
Book Reviews

'God is green, long live the Queen'

by Mark Burdman

God Is Green: Christianity and the Environment

by Ian Bradley

Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1990
118 pages, paperbound, £6.95

Political Theory and Animal Rights

by Paul A.B. Clarke and Andrew Linzey

Pluto Press, London, 1990

193 pages, paperbound, £9.95

One of the best indications of how committed the British elites are to pagan ecologism, is the selection of the Right Reverend Peter Carey of Bath and Wells, to be the new primate of the Church of England. Carey is the first bishop in Britain to have publicly advocated the doctrine that "God is Green," which was the title of an article he wrote for the British press some months back. Carey recently told a meeting of the British Green Party: "In nature, predator numbers are always fewer than their prey, but the human species is unique in attaining such a high density, that the structure of our environment is in danger of breaking down under the huge punishment." The Green Party issued a statement welcoming Carey's appointment, calling him the "first Green primate." His selection by a Crown Appointments Commission was certified by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and announced by Her Majesty the Queen on July 25. After his appointment, he said that he wanted the church to work out an ideology for greener living, and to call for simpler lifestyles to ease ecological pressures, since "we have to modify lifestyles to take into account diminishing resources."

In the light of Carey's appointment, these two books

are essential to understanding the mind of an ever-growing section of the British Establishment. Although they express different forms of clinical insanity—on one side, "green ecologism" and, on the other, support for "animal rights"—their declared aim is identical. It is to destroy what they call the "anthropocentric" world view, a view that they attribute to the classical Greek tradition of Plato and Socrates, to Judeo-Christian monotheism particularly as expressed in the Christianity by St. Augustine, and the 15th-century Golden Renaissance.

In Ian Bradley's view, the main culprit is St. Augustine, and the "classical Greek influences" out of which the Augustinian tradition came. Christianity, he complains, has suffered from "that long period of anthropocentric and negative Christianity inaugurated by St. Augustine. . . . Many Christians remain stuck in the old anthropocentric rut of individual salvation, justification and atonement." To this, he counterposes a "Green Christianity," and defines his own purpose as a "missionary urge to spread the Green gospel of Christianity," with a "conviction that, if the 1980s have been barren of religious ideas, the 1990s must be the decade of Green theology. . . . But in order to find this Green gospel at the heart of Christianity," he warns, "we need to clear away centuries of anthropocentric thinking which has put man rather than God at the center of the universe and which has made the church in the Western world at least one of the prime aiders and abettors of the exploitation and pollution of the Earth's resources."

Bradley is assistant minister at St. Leonard's in the Church of Scotland.

Similarly, North Carolina State University Prof. Tom Regan, president of the Culture and Animals Foundation and chief ideologue for the "animal rights" movement in the United States, affirms in his foreword to *Political Theory and Animal Rights*: "There is a revolution of ideas afoot. . . . Some partisans refer to the change as the emergence of a 'new paradigm'. . . . There is no single 'new paradigm' that has taken hold. Rather, there is a variety of contenders each at war with the others, each vying for widespread acceptance. . . . Deep ecology. Feminism. Animal rights. . . . Dissonant though their demands often are, one main theme is the same: traditional moral anthropocentrism is dead. This is the faith shared by deep ecologists, feminists, proponents of animal rights, and other critics of the intellectual *status quo*. Their common task is to bury Protagoras once and for all. Humans are *not* the measure of all things. And while it is true that the death of the 'old paradigm' by itself does not give birth to a new one, ideas may be like forests. Sometimes the stands of old trees must be destroyed by fire, before the new growth can flourish. In the present case, it is Protagoras and his descendants that find themselves in the furnace. One part of this conflagration is being fuelled by those thinkers and political activists who constitute the animal rights movement."

Regan points to Andrew Linzey's 1976 book *Animal Rights: A Christian Assessment*, for having "heralded the beginning, in earnest, of the growing theological assault on traditional moral anthropocentrism." Linzey is chaplain to the University of Essex and its director of studies at the Center for the Study of Theology. In July, he and Regan were among the chief sponsors, of a "Pilgrimage to Rome" by animal rights organizations, to petition Pope John Paul II on the subject of "the souls of animals." Ian Bradley regards Linzey as a co-thinker.

Thank God for anthropocentrism!

