

**Religion & Animals Workshop**  
**November 1-3, 2002**  
**Heifer Project Learning Center**  
**Perryville, AR**

**Sponsors:** The Center for Respect of Life and Environment (CRLE) and the Sustainability, Humanities, and Environment Alliance (formerly the Spirituality and Sustainability Alliance) of the Environmental Initiative of the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS)

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Religion and Animals Conference is threefold: (1) to give scholars of religious studies around the nation the opportunity to learn about one another's research, (2) to give teachers of religious studies an opportunity for sharing ways of teaching courses dealing with religion and animals to college undergraduates, and (3) to develop a national network of scholars interested in religion and animals.

**Participants:**

Forrest Clingerman, University of Iowa  
Rick Clugston, CRLE  
Barbara Darling-Smith, Wheaton College  
Frances Flannery-Dailey, Hendrix College  
Herman Greene, Hendrix College  
Laura Hobgood-Oster, Southwestern University  
Randy Lockwood, The Humane Society of the United States  
Jay McDaniel, Hendrix College  
Lynn Poland, Davidson University  
Heather Tallent, CRLE  
Paul Waldau, Tufts University  
Stephen Webb, Wabash College  
Donna Yarri, Alvernia College

**NOTES**

**First Strike Presentation:** by Randy Lockwood

- For more information on the First Strike program, visit the HSUS website at <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11462>.

**Introduction:** by Rick Clugston

- Background on CRLE and its work with Religion & Ecology:
  - Theological Education to Meet the Environmental Challenge (TEMEC)
  - Center for Spirituality and Sustainability, and
  - Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE).
  - See [http://crle.org/prog\\_religion.asp](http://crle.org/prog_religion.asp) for more information.
- *How do we weave our concerns for animals into the greater matrix of the ecological/environmental/sustainability movement?* One example is the Earth Charter
- Conflicts between the two frequently occur with species vs. individual; We are so far away from where we need to be (a just, sustainable world), that we shouldn't get bogged down with these arguments at this point (i.e., between animal rights and environmental advocates and theorists)
- Definition of sustainability: Ecology, Economy and Society with a time dimension; the Earth Charter offers a fairly comprehensive view of sustainability

## Jay McDaniel:

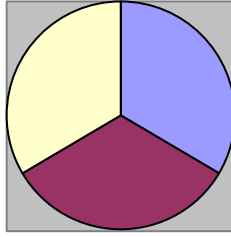
### “What Needs to Happen in Christianity and Other Ways”

#### Ethics:

-Animal Rights -Animal Welfare

#### Spirituality:

-Animals as teachers and spiritual guides  
-mind to mind connection;  
“feelings the feelings”



#### Teachings:

-Communion of Subjects  
-God & Animals  
-Creation as Continuous Process  
(Evolution)

CHART - religious life has three aspects:

1. *Teachings/Understanding/Philosophy*
2. *Ethics/Applying the Teaching/Ritual*
3. *Spirituality/Intention/Attitude*

- The problem of violence in nature Ex: the fox chasing the rabbit
- Is there a calling for humans to live lightly on the earth? Humans and other creatures may not be evolving to any one end, but then what are we being lured toward? In heaven, would predators be weaned from hunting? Are other creatures evolving? You see stories of dogs sharing food with birds, a crow raising a kitten, etc. – these are different relationships between typical predator and prey animals. Maybe they aren’t overcoming genetic predisposition, but are actually participating in moments of recognition, consciousness of love/God.

