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Religion and the Care, Treatment, and Rights of Animals

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Contents

Foreward	3
Traditions:	
Buddhism	4
Catholicism	5
Latter-Day Saints (Mormonism)	6
Hinduism	7
Humanism/Atheism	8
Islam	10
Judaism, Orthodox	12
Judaism, Reform	13
Protestantism, Evangelical	14
Protestantism, Mainline	15
Unitarian Universalism	16
Additional Resources	17

Foreword

Hello, and thank you for reading!

Religion in America is always changing, and so is what it means to those who practice. Whether because of interreligious conflict, pressures from academic and social movements, responses to the pressing challenges of living in an increasingly interconnected world, or simply individuals finding new ways to articulate their spiritual experiences—maintaining a productive understanding of what “faith” and “religious traditions” mean demands that we are dynamic and at times humble in our approach. It demands that we listen to many voices, at times voices in conflict, to build a comprehensive worldview that accounts for the diversity of traditions, and indeed the diversity within traditions.

With that in mind, what follows is not an exhaustive overview of how the major traditions that account for much of America's religious landscape approach questions about animal life, animal care, and animals' moral status. I think of it more as a survey of various perspectives from those traditions that can help prepare veterinarians and others in the practice of animal care entering environments where those unfamiliar traditions might be found in greater numbers to support clients and their particular spiritual needs. I know that in my work, when I've entered new cultural environments, having heard people for whom that culture is very important share a bit about what it means to them has helped me empathize best, especially in crises when quickly being able to empathize with someone seeking support can matter most. Most importantly, though, I hope this resource to be helpful in understanding the complexities of these questions and in building a toolkit for approaching them. While we might not be able to know exactly how someone of a particular faith background may be approaching their theology of animals, we can engage them with at least some basis of knowledge and listen empathetically to their particular experience.

The perspectives shared for each tradition are from a variety of sources—some scriptural, academic, some official doctrine, some more vernacular. Where possible I've included links to the sources online. I've tried to focus on how various members of each tradition approach any of five relevant topics, namely: animal euthanasia, neutering, keeping pets, the moral status of animals, and unique traditions in processing grief for animals lost. I've avoided including too many perspectives in other areas that are a bit easier to find details on yet less relevant for medical practice, such as vegetarianism, unless it seemed relevant to any of the aforementioned topics. The local contacts listed have offered to be available by email if you should have any further questions about the tradition to which they belong. At the end you can also find other useful links and resources for further reading in interreligious diversity and animal care.

In all, I hope that you find this helpful and that it aides in your discussions on religion in America among your colleagues in veterinary medicine and in your community beyond. Good luck in your practice and always feel free to write to me if you want to discuss these issues further.

Best wishes,



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BUDDHISM

Number in United States: 1,200,000 (U-T San Diego)

Number worldwide: 500,000,000 (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: California, Delaware, and Hawaii

Local contacts: The Venerable Upali Sraman || Buddhist in Residence, Tufts University Chaplaincy
|| upali.sraman@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“We string a bead on our rosary of life when we adopt a companion animal from a shelter instead of buying from a breeder or pet store. We string a bead on our rosary of life when we spay or neuter our companion animals to ensure that no additional dogs or cats come into the world while millions are being killed every year because there are no homes for them.”

Norm Phelps, [The Great Compassion: Buddhism and Animal Rights.](#)

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Great-Compassion-Buddhism-Animal/dp/1590560698>

“When one kills with a true bodhichitta intention, with a heart filled with Dharma wisdom and compassion, the act actually becomes one in which it is ‘beneficial to kill.’ ‘This pure motivation behind the altruistic decision to end another sentient being’s suffering – putting them out of their misery by ending their present life while knowing absolutely that one could at that very moment be creating the karmic causes for one to be born in the hell realm – makes such a killing beneficial.’ Rinpoche went on to explain that the vow of non-killing refers to abstaining from killing that is associated with and backed by ignorance and negative attachment. It is that kind of killing that creates negative karma. Only killing with a motivation that is ‘totally pure’ becomes a virtue. Of course, one in such a position must do everything within their capacity to prevent such a compromising decision, to ascertain that there is no alternative treatment or other method at all possible – and even then, the decision is not an easy one.”

