

# THESIS



## ANIMAL SPIRIT CHURCH

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DEVELOPED BY: **TOMASZ JAESCHKE**  
MA IN THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGY

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**TRANSLATION FROM POLISH:**  
DOROTA MARIA GRZEGORZAK  
ELZBIETA GRZEGORZAK  
GRZEGORZ GRZEGORZAK

# ANIMAL SPIRIT CHURCH THESIS

1. We are convinced that animals, being creatures of God, were made by his hands and therefore are owned by Him.
2. We believe and are indeed convinced that there is a spark of life in animals, exactly the same as that given by God to mankind.
3. Animals do have soul (Genesis 2:7).
4. God called animals to life, for their own being and for his glory.
5. Animals are a reflection of godly soul.
6. It is not only humankind that reflects the image of God, but also every other creature called by Him to life. Every one of which accords with its nature.
7. The world immersed in pain (mentioned in the letters of St. Paul to Romans (Romans 8:19), world awaiting the sent of Godly sons and freedom from suffering) is also the world of animal beings.
8. “Following disasterous fall of Adam, all of humankind, corrupted by ancestral sin, lost its communion in godly nature” (Mystici Corporis, Pius XII, p.12). Animals, free from corruption of original sin of first humans, have never lost this communion.
9. The Church teaches that original sin of first forefathers has caused disruptions in communication between man and his creator, God. Through this fall, humankind has lost contact with God. Animals, free from corruption of ancestral sin, have never lost this direct contact with the creator, and therefore still enjoy his immediate presence.
10. Since the moment of God’s Incarnation into the physical matter, none of the feeling beings (or capable of feeling) can be excluded from the salvation of Christ’s redemption.
11. The eyes, that looked at field flowers and blue birds with admiration and love (compare Matthew 6:26), would never accept the suffering of animals presented before our eyes today. Jesus must be proclaimed as the first christian ecologist and admirer of animals.
12. “Fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28), directed to man by God, is not an invitation to do with the earth and its resources as we please but a calling for responsibility according to God’s intentions.



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13. Man in God's act of creation, in accordance with the teachings of the Bible, adopts the role of carer and administrator and not the role of absolute owner. Nothing belongs to mankind. He is only called upon to care for the wholeness of Godly creation. It concerns not only other human beings but also animals and the whole world of nature.
14. The presence of animals in human's life is a gift of God. Animals possess a gift of teaching mankind about the Kingdom of God, mercifulness and love of God towards his creations. Animals teach us about the glory, might, love and visage of God.
15. Animals have also been included in the act of establishing Covenant between God and men (Genesis 9:8, Hosea 2:20). A man cannot be said to respect this Covenant, if he is indifferent or indeed contributes to animal suffering.
16. According to the Bible, a human being is not the culmination of God's work, but the feast of the Sabbath. Animals as well as human should partake in this celebration (according to the Bible, Genesis 2:2, Deuteronomy 5:14, Exodus 20:8; 23:12).
17. Making the human the lord and master of Godly creation is therefore contrary to teachings of the Bible. The anthropocentric model of the world is not compatible with the message of the Bible.
18. By being compassionate towards suffering animals, the Church allows God to breathe through two sets of 'lungs' as God breathed the breath of life into humans as well as animals.
19. Sacrifices made from animals are not to God's liking (Isaiah 1:11-16). Whatever their purpose, they will not please the Lord.
20. God, who would favour bloody sacrifices of animals and their suffering, would instigate justified fear and would not be worthy of loving trust. Such a God could not be called the God of love. A loving God cannot truly love and at the same time favour inflicting violence on innocent beings.
21. After death, the soul of a man as well as that of an animal will join the Lord in his Kingdom (Ecclesiastes 3:19).
22. In the history of salvation, in communicating with a man, God spoken through animals and through their help often entrusted to man the deposit of revelation. God communicates with us in this way to this day.



