puppy sitting on a dinner plate with a knife and fork on either side, it asked "Why not? You eat other animals don't you?"<sup>22</sup>

However, the Christian vegetarian and animal welfare groups of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were also unsuccessful in penetrating the mainstream Christian churches. Meat consumption was not a threat to the churches unlike alcoholism. For a long time meat and beer seemed in competition with one another – meat eating was a symbol of a "well-fed" family in which the breadwinner did not squander his earnings on drink.

Pacifism was for much of the period discussed here a sectarian cause which was not taken up by the mainstream churches. However, like temperance, pacifism in the twentieth century gained significant levels of support from a minority of mainstream churches, possibly because of the experience and fear of modern warfare. Many mainstream Christians in the late twentieth century supported such causes as the campaign for nuclear disarmament. Vegetarianism may similarly be taken up by the non-sectarian churches if the environmental case becomes sufficiently pressing, through their own experience, to do so.

The Vegetarian Society in Britain was largely founded by two groups of Christians – even if we allow that their views were heterodox – the Salford Bible Christians

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<sup>22</sup> Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1996), 117.

and the Concordium. The Concordium did not survive long after the foundation of the Society but the Bible Christians continued to greatly influence the Vegetarian Society for the lifetime of the church and in the early years the Society was an extension of the church – it supplied the Society with many of its officers, its premises (meetings were held at the church), a place for social functions and a place of worship on the occasion of its annual meetings. Its first president James Simpson also provided much needed financial support in its first few years until his untimely death. It is not surprising therefore that there is a Christian influence in the journals of the early Vegetarian Society.

I had anticipated that my research would demonstrate a Vegetarian Society that, at the outset, was run by Bible Christians, whose work was influenced by them, that relied upon religious justifications, and whose journals demonstrated that influence. I anticipated finding as other researchers had that the religious and particularly the Swedenborgian influence in the Vegetarian Society had declined from the 1870s<sup>23</sup> and that as the Church faded so did its connection with, and influence of the Vegetarian Society. I imagined that an increasingly secular Society might also have contributed to the reduction of the employment of religious arguments to be found in the Society's journals. I was to be surprised on many counts.

Whilst the Bible Christian Church influence on the Society is clearly not as great at the end of the Church's days as it was at its founding, there is a continued

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<sup>23</sup> Julia Twigg makes this assertion, 'Vegetarian Movement', 114

connection between the two which stretches beyond the end of the Church. Even after the closure of the Church the Society continued to have a religious service at its Annual General Meeting weekend led by an ex-minister of the Bible Christian Church. This practice was not discontinued until 1937 some five years after the demise of the last Bible Christian Church. Even then the influence of individual members or interests could still result in a religious ceremony. At the 1957 May meeting in Birmingham there were well attended meetings of the Society of Friends, The Mazdaznans,<sup>24</sup> The Theosophical Society and the Order of the Cross and on the Sunday there was a special service conducted by the Reverend and Mrs Harold Kemmis of the Order of the Cross.<sup>25</sup>

Although there were more officers of the Vegetarian Society who were Bible Christians in the early years of the Society, there was a continued involvement in the affairs of the Bible Christian Church into the early twentieth century and the relationship between the two organisations was strong enough in the 1920s for social functions to be held on Bible Christian Church premises and for the Vegetarian Society to approach the Church to act as its landlord.

The journals of the Vegetarian Society during the life of the Church, and beyond, always included the religious arguments for vegetarianism although, at all times, the arguments promoting the diet's benefit to human health or vitality were advanced more frequently. At the fourth annual meeting of the Society in 1851 the

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<sup>24</sup> Mazdaznanism was a neo-Zoroastrian religion founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Otoman Zar-Adusht Ha'nish, the religion was a revival of sixth-century Mazdakism. Adherents maintained vegetarian diets and practiced breathing exercises.

<sup>25</sup> *The Vegetarian*, Jul-Aug 1957, 97.