## Frances Flannery-Dailey:

### “Judaism and the Human-Animal Covenant: Implications for Contemporary Ecology”

- The “image of God” doesn’t necessarily refer to humans, but to creativity, creation without destruction. Therefore, humans should be creative without being destructive. This fits the concept of vegetarianism - if all animals ate plants, there’d be no violence.
- In one story, Adam, the earthling, was originally androgynous. God creates the animals to keep Adam company and to potentially be Adam’s partners. In this story, humans were created before the garden, and the garden was created later for them, yet they were to till and tend to the garden. However, we attained the capacity to discern between good and evil; harmony is broken between humans and earth, humans and animals, male and female. We then continue to choose evil so many times that God decide to wipe us all out, including the animals. As a concession for our sins, God allows us to eat meat BUT the return to paradise would be a return to vegetarianism, nonviolence, and harmony between all creatures, including humans. Is that what evolution is tending toward?
- There is an explicit statement in Deuteronomy that the welfare of the earth, land and animals (good crops, herds, flocks, etc.) is tied to whether or not humans behave morally and develop a socially-just society. Humans are part of nature and the environment, but we have special consciousness and therefore special responsibilities
- The exodus of the Israelites demonstrated that God is concerned with the physical well-being of humans. Therefore, humans should also be concerned with the earth, our home, and not just heaven and what will come. If we really believe that the earth is our potential paradise and not just a transitory place, how differently would we act? And what would that mean about how we treat animals?
- Commandments: There are several related to animal welfare (don’t muzzle an ox when s/he is treading grain, so s/he can eat, too; leave fields fallow some years, and leave food for the wild beasts; the Sabbath is for animals to rest, too). There are also some which infer that animals have moral culpability (a human *or* animal that kills another human can be killed).
- Other passages point out that both the land and beasts suffer when humans are evil. It’s all systemic; God suffers when animals suffer.

### **Paul Waldau:**

- How can we incorporate “religion and animals” into courses? How can we incorporate “religion and animals” into faith-based institutions?
- Issues to examine:
  1. Empirical – How do animals experience the world? What are they like? What can science/ethology teach us?
  2. Images within religious traditions – What claims to they make? What do we do when a tradition’s image is empirically incorrect?
  3. Possibilities – This is where the ethical part comes in; past and present practices and treatment *do* come into play.
- How do you get traditions to engage each other and these issues? If based on a system of ethics, you can also work with secular and even atheist systems. We must all realize that we understand our own tradition’s story, but probably not others, and we *all* have a cultural story. We should look for commonalities and create a dialogue.
- How can we assess other animals (sense of self, morality, culture)? How do you deal with this problem in a religion and animals class? And then how do you tie in the kind of information Randy deals with?
- How do you decide what traditions to teach? And then explain what the believers do vs. what the scholars say about it?
- Practicality: we must engage the Religion and Ecology movement;
- Universities should get local/student groups involved. Get groups with similar interests to cosponsor events and lectures, professors could give lectures to different classes, etc.
- We should post Religion and Animals class syllabi on the web for others (through AAR site), and also promote more and better scholarship.
- How do we get churches and seminaries involved? Possibly lecturing, especially with the environmental connection.
- How to keep Religion and Animals courses from focusing on humans? Bring animals in experientially, presenting them as subjects and not objects.
- Is it too difficult to make Religion & Animals classes comparative, or should they focus on only one tradition? Maybe just focus on two so you can get in-depth but still compare; ex. “Abrahamic traditions and other animals.”
- How to combine an “activist” issue in a course with scholarly objectives? We all have agendas, we just need to make sure we’re up front about it.

### **Steven Webb:**

- Steve works with the Christian Vegetarian Association (<http://www.christianveg.com/>).
- Steve’s *On God and Dogs* was originally written based on his view that Animal Rights was focused more on wild animals than domestic animals. He thinks “Animal Compassion” is a better term than “Animal Rights.”
- For *Good Eating*, he discusses the vegetarian ethic in the Hebrew bible, as well as many contemporary vegetarian movements. What happens to that ideal through the different stages of Christianity?
  - some vegetarian groups came to be considered “bad”, etc.;
  - vegetarianism becomes compartmentalized to monastic traditions;
  - Reformation reaction against liturgical rules;
  - later Christian groups revive vegetarianism;
  - current vegetarian groups are sometimes anti-Christian.
- He believes that the Bible teaches that animals aren’t supposed to be left alone, and that humans have a Christ-like role in relation to animals.
- Should we romanticize wild animals? The Bible doesn’t mythologize animals – it’s very realistic. There are many views of Nature in the Bible – romantic, evil, humans must tame and conquer it, etc.

### **Donna Yarri:**

- Recently finished her dissertation on animal experimentation, “The Ethics of Animal Experimentation: A Critical Analysis and Constructive Christian Proposal”
- \*\*See handout! (includes paper presentations, outline of dissertation, and possible ideas for future research)
- What is the role of Christology? “Upon whom would Jesus experiment?”