Leah Richards, “Euthanasia with a Good Heart,” *Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.*

<http://fpmt.org/mandala/archives/mandala-issues-for-2004/october/euthanasia-with-a-good-heart/>

CATHOLICISM

Number in United States: 78,200,000 (Georgetown University)

Number worldwide: 1,200,000,000 (World Christian Database)

US Geographic distribution: Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Mexico

Local contacts: Lynn Cooper || Catholic Chaplain, Tufts University Chaplaincy ||
lynn.cooper@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image.¹⁹⁸ Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pt. 3, Sec. 2, Ch.2, Article 7: “The Seventh Commandment.”

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a7.htm

“For Catholic theology, steeped as it is in scholasticism, animals have no moral status. If we have any duties to them, they are indirect, owing to some human interest involved. Animals are not rational like human beings and therefore cannot possess immortal souls. Even the most hard-boiled scholastic would now probably admit that animals feel some pain but, if so, their pain is not regarded as morally relevant or truly analogous to human pain. In consequence, animals have no rights.... To grant animal rights is to accept that they can be wronged... Animals can be wronged because their Creator’s own creation can be wronged.”

Rev. Andrew Linzey, “The Theos-Rights of Animals.”

http://www.sparelives.org/index.pl/animals_in_christianity

“Since animals are not made in the image and likeness of God and do not have immortal souls, it is acceptable to euthanize an animal humanely. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* doesn’t cipro without prescription say directly say that pets will or will not go to heaven but it does give some guidance. All living things have a soul (it’s what makes a body alive) and when it does, the soul is separated from the body. In man, the soul is immortal so it keeps on living but the soul of an animal, or plant even, is not immortal and simply ceases to exist once the body perishes.”

“Euthanizing and Eternal Life of Pets,” St. Michael Society.

<http://stmichaelsociety.com/2011/07/11/dear-gabby-euthanizing-and-eternal-life-of-pets/>

“We preach that all of human life is sacred, from womb to tomb. Not everyone agrees with that sentence. But I further believe that, since all life comes from God, all of life is sacred. We see each other as individuals because that’s how our limited senses perceive each other. But God sees us all as one. Over the years, the death of an animal was final. There was no belief of an animal’s continued existence. That’s why the pain of the loss of an animal friend was so profound. This was it. There is no future chance of seeing the animal again. However, looking at it today through eyes of love, I believe we will see our pets in eternity. After all, how can we be perfectly happy when an important part of our happiness is missing? Life doesn’t die. Love wouldn’t allow it! Our mind may not be our friend, but God is!”

Fr. Joseph Breighner, “The loss of a pet and the power of love,” *The Catholic Review*.

<http://www.catholicreview.org/article/commentary/father-joseph-breighner/the-loss-of-a-pet-and-the-power-of-love#sthash.wDEwlaCo.dpuf>

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONISM)

Number in United States: 8,150,000 (LDS 2013 April General Conference)

Number worldwide: ~15,300,000 (Mormon Newsroom)

US Geographic distribution: Utah, California, and Idaho

Local contacts: John S. Thompson || LDS Chaplain, Harvard University Chaplains ||
thompsonJS@ldschurch.org

Perspectives:

“Says one, "I cannot believe in the salvation of beasts." Any man who would tell you that this could not be, would tell you that the revelations are not true. John heard the words of the beasts giving glory to God, and understood them. God who made the beasts could understand every language spoken by them. The four beasts were four of the most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect: they were like angels in their sphere. We are not told where they came from, and I do not know; but they were seen and heard by John praising and glorifying God.”

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*.

<http://scriptures.byu.edu/tpjs/STPJS.pdf>

“So we see that the Lord intends to save, not only the earth and the heavens, not only man who dwells upon the earth, but all things which he has created. The animals, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, as well as man, are to be recreated, or renewed, through the resurrection, for they too are living souls.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, “Conference Report (1928).”

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1972/08/the-gospel-and-animals>

HINDUISM

Number in United States: 2,230,000 (ARIS)

Number worldwide: 1,000,000,000 (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: Connecticut, New Jersey, California, and Texas

Local contacts: Swmai Tyagananda || Hindu (Vedanta Society) Chaplain, Harvard University Chaplains || swami_tyagananda@harvard.edu

Perspectives:

“Cats are not killed by Hindus. If any cat is killed even accidentally, it is considered as a sin and this impious act can only be compensated and atoned by offering a golden replica of the cat; as an act of penance. List of sacred animals in Hinduism is quite exhaustive...all said and some cow, bull and serpents are generally worshiped by Hindus.”