23. In every living creature there lives the Spirit of the Lord, who calls upon us to have a deeper relationship with Him through his creations (Laudiato Si, 24.05.2015, p.88). Protection of animals and their rights is a chance as well as an invitation from the Lord to have a deeper dialogue with Him.
24. Animals were not called to life to serve the man. Their 'serving' character towards man, is realized through their sole existence and message that God directs to us through them.
25. The presence of animals in the work of Godly creation, is a gift from God to man, so that he may find his own identity (compare Genesis 2:19).
26. When Jesus has said 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' (Matthew 25:40), he also meant this in relation to animals.
27. Being a Christian, in its very nature, means a calling to proclaim the Good News, also to animals.
28. On the day of Last Judgment, we will be asked about our relationship with animals.
29. The idea of Messianic Peace extends to the relationship of people with animals (Isaiah 11:6-10; Hosea 2:20).
30. Man will have to answer before God for the suffering and pain he has caused to animals.
31. Following the path of Christ (compare Luke 9:23; John 8:12; 14:6) means unconditional commitment to light, truth and life (in other words option pro-life). This choice concerns equally humans and animals.
32. The pain and suffering inflicted on animals must be treated with the same ethical severity and legal consequence as suffering and pain inflicted on humans (Isaiah 66:3).
33. The 5<sup>th</sup> commandment 'Do not kill' relates as much to men as to any other feeling being.
34. God commanding Adam, the first man (Genesis 2:19), to give names to animals by the same token intended to make a man understand that animals are not objects and therefore he invited us to enter personal relations with them.
35. Universal rule 'What you do not want to happen to you, do not do it yourself either' which has a consensus in the civilization and which is also reflected in the gospel 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' (Matthew 22:39; Galatians 5:4; Romans 13:8-10; Luke 10:27) relates also to animals in which a Christian finds elder and smaller brothers and sisters, i.e. their neighbours.



36. The original image of Christ worshipped by first Christians was the image of the good shepherd. This image should find its place in theology as well as in a practice of life of the church so that it may be returned to its due place.
37. Following the teachings of the Bible, one cannot prove that Jesus has eaten or not eaten meat. This concerns also the last supper.
38. Regardless of different interpretations of the Bible, with its all complex context, both theological, societal, historical and cultural, one thesis remains unquestionable : the aim of each biblical message as much new as the Old Testament is building the Kingdom of God, messianic times, which means the times of peace. Achieving that with indifference to suffering and pain of animals seems contradictory in itself.
39. The man of the new Testament to whom identity, we as Christians are predestined, according to Saint Paul, is the man who freed himself from old desires and old way of thinking and enslavement (of the old man). It is the man who opened himself to new life, in the deepest meaning of this word. The man who opening himself to the life around him takes responsibility for it.
40. On many occasions God taught his chosen people (Amos 5:21; Isaiah 1:11) that He detests bloody sacrifices from animals for his glory. He favours people of pure and honest hearts, living in truth and love (compare Psalm 51:19; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15). It is therefore hard to imagine that he would favour today's practice of sacrificing animals on the altar of consumptional needs or human's profit.
41. Blessed are the feet of heralds of Good News bringing peace (compare Isaiah 52:7) . Adopting a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle is one of the forms of contributing to building Messianic peace in the world.
42. God's peace cannot surface between humans without their peaceful co-existence with the animals.
43. Using any form of violence against animals is a step backwards in the process of civilizational development of men – for a Christian and a man of faith it is additionally a rejection of vocation, to which he was called as a godly child and a disciple of Christ.
44. God is love. Those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them (1 John 4:16; compare Lumen Gentium 42). The practice of love determines how close the man is to God and the God to man. Love towards animal must be seen from the exact same perspective.