### **Forrest Clingerman:**

- Forrest is working on his dissertation, “Speaking of Herons: Theological Models, Nature and the Migrating of Otherness.”
- \*\*See handout! (outline of dissertation)

### **Lynn Poland:**

- Lynn is interested in horseback riding, specifically dressage.
- In dressage, the horse and rider become partners; the goal is to seek harmony. You must teach the horses to follow learned cues. The rider must train themselves, too - must learn to control their body in order to control and match the horse, or become “kinesthetically legible.” Horses can read you whether or not you want them to. It’s a different type of language.
- Lynn wants to write about dressage as a spiritual, religious experience or practice; the Word in relation to animals. What is the language of God, the incarnation of the Word? Is it heard or can it be active?
- Horseback riding has often been described as a spiritual experience, being focused on the present very much like meditation.
- One also learns the nonverbal language of the horse. We can use nonverbal language to communicate with other species, too, like chimps.

### **Barbara Darling-Smith:**

- Her focus is on Christian communities that are ecologically responsible; the role of community, ethical practice and rituals.
- She has mostly found churches with environmental committees, but not so much whole communities.
- Women’s religious orders in Catholic practice have been very involved in creating ecological communities (big supporters of the Earth Charter). They are generally very forward-looking and earth-based. One reason the women’s Catholic traditions are picking it up before the Protestant practices may be due to the Sacramental tradition vs. Word-based traditions; it may also be due to feminist and liberation theologies.
- How do Protestant churches get into it, too? Larry Rasmussen studied communities that arose out of commitment to Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation. The Blessing of the Animals is a good way to work that theme in, too (see Andrew Linzey’s *Animal Rites*).

### **Pedagogy Discussion:**

- “This is my experience. Is it yours?” – Teaching a Christianity & Nature course is difficult when you are heavily invested in the subject. How do you avoid feeling like you are propagandizing? One suggestion is to get your agenda out up front. Also, we must point out to classes that people have already been taking in cultural propaganda; we’re simply providing a different point of view.
- Students don’t have to agree with you, but they must be able to support their arguments.
- See the book, *Religion on Campus* by Conrad Cherry, Amanda Porterfield and Betty A. Deberg, 2001
- How to approach teaching as cultural transformation?
- There will be different agendas for different classes, ex. “Religion & Science” vs. “Religion, Animals & the Earth.”
- You must also consider the institutional context of *where* you are teaching.
- And we must get the field formalized through AAR
- Courses called “Religion and Animals” may imply more of a focus on religion than animals. How do we change and formalize that concept into a shared, equally-focused definition?
- Books to use: Daniel Quinn, Aldo Leopold, Andrew Linzey, etc.; *Woman the Hunter* by Mary Zeiss Stange; *The End of Nature* by Bill McKibben; *Is God a Vegetarian?: Christianity, Vegetarianism, and Animal Rights* by Richard Alan Young
- Videos to use: “Cane Toads: An Unnatural History” (1988) and “The Natural History of the Chicken” (2001) by Mark Lewis; “To Live or Die” (documentary shown in Tufts Vet class); “The Witness” from Tribe of Heart ([www.tribeofheart.org](http://www.tribeofheart.org)); PETA videos; “People Who Love Animals”; “All the Little Animals”; “The Bear”; “The Advocate”; episodes of *Law and Order*; PBS & BBC videos

- Look at Ark Trust archives ([www.arktrust.org](http://www.arktrust.org)), Animals Agenda library ([www.animalsagenda.org](http://www.animalsagenda.org))
- Journals: *Between the Species; Society and Animals; Anthrozoos; Applied Animal Welfare Science; Environmental Ethics; Agriculture and Human Values; Technology and Values; World Views and Ecology; Animal Law*
  - Also see *Satya; E Magazine*; International Society for Environmental Ethics newsletters

### **Strategizing Session:**

1. Relationship to FORE
2. Further meetings of this group
3. Hopes for the future
4. Wabash Center
5. Signature programs
6. AAR
7. *Earth Ethics* issue