Dr. Shiv Sharma, [Brilliance of Hinduism](#).

<http://www.amazon.com/Brilliance-Hinduism-Shiv-Sharma/dp/8128800825>

“Animal sacrifice is a part of the major rituals of Hinduism, but the keeping of pets-even by the gods-is a central feature of Hindu life, and cattle are set apart for special treatment. The most advanced Hindu contemplative leaves human community and realizes his unity with all of nature. The doctrinal Hinduism of the Vedas and Upanishads sees scientific work, and the use of animals in science, as a distraction from the higher knowing that people should seek. The use of animals in research is difficult to justify, with the possible exception of medical uses. Popular Hinduism is more tolerant than are the philosophical schools, syncretistic and practical.”

David H. Smith, “Religion and the Use of Animals in Research,” *Ethics and Behavior*.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1207/s15327019eb0702_5

“Reach out to friends, family, colleagues and veterinary professionals to talk about your loss. Conducting rituals may help you accept the situation openly. Lay your pet to rest in your backyard, carve a tombstone and write a eulogy, you can also choose to rest him in a pet cemetery or conduct a memorial service for your pet. If there are children in your family, explain it to them patiently and encourage them to participate in the farewell ceremony. They can sketch a picture of your pet, write a letter, plant a tree at the burial site or throw in the pet’s favourite toy while laying him to rest...Our relationship with our pets is of unconditional love and acceptance. ”

Nivedita Kumar, “Coping with the death of a pet,” *The Hindu*.

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/Coping-with-the-death-of-a-pet/article11088037.ec>

HUMANISM

Number in United States: ~50,000 (American Humanist Association); ~9,000,000 atheists (Pew)

Number worldwide: ~5 million (India Humanists); ~980,000,000 unaffiliated (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: Vermont, New Hampshire, and Washington

Local contacts: Vanessa Zoltan || Assistant Humanist Chaplain, Humanist Community at Harvard|| vanessazoltan@gmail.com

Walker Bristol || Humanist in Residence, Tufts University Chaplaincy || walker.bristol@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough, distinguishing things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be. We welcome the challenges of the future, and are drawn to and undaunted by the yet to be known.”

“The Humanist Manifesto III,” *The American Humanist Association*.

http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist_manifesto_iii

“To start, we know that animals suffer. If we don’t think souls are necessary to explain consciousness, then we can’t treat all animals like Descartes did—as unfeeling meat-machines that only seem as if they experience. Instead, we know that at some point in the branching tree that connected our simplest ancestors to our most recent primate ones, consciousness developed. We can dispute where that line is, but it’s hard to peg that line lower than the animals we farm and eat.”

Vlad Chituc, “Why Atheists Should Be Vegans,” *Nonprophet Status*.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/nonprophetstatus/2014/09/09/why-atheists-should-be-vegans/#sthash.xXK7IFDn.dpuf>

“That’s the key: needless suffering...even today populations living in certain climates, such as the Inuit in the arctic, simply can’t survive without hunting and fishing. (Moreover, ethical animal experimentation is a current necessity of our modern survival and thriving, and psychologists tell us that certain house pets are good for our emotional well-being.)”

Fred Edwards, “An Omnivorous Animal Agenda,” *Humanist Network News*.

<http://americanhumanist.org/HNN/details/2011-03-an-omnivorous-animal-agenda>

“So insofar as their rights are derived from their value, they may have many rights (or at least the most important ones). Humanists can argue that cows have the right to graze (rather than be fed a chemical diet) because it's in our best interests to eat such cows (and not the ones pumped full of steroids and what have you). And I can argue that because my happiness depends on chessie's happiness, she has a right to be happy (and therefore will get a new stuffed toy for her birthday). In fact, the more we understand that we live in a complex web of life, that we depend on the ecosystem's stability for our survival, the more favourably we'll consider the other lifeforms in that ecosystem. So humanists may argue that plankton have rights too.”

Peg Tittle, “A Humanist View of Animal Rights,” *Humanist Association of Canada*.

<http://www.pegtitle.com/Articles/A%20Humanist%20View%20of%20Animal%20Rights.pdf>

ISLAM

Number in United States: ~3,300,000 (Pew)

Number worldwide: 1,600,000,000 (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: Illinois, Virginia, New York, and New Jersey

Local contacts: Celene Ibrahim || Muslim Chaplain, Tufts University Chaplaincy ||
celene.ibrahim@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: this is not a thing but celebrates His praise; And yet ye understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is Oft-Forbear, Most Forgiving!”