President, James Simpson, acknowledges, with some satisfaction, the wide range of beliefs that make up the vegetarian community:

As a society, Vegetarians did not wish to interfere with the conscience of any man and those who joined the Society, did so because they believed it was good to abstain from flesh as food. They might entertain fifty opinions upon the subject, but they were bended together upon the idea that it was good to abstain from one motive or other.<sup>26</sup>

In 1904 W. E. A. Axon contributed a long article on 'Vegetarianism in the Early Christian Church' to *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*.<sup>27</sup> In 1933, after the demise of the Bible Christian Church, under the heading of 'Famous Vegetarians' Marion Reid writes in the same journal of Emanuel Swedenborg "whatever we may think of his beliefs, we too would bow our heads in reverence to the memory of one so simple in his goodness, so humble in his nobility, so lowly in his greatness."<sup>28</sup>

My research suggests that the Vegetarian Society was neither so religious at the outset, nor so secular at the end of the Bible Christian Church, as might have been anticipated. I was surprised to discover that rather than the Church's influence in the Society weakening, it was rather the vegetarianism within the Church that waned after its early proponents such as Cowherd, Gaskill, Scholfield and Brotherton died. The Church lost its charismatic leaders, it lost its radical edge and with it went its essential point of difference. Perhaps it was the case, as Clark

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<sup>26</sup> *Vegetarian Messenger*, Vol. II, (London: Fred Pitman, 1852 (1851), 68.

<sup>27</sup> *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, 7<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 1, 56<sup>th</sup> Year, 1904, 85-92.

<sup>28</sup> *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*, 8<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. XXX, 85<sup>th</sup> Year, 1933, 90.

believed, that the Vegetarian Society had provided an alternative outlet for the furtherance of the vegetarian movement:

Some of our folks went to America, a part of them taking that excursion to abandon their principles, of the rest the scattering process broke down some and only a few families or parts of families remained when I took charge. We are now fewer even than then, the Vegetarian Society having rather given a new direction to the association of abstainers."<sup>29</sup>

The pattern of secularisation in the Vegetarian Society does not support any of the rival chronologies of nineteenth-century secularisation. Unlike Twigg I did not find that the religious articles in the vegetarian journals were ever particularly numerous nor sectarian and I did not find that they reduce in number or frequency with the passing of the decades. Throughout its history the Vegetarian Society has always featured Christian/biblical articles and published details of services and even sermons from the services. These were never as frequent as the appeals made for the health benefits or the economy of the diet. Christian vegetarian articles did not become less frequent after the demise of the Bible Christian Church. There was no obvious peak in religious activity in particular periods of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Although the annual service at the annual meeting weekend of the Vegetarian Society ceased in 1937 the presence of an Order of the Cross service at a May Meeting in 1957 and of meetings of various other vegetarian Christian groups demonstrates that the Vegetarian Society was still very open to a relationship with Christian groups. In 1957 the Vegetarian Society still produced a pamphlet on 'Vegetarianism and the Bible' which was

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from James Clark to W. E. A. Axon dated 20 June 1886, MCL MISC/1050/6.

advertised at 3d. In the 1960s the *British Vegetarian* continued to offer Christian vegetarian articles with no less frequency than in previous decades in the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> Secularisation – as demonstrated by the disappearance of Christian material in the vegetarian journals - came late to the Vegetarian Society then. It is only in the 1970s that we see the demise of the infrequent articles about Christianity or spirituality and vegetarianism (although references to such groups could still be found in the classified advertisement columns). The secularisation of the Vegetarian Society would support Callum Brown's thesis of secularisation not taking place until the late twentieth century. However, even then it came late to the Vegetarian Society and did not happen "quite suddenly in 1963".<sup>31</sup> In fact it happened quite suddenly in the latter part of 1971. It was in October 1971 that the *British Vegetarian* ceased its magazine format and became a newspaper. The newspaper format had shorter articles, more photographs and a lighter tone. Its content contained a disproportionate number of photographs of attractive young women with modelling/beauty queen backgrounds who appearance in the title was justified with just a few words about their interests. This lighter, briefer journal may explain the sudden demise of Christian articles. Even the traditional period for reflecting on Christianity and meat consumption – Christmas – saw no mention of religion. The demise of Christian content may also be in part a result of the wider secularisation of society. Religion was increasingly marginalised in society to the extent that unless an organisation had an explicitly Christian or religious ethos

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<sup>30</sup> See for example Ronald Lightowler, Secretary of the London Vegetarian Society, editorial on 'The Vegetarian Gospel', *British Vegetarian*, November – December 1961, Vol.3, No.6, 331-333. Several articles appeared in the November – December issue of the *British Vegetarian* such as 'Christ Vegetarian a priori', 'Did Jesus eat meat? Eastern Orthodox tradition examined' and 'Non-Think Christians', *British Vegetarian*, November – December 1970, No.6, Vol.12, 499-504.