#### 1. Relationship to FORE:

- Should we try to get a Religion & Animals section onto the FORE website? Maybe later
- **we will put together a webpage on the CRLE website; we will also reserve the domain, [www.religionandanimals.org](http://www.religionandanimals.org)**
- Is R&A a subset of Religion & Ecology? Perhaps we should link up with FORE, but maintain separateness; maintain a strong relationship so FORE people are forced to consider animal issues, but not make extra work for the FORE organizers.
- Is R&A more inclusive than R&E, or the opposite? Maybe they are two circles that overlap.
- Should there be an ethical agenda? Not as part of the architecture; we should keep it very broadly defined so people have a place to present their research and get involved without feeling they must fit an agenda. BUT we must acknowledge that people will bring their ethical concerns to the table.
- What other groups can we work with? Groups doing biomedical ethics, biblical studies, feminist groups, student groups, etc.
  - The HSUS affiliate, National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE - <http://www.nahee.org/>), has a list on its website for the Student Network News, with list of related high school and college groups.
  - ULSF (a CRLE affiliate) has a list of college student organizations on its resource database (<http://www.ulsf.org/cgi-bin/searchresults.cfm?catID=11&subcatID=38>).
  - There are also a number of student org networks, including the Student Animal Rights Alliance (<http://www.defendanimals.org/main/index.htm>) among others.

#### Wabash Center for the Teaching and Learning of Theology and Religion - <http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/>

- A regranteeing agency that also runs workshops to help people think of creative ways to teach religion. It publishes a journal, *Teaching Theology and Religion*.
- They could do a special journal issue on teaching R&A, with a workshop proceeding it.
- The center's website also promotes other websites that serve as clearinghouses for relevant information.
- There is also a Center for Inquiry into Liberal Arts at Wabash (<http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/>) that we could consider utilizing.
- **Steve will look into setting up a meeting process.** The focus could be developing semester courses with assessment of workshop/process at the end, or on modules. Maybe 3 meetings over 3 years, with first as preparatory, second as feedback and plans for the modules, and third for evaluation. This would give everyone time to try out ideas and practices between workshops. We must have concrete outcomes for each meeting (syllabus, paper, assessment, resource list, etc.). We could possibly pull in special resource guests (like Rick and Randy) and also media people to report on the workshop and Center.
- **Heather will send everyone a list of all participants' email addresses, and look into creating a group listserv.**

#### 6. AAR:

- There is currently a formal caucus (Caucus on Animals, Religion and Ethics) led by Paul, Barbara, Forrest and Laura. They are applying to become a Consultation. The group has met for four years, and they are meeting again this year Sunday morning, 7:00-8:30 AM over breakfast. In the past they have had up to 50 people in attendance at meetings.
- **Everyone teaching a R&A course should post their syllabus on the AAR website under the new R&A section (<http://www.aarweb.org/syllabus/default.asp>).**
- **We should also put a list of materials, resources, syllabi and modules on our site.**
- **For next year's meeting, group should include a guide to veg\*an options sponsored by the caucus in publicity materials, highlighting a special meeting of the group at a certain restaurant.**
- **Everyone should send an email to any potentially interested parties about meetings.**
- For the meeting: is it better to have a hook (specific issue, big-name people) to get people there, and then follow with the business part of the meeting? Ex. Carol Adams
- Call for Papers (for next year's Consultation) – perhaps we should have an organized panel for one of the sessions (Paul has list of potential participants). Potential topics include: Why have other animals not been so prominent in AAR?; The Place of Animals in Religious Life.

\*How will this all be structured?

A. AAR Caucus – can be more “activist”

B. AAR Consultation – can't promote an agenda; must be more scholarly

C. the (outside AAR) R&A group – see discussion under #1 above

How to get other faculty interested?

- AAR
- Annual meetings like this workshop, or piggyback the meeting with another conference
- Good accessible books for courses (like Paul's book, or *World Views, Religion and the Environment* by Richard Foltz)
- Develop different modules that professors could incorporate into their existing classes (Religion & Ecology, Environmental Ethics, any kind of ethics class, etc.)
- Work with other departments
- Pull in a service learning component
- Start a faculty caucus group
- A class in Human & Animal Bonds would pull in people from other departments, unlike a strictly R&A course

What's our goal?

- Getting R&A courses in every school?
- Changing the cultural ethos – how do you get people who care about animals to make the jump to environmental protection, anti-consumerism, etc.)
- Can R&A show that animals are important to people around the world and gain standing in that way?
- How do you make it matter to students, faculty, congregations? Ex. Environmental committees at churches, animal law classes

7. *Earth Ethics* issue:

- The next issue will focus on R&A. A past issue on Religion & Ecology has been used as a resource for FORE workshops, outreach, etc.; we can do similar things with this upcoming issue.
- We will include information on the R&A Caucus, the state of the field, condensed articles on related topics.
- **Heather will add everyone to the mailing list for *Earth Ethics*.**