This British attack on "anthropocentrism" is the equivalent of giving out a license to kill. All the rhetoric about the rights of nature, the rights of animals, and so on, is a cover for destroying the concepts of *human* rights and the sanctity of human life, thereby seeking to induce the human race to regress to bestiality and brutality. It is no accident that the release of these books coincides with increasingly open expressions of bestiality in the British press, including, prominently, a tendency to relativize the crimes of Hitler and Stalin. One such apologia for genocide was made, appropriately enough, in the context of a June 12 London *Guardian* editorial page opinion column endorsing the philosophy of the animal rights movement. Another *Guardian* piece, a July 26 review of a new book about animal rights fanatic and vegetarian cultist George Bernard Shaw, documented Shaw's defense of both Stalin and Hitler, and then eulogized Shaw as "one of those extraordinary personalities with the power to energize others."

The simple fact is that "anthropocentrism" is the beginning of all knowledge and philosophy. There is no way to determine knowledge and truth, but from the standpoint of the creative human mind. Without starting there, the result is either meaningless babble, or fascist drivel, or both. Augustinian anthropocentrism expresses a fundamental law of the universe, which is that the creative individual human mind is in atonement with the universe. This lawfulness can not be negated just because petty and ugly souls want it to be. And, even these petty and ugly souls cannot explain their own existence, and their ability to write books, even bad books, except from a standpoint that is "anthropocentric."

The attack on Augustine has a special significance. As *EIR* founding editor Lyndon LaRouche has asserted, the past two millennia of human history might be summed up as the "St. Augustine wars"—the battle between Christian republicanism and pagan imperialism.

Augustine himself needs no defenders. To claim, as Bradley does, that Augustine "put man rather than God at the center of the universe" is just a fatuous lie, as anyone who has read his writings—as Bradley seems not to have done—would know. But beyond this, his *City of God*, written about A.D. 410, stands to the present day, as the best polemic against the likes of Bradley, Linzey, Clarke, and

their ilk. Augustine wrote that book in reply to what he denounced as the "calumny" of those who were blaming Christianity for having brought about the fall of Rome. He argued, most persuasively and convincingly, that it was worship of the pagan gods, not Christianity, that destroyed Rome from within, and that the process of moral decay induced by such worship began even before Jesus Christ was born. Those qualities which ruined Rome, the sins of avarice, cruelty, lust, greed, and so on, were precisely that which Christianity was created to *overcome*. The reader is invited to read Book Two of the *City of God*, and judge for himself.

From an adversarial standpoint, Linzey and Clarke publish a statement from Augustine, in which he attacks those who equate man with beasts as promoting the "foolish error of the Manicheans." Amen!

Today, these creatures blame Christianity for the destruction of the environment, for pollution, and for mistreatment of the animal kingdom. Again today, St. Augustine's argument would hold: it is *paganism* in its various forms, including in its pseudo-Christian forms, with its encouragement of hedonism, irrationalism, drug usage, and infantilism, that is responsible for ecological degradation. The virtues espoused by St. Augustine and his Christian republican tradition, with the goal of creating the "City of God," are precisely what are needed to "protect the environment" now. As for the abuse of animals, isn't it interesting that not a whimper of protest is heard from the animal rights activists about the ritual abuse, torture and sacrifice of animals by Satan-worshipping cults? But what can one expect from a pack of foolish Manicheans?

Paganism in Christian clothes

In attacking St. Augustine and claiming to speak on behalf of a "green Christianity," Ian Bradley is repeating what might be called the "Emperor Constantine heresy." Constantine, ruling Rome only a few decades after the gnostic reforms of the Emperor Diocletian, established Christianity in nominal terms, as the religion of the Roman Empire, while making sure that the *content* of his Christianity would be paganism, and the worship of the pagan gods. As seen in his text, Bradley is extremely sensitive about being seen to recommend paganism, since he is, after all, a Church of Scotland official, and he wants to dupe believing Christians. But in content, paganism is precisely what he is preaching. He is a self-professed devotee of feminism, vegetarianism, Gaia-Mother Earth, the Hindu cult of Shiva, and Eastern Orthodoxy. He has accepted the central argument of medieval historian Lynn White, who wrote in *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement in Science, in 1967: "Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. In absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions, it not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends." Bradley's solution is not to abandon Christianity in name,

but to transform Christianity into paganism. Neat little trick!