<sup>31</sup> Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain, Understanding secularisation, 1800 – 2000*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001, 1.

then religion received no place in it. It is also possible that the establishment of groups in the twentieth century such as the Quaker Vegetarian Society, the Fellowship of Life and the Christian Vegetarian Association perhaps provided new outlets for Christian vegetarianism in the same way that the Bible Christian James Clark once felt that the Vegetarian Society had provided an outlet for vegetarianism outside of the Bible Christian Church. Christian vegetarianism is alive even if it is marginalised from the mainstream movement. However, it has to be acknowledged that the number of members of these Christian vegetarian organisations is very small indeed – frequently just a few hundred people. Membership is not a particularly good indicator of interest or support for a subject and the members of these organisations are likely to be a small percentage of the Christian vegetarians in the UK and USA but even allowing for that we are still considering a minority group that has not influenced the majority of Christians in the same way as the temperance movement did.

Until recent times, vegetarianism has invariably been part of an alternative or counter-culture, and consequently has had a minority identity. Mainstream churches have been self-consciously part of popular culture and the establishment. They have been generally conservative and suspicious of alternative cultures, but further secularisation in western society may make even mainstream Christians more conscious of being a minority culture and, as a result, more open to alternative cultures and ideas such as vegetarianism. Andrew Linzey argues that the mainstream churches need to address animal welfare and

rights issues, including vegetarianism. If there is to be any real humanitarian progress in these areas, the churches need to lead the way:

We desperately need a whole new generation of Christians, lay and ordained, who will grasp this issue of an inclusive ministry to all creation. Of course, we must be concerned with the salvation of human beings. Alone among creation, the human species is cruel, greedy and sinful – we certainly need salvation. But animals need also to be saved from cruel, greedy, sinful human beings. Here is a whole new agenda for each national Church, and for every local church.<sup>32</sup>

In this context of human animals as “cruel, greedy, sinful” animals are the victims and take on the role of the perfected innocents – the paschal or sacrificial lamb whose life is taken – often brutally – for human beings who place their preference for the taste of its flesh above the fear and suffering they are causing to their fellow sentient beings. Meat eaters may yet be led to appreciate the importance of food practices:

Indeed, for vegetarians it is not necessarily a concession to accept that historic reasons for meat abstention sometimes had little to do with animal welfare. Rather, by acknowledging the variety of motives for abstention, present-day vegetarians can find in past practice principles which challenge all modern views of food consumption, and so draw meat eaters into a debate that, even if not leading them immediately to vegetarianism, will engender more reflective food practices. Food issues are not just about healthy eating, but about how humans live under God.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Linzey, *Creatures of the Same God, Explorations in Animal Theology*, (Winchester: Winchester University Press, 2007), 168. The Reverend Professor Andrew Linzey is a member of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Oxford, and Honorary Research Fellow of St Stephen's House, Oxford. Professor Linzey previously held the world's first academic post in Theology and Animal Welfare — at Mansfield College, Oxford (1992-2000), and subsequently at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford (2000-2006). Professor Linzey has written or edited 20 books and more than 100 articles.

<sup>33</sup> David Grumett and Rachel Muers, *Theology on the Menu, Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), preface X.



The vegetarian movement has had an impact on wider society, and Christian vegetarians and Christian vegetarian organisations have also influenced the diet of society over the last two centuries. The movement has arguably led to healthier food choices among the populations of the UK and USA, particularly in the area of health foods from peanut butter, cornflakes, granola and muesli through to soya products, and has encouraged and supported wider acceptance of a vegetarian diet and the reduction in meat consumption. However, this success has been very limited – the movement never led to large numbers of strict vegetarians. At its height in Britain in 1992, the Vegetarian Society had 21,000 members including 6,500 junior members and levels of vegetarianism in the population as a whole were never realistically claimed to be more than seven per cent of the adult population.

Mainstream churches and society as a whole may embrace vegetarianism in the future from self-interest, if not compassion. The requirements of our over-populated planet may lead the international community to start to regulate animal husbandry and encourage meat reduction for environmental reasons.

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