17:44, *The Holy Quran*.

“Most Muslim scholars agree that the saliva of a dog is ritually impure, and that contact with a dog's saliva requires one to wash seven times...It is to be noted, however, that one of the major Islamic schools of thought (Maliki) indicates that its not a matter of ritual cleanliness, but simply a common-sense method way to prevent the spread of disease. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Angels do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or an animate picture." (Reported by Bukhari) Many Muslims base the prohibition against keeping a dog in one's home, except for the case of working or service dogs, on these traditions.”

Huda, “Dogs in Islam.”

<http://islam.about.com/od/islamsays/a/Dogs-In-Islam.htm>

“Cutting ear or tail of a dog or castrating it is not permitted without any necessity since this act is a kind of changing Allah's Creation which is forbidden in Sharia...Imams Tabari and Syoothi have reported in their Tafseer from many righteous ancestors that the prohibition of changing Creation of Allah in [The Holy Quran 4:118-119] means castrating them. However, some Muslim scholars permitted such an act if there is any benefit for doing so such as to diminish their sexual desire to protect them from fighting to control females.”

Islamweb Fatwas, “Veterinary treatment of dogs.”

<http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=83701>

“Muslims do recognize animal rights, and animal rights means that we should not abuse them, torture them, and when we have to use them for meat, we should slaughter them with a sharp knife, mentioning the name of Allah (SWT)...So, Muslims are not vegetarianists. However, if someone prefers to eat vegetables, then they are allowed to do so. Allah has given us permission to eat meat of slaughtered animals, but He has not made it obligatory upon us.”

Muzammil Siddiqi, “Fatwas on Vegetarianism.”

<http://www.islamicconcern.com/fatwas.asp>

JUDAISM, ORTHODOX

Number in United States: 529,000 (United Jewish Communities Report)

Number worldwide: ~8,000,000 (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs)

US Geographic distribution: New York, Maryland, and southern Florida

Local contacts: Rabbi Jeffery Summit || Jewish Chaplain, Tufts Hillel || jeffery.summit@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.”

Exodus 23:5, *The Hebrew Bible (English Standard Version)*.

“It is a violation of Jewish law to neuter a pet. The Torah prohibits castrating males of any species (Lev. 22:24). Although this law does not apply to neutering female pets, neutering of females is prohibited by general laws against tza'ar ba'alei chayim (causing suffering to animals). Please note that, while the law prohibits you from neutering your pet, it does not prohibit you from owning a pet that is already neutered. If you want a neutered pet, I strongly encourage you to adopt from one of the many reputable shelters, such as Spay and Save (where I adopted a cat), Kitty Cottage (where I adopted two others) or the Delaware Humane Association.”

Tracey R. Rich, “Treatment of Animals.”

<http://www.jewfaq.org/animals.htm>

“The suffering of animals in the service of human needs may not be discounted as morally inconsequential. Surely this higher sensitivity should be applied to areas of questionable human necessity...The Talmud states that the Jewish people are praiseworthy for their desire to serve God beyond the letter of the law. This expression of religious devotion has been applied to many ritual precepts; should we not apply it with equal diligence to precepts that affect other living creatures? Moreover, this directly benefits God's works and improves the world. By engaging in acts of compassion, we become worthy of receiving the blessing of our sages: that God will show mercy to those who are merciful.”

Rabbi David Sears, “Compassion for All Creatures.”

<http://canfeinesharim.org/compassion-for-all-creatures-longer-article/>

“A person’s attachment to a pet, as you mention in your question, a ‘beloved dog,’ can be great and very important. When my daughter and son were young, their pet hamster “Shlumiel” died. Naturally, they were ‘broken hearted’ and we buried the deceased pet. The children wrote notes to the pet that we included as we shoveled in the earth. They were also encouraged to ‘say a few words’ of their love of their hamster. In no way did I feel that this encroached on sacred Jewish tradition, nor did I feel that they had lost sight of the enormous deference accorded human life (and death) as distinct from the loss of animal life. While in the process of driving to the Jewish cemetery one day, I noted a pet cemetery where pets were buried in very elaborate funeral ceremonies. I can understand the depth of emotion of losing the ‘family pet,’ however, at the same time there may be a blurring of the place in Judaism of humanity. Everything must be done to preserve our love of human life and not equate human-kind with animal-kind. To do so, may have the undesirable result of losing our Jewish perspective on all life.”

Rabbi Sanford Shudnow, “Is it wrong to light a yahrzeit or want a memorial service for a beloved dog?”
Jewish Values Online.

<http://www.jewishvaluesonline.org/697>

JUDAISM, REFORM

Number in United States: ~1,800,000 (Jewish Daily Forward)

Number worldwide: ~2,200,000 (World Union for Progressive Judaism)

US Geographic distribution: New York,

Local contacts: Rabbi Jeffery Summit || Jewish Chaplain, Tufts Hillel || jeffery.summit@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“Another significant debate exists regarding the inclusion of sterilization within the Noahide laws (*Sanhedrin* 56b). While some scholars believe that gentiles are also included in this proscription, many decisors assert that non-Jews have the prerogative to perform these procedures (*Aruch Hashulhan* 5:26)... Nonetheless, it remains prohibited for Jewish urologists or veterinarians to perform nontherapeutic sterilization for non-Jews. Moreover, as with other prohibitions, a Jew may not ask a non-Jew to sterilize for himself (*amira le'akum*), even in a subtle or indirect manner (EH 5:14), although using non-Jewish doctors may be preferable in certain cases of legally mandated procedures.”

Jerusalem Post, “Ask the Rabbi: Neutering animals.”

<http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Judaism/Ask-the-Rabbi-Neutering-animals>

“We should also note that the castration of animals was prohibited and this has always been considered as a form of maiming, which was forbidden (*Shelat Yaabetz* 1.11). We may summarize this by relating that our tradition demands kind treatment of animals...Human life must be saved if it is at all possible...When dealing with experimental animals we should be quite certain that they are not subjected to pain or used for frivolous reasons as for example cosmetic experimentation.”

Central Conference of American Rabbis, “New American Reform Responsa: Jewish Involvement in Genetic Engineering.”

<https://ccarnet.org/responsa/narr-247-252/>

“...[T]he care of animals was always an important part of our tradition. We would, therefore, say that the heirs [of a man who left behind a cat when he died] are duty bound to either care for this animal which was important to their father or to find an appropriate home for it. They may certainly not put it to sleep or abandon it.”

Central Conference of American Rabbis, “New American Reform Responsa: Responsibility Toward Pets.”

http://press.ccar-ebook.com/Questions_and_Reform_Jewish_Answers/155

“The death of a beloved pet is a traumatic experience and it is important to find an appropriate and meaningful way to mark the loss. Our tradition does not offer an ancient ritual for this because it is only in contemporary times that humans have formed the type of close emotional attachment to our pets that we find natural. Although it is entirely appropriate and I would suggest important to create a ritual for the loss of a pet, it is not appropriate to incorporate our traditional mourning/memorial liturgy (i.e. Eil male rachamim and Kaddish) for this purpose. Although we love and adore our pets and they are significant members of our families, they are not human. It is important that we remain cognizant of the boundaries that do exist as a part of the natural world--raising up and honoring our creature companions without debasing the responsibilities, benefits and privileges that come with being human.”

Rabbi Janet Offel, “When A Beloved Pet Dies,” Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health at Hebrew Union College.

http://kalsman.huc.edu/articles/Offel_WhenABelovedPetDies.pdf

PROTESTANTISM, EVANGELICAL (SOUTHERN BAPTIST, PENTECOSTALISM, AME, etc)

Number in United States: 100,000,000 (Wheaton College)

Number worldwide: 285,000,000 (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: Tennessee, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Alabama

Local contacts: Daniel Bell || Protestant Chaplain, Tufts University Chaplaincy || daniel.bell@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“Then Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!’”

Luke 12:22-24, *The New Testament (New International Version)*.

“Animals share some of the privileges of God's people, and so the Sabbath rest applies equally to them: “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest” (Exod 23:12 ; cf. Lev 25:7 ; Deut 5:14). Further, an ox treading the corn was not to be muzzled (Deut 25:4 ; quoted in 1 Col 9:9 ; and 1 Tim 5:18, ; where it is applied to people) and a fallen ox was to be helped to its feet (Deut 22:4 ; cf. Lev 22:27-28 ; Deuteronomy 22:6-7 Deuteronomy 22:10). Jesus also pointed to the humanitarian treatment of animals on the Sabbath (Matt 12:11-12 ; Luke 13:15 ; 14:5) and argued from this that he should free people from illness on the Sabbath. This sense of responsibility for the welfare of animals is summed up in Proverbs 12:10: “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal.” Thus, animals are owed some of the basic obligations we extend to fellow human beings.”

Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/animals.html>

“I believe that humans are made in the image of God and given a special responsibility for stewardship of the whole of creation. Human arrogance, among other sins, leads us to justify the horrific abuse of God’s creation for our own selfish means. I believe that through grace, created beings have the opportunity to be reconciled with one another, with creation, and with God. Grace is a gift from God, not earned or deserved.”

Sarah Withrow King, *Animals Are Not Ours: An Evangelical Animal Theology*.

<https://wipfandstock.com/animals-are-not-ours-no-really-they-re-not.html>

PROTESTANTISM, MAINLINE (UNITED METHODIST, PRESBYTERIAN, UCC, etc)

Number in United States: 36,000,000 (Pew)

Number worldwide: ~36,000,000 (Pew)

US Geographic distribution: South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Local contacts: Daniel Bell || Protestant Chaplain, Tufts University Chaplaincy || daniel.bell@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and women, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD for His name alone is exalted; His splendor is above the earth and the heavens.”

Psalm 148:7-13, *The Old Testament (New International Version)*

“We United Methodists do not teach that animals have souls and therefore need redemption and forgiveness or heaven in the same way that humans do. However...we support regulations that protect and conserve the life and health of animals, including those ensuring the humane treatment of pets, domesticated animals, animals used in research, wildlife, and the painless slaughtering of meat animals, fish, and fowl.”

United Methodist Church, “What We Believe.”

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/do-united-methodists-believe-that-animals-have-souls-and-go-to-heaven>

“The doctrine of creation demonstrates that God’s covenantal relationship with and continuing providential care of animals, exercised through human dominion, should be understood as benevolent stewardship rather than as autocratic despotism...even if animals are excluded from heavenly paradise, however it is understood, this simply puts a greater burden on us to ensure their benevolent treatment in this life. The most important argument Christian theology supports, though, is that the purpose of animals is much more than simply their instrumental value to humans.”

Donna Yarri, *The Ethics of Animal Experimentation*.

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Ethics-Animal-Experimentation-Constructive/dp/0195181794>

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Number in United States: ~200,000 (UUA)

Number worldwide: ~600,000 (Adherents)

US Geographic distribution: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Wyoming, and Washington

Local contacts: Rev. Greg McGonigle || University Chaplain, Tufts University Chaplaincy ||
greg.mcgonigle@tufts.edu

Perspectives:

“[UU Rev. Eliza] Blanchard also serves as chaplain to animal caregivers such as rescue workers and vet technicians. Both jobs are high stress and linked to a post-traumatic stress disorder known as compassion fatigue. Employees in veterinary offices often start and end their day with euthanizing animals—decisions they don’t always agree with—and see as many as five times more deaths as other medical providers. One client, who rescues dogs on death row in shelters, grapples with good and evil on a daily basis: witnessing dogs that have been starved, burned, and maimed by abuse. Blanchard encourages these caregivers to counter the negative images through spiritual practices such as prayer, guided meditation, gratitude journals, or art. “I firmly believe people have the answer within,” she says.”

Kimberly French, “Caring for all creatures,” *UU World (Winter 2012)*.

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/pet-ministry>

“Our goal[s] in UU Animal Ministry [are]...To work, along with other people of humane and compassionate beliefs, toward the exclusion of cruel, wasteful and repetitive testing of commercial products; duplicative, unnecessary, wasteful and even frivolous biomedical research using animals; the widespread abuse of "food" animals on factory farms and in transit to slaughter, the destruction of fur-bearing animals for profit; "sport hunting", and events which mistreat animals for entertainment; To encourage UUs and others to explore and adopt a more humane lifestyle, focusing on ethical consumerism, vegetarianism and veganism, the use of cruelty-free products and the development of alternatives to the use of animals in research and products testing.”

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry, “Forming a UUAM Chapter.”

<http://uuam.org/formchapter.php>

Additional Resources

“Facts and Faith: Religious Statements on Animals.” The Humane Society of the United States. <http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/faith/facts/statements/>

“Ethics guide: Animal Ethics.” BBC Religion & Ethics. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/animals/>

“Religion and Animals Project.” Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics.

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