45. “The people of God believes that it is led by the spirit of the Lord, who fills the whole world. Impalled by that faith, they try to discern the true signs of God’s presence and purpose in the events, the needs and the desires, which it shares with the rest of humanity today. For faith casts a new light on everything and makes known the full ideal, which God has set for humanity, fast guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human” (Gaudium et Spes, p.11).  
Therefore, we expect that the care of these people of God for our world and our suffering brothers and sisters, animals, was adopted by the church with appropriate seriousness and responsibility.
46. If the Bible teaches us that the sun rises for all the inhabitants of earth and is unconditional (compare Matthew 5:45), absolute gift of good God and it rises due to his will also for other smaller brothers and sisters, animals. The church must accept their presence as wanted by God and equal in their rights for godly love and mercy.
47. The biblical ‘direction’ to eat meat after the flood in Noah’s time, is not to be treated literally, but in the context of biblical hermeneutics as well as symbolism of language, which biblical language often entails. To interpret this text as allowance to eat meat by man is wrong.
48. When Jesus commanded his disciples to observe blue birds and lilies of the field (Matthew 6:26), he taught them and is still teaching us, that the truth about the Lord’s Kingdom is to be learned from nature surrounding us.
49. The Jewish philosopher, religious pedagogist, Pinchas Lapide, has claimed that the Bible can only be read in two ways: either literally or seriously, i.e. taking into account the spirit of the times in which it was created, the symbolism which it used and messages, which it was to deliver. This must be taken into account also in the context of animals.
50. Original sin has undoubtedly also a cosmic dimension. Its consequences went beyond the history of an individual and became a universal phenomen. As a consequence the whole ecological system surrouding human’s life was affected. And hence the need for inclusion of ecotheology and ecological soteriology into the theology of redemption.
51. Participation in the mistical body of Christ, and therefore in the act of his salvific death, as well as fruits of his ressurection, concerns also animal beings. It is so because of universal and cosmic character of paschal Mystery (compare Ephesians 1,10:23; Colossians 1:20) and the act of redemption.



52. The concept of sin cannot reject relevance of the relationship of man with animals.
53. Christian spirituality if deprived of connection to love to animals and all the act of godly creation is a spirituality without its roots.
54. One cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), claims Jesus. You cannot serve God and mammon. A Christian must be ready to face the challenge and be on the side of life in whichever form it reveals itself, even at the cost of rejection by the world in which one finds himself. Christian is called upon to proclaim the truth even at the cost of losing his material goods.
55. Experiments on animals not only do not lead to expected results, but are also ethically unjustified (reprehensible).
56. There are no industrial, breeding, experimental, domestic or wild animals. There are only animals – the feeling creatures.
57. Decisions undertaken by humans concerning life and death (such as euthanasia) have to be undertaken in equal responsibility in relation to human and animal beings.
58. Animal rights activism must be seen as equal to engagement for suffering humans. A Christian is obliged to both, by the rule of the same moral obligation.
59. Animals just like people are entitled to undeniable right for legal protection, right to life in freedom and happiness.
60. We will not be successful in changing the world without changing our own personal habits. This is an illusion we should not be deceived by. Therefore the appeal of Saint Paul for abandoning the old man and applying a new one (Colossians 3:9) is and always will be the theme of authentic and fundamental, in-depth transformation of the world.
61. Consuming or not consuming meat based food should not be a reason for one group of people to regard themselves above others. We live and we will always live to some extent at the expense of others as much men as animals. The aim is not to build a divided world but united in striving for shared better future, equally for human and animal beings. It is about vegeterians, vegans and the ones who are neither, undertaking shared responsibility for their shared home.
62. Achieving Messian peace of escatological times mentioned in the Bible (compare Isaiah 11:6-9; Amos 9:11) without sharing this peace with suffering of animal beings is and always will be both religious and humanitarian utopia.



63. Care for animals is an important component of upbringing to become a Christian, i.e. the disciple of Christ.
64. A man need rites. They have a very important role in life of both individuals as well as societies. They reinforce acquired experience, they help to quickly find the direction, orientation and stabilisation. They also help to cultivate and understand significant, accepted and respected values. They aid in uniting people who share similar values. Nevertheless, if rites are not critically reviewed with reason or faith, they can alienate from its source, gain their own dynamics and lead to confusion or even ultimate loss of the values, which the rite originally carried.
65. Celebrating of Christian festivals is supposed to be a manifestation of siding with life and light. Therefore celebrations of festivals at the expense of suffering of humans or animals is non-Christian, detested by God and unacceptable.
66. Blessing of meat during Easter holidays is in contradiction with evangelical spirit of Jesus's message and religious sense of the Easter itself. One cannot enjoy the Mystery of Ressurrection, proclaim victory of life over death and at the same time continue to celebrate the same suffering and death.
67. Saint Heronimus claimed that it is not possible to reconcile being of Christian faith with the consumption of meat. This and alike opinions belong to tradition of Christian thought and therefore should be appropriately honoured.
68. In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Gaudium et Spes Constitution, the