Bradley, unfortunately, speaks for a growing tendency within Christian churches. According to his own account, he represents a growing minority within the Church of Scotland. He also claims new Church of England primate Carey as a “co-thinker,” and Carey’s appointment, of course, puts that irrational belief-structure at the top of the Church of England. Beyond this, such organizations as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the umbrella organization for predominantly Calvinist churches, have been mounting attacks against anthropocentrism, the Renaissance, and the like. Two of the books that Bradley cites in his first pages, as works that shaped his own thinking, are the 1978 *The Human Presence: Towards an Orthodox View of Nature*, authored by the World Council of Churches’ senior theologian Paulos Gregorios and published by the WCC, and the 1985 *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, by West Germany’s Jürgen Moltmann, a co-thinker of Britain’s Prince Philip who has authored an ecologist animal rights treatise for the WARC. Bradley also praises the work of a Church of England working party on the “theology of nature” headed by the ultra-liberal Dr. Hugh Montefiore, and that of the Church of Scotland’s Religion, Science and Technology Unit.

Bradley’s method is to interpret, or rather misinterpret the Bible, in order to make it “ecological.” His greatest contortions are around the Book of Genesis, whose injunctions to man, to be “fruitful and multiply,” and to “have dominion” over nature, are the bulwarks of Judeo-Christian civilization. Out of such contortions, Bradley assures us that early man was a vegetarian! Elsewhere, we are told that the great moment of Christ in Gethsemane is one of many “garden” scenes in the Bible. The Old Testament, which Bradley otherwise vilifies for having advocated the destruction of idol worship, is praised for an “ecological” view, as typified by the ancient Israelites’ supposed reverence toward the pristine desert and the wilderness. One wonders what modern Israelis, whose best instincts are expressed in the policy of “making the deserts bloom,” would think of this!

‘Rats will hold the primacy’

Political Theory and Animal Rights is in the form of a series of essays, supposedly for and against “animal rights.” Aside from the fact that the book is clumsily and incoherently composed, it attempts to elevate the absurdity of animal rights into a serious philosophical dispute, juxtaposing eccentric kooks and cultists with republican philosophers. Of course, the editors’ bias is never hidden. The book-cover illustration, is of five similar drawings in sequence: the first, on the far left, is a dead chicken hanging from a hook. After three intermediate transformations, the last one, on the far right, shows a dead man’s corpse on a hook. Get it?

What clearly emerges out of the mess, is that the philo-

sophical mentor of the animal rights movement is British 18th-century philosophical radical Jeremy Bentham, reinforced later by John Stuart Mill, and then continuing through the present time up to Bertrand Russell and the Fabian Society’s George Bernard Shaw, meanwhile merging through the years with continental European traditions associated with Friedrich Nietzsche and anarchist Prince Kropotkin of Russia. In one essay, Bentham is praised by a certain Henry Salt, who had authored *Animal Rights* in 1892, which made a big impact on George Bernard Shaw. Salt praises Bentham as having had “the high honor of first asserting the rights of animals with authority and persistence,” leading to the promulgation in England in 1822 of a *jus animalium*. (The same Bentham who believed in “animal rights” did not believe in inalienable human rights, and was violently hostile to the American Declaration of Independence.)

Bentham’s is the famous “utilitarian calculus”: Nothing really matters beyond the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In 1789, he wrote: “The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?” This is the principle of “sentience.” The absurdity and danger of Bentham’s philosophy is seen in the contribution of Australia’s Peter Singer, the guru of the animal rights movement: “Surely every sentient being is capable of leading a life that is happier or less miserable than some alternative life, and hence has a claim to be taken into account. In this respect, the distinction between humans and nonhumans is not a sharp division, but rather a continuum along which we move gradually, and with overlaps between the species, from simple capacities for enjoyment and satisfaction, or pain and suffering, to more complex ones.” Singer is not shy about naming his enemy: “This idea of a distinctive human dignity and worth has a long history; it can be traced back directly to the Renaissance humanists. . . . This view of the universe, in turn, goes back to both classical and Judeo-Christian doctrines.”

A quote from Bertrand Russell’s 1932 essay, “If Animals Could Talk,” excerpted in the Linzey-Clark collection, sums up the state of mind involved here: “An eminent biologist of my acquaintance looks forward to the day when rats will hold the primacy among animals and human beings will have been deposed. There is no impersonal reason for regarding the interests of human beings as more important than those of animals. We can destroy animals more easily than they can destroy us; that is the only solid basis of our claim to superiority. We value art and science and literature, because these are things in which we excel. But whales might value spouting, and donkeys might maintain that a good bray is more exquisite than the music of Bach. We cannot prove them wrong, except by the exercise of arbitrary power. All ethical systems, in the last analysis, depend upon weapons of war.”

The longer the Benthamite-Russellite “anti-anthropocentric” worldview is tolerated, the likelier it will be that human beings will be “deposed.” And, indeed, by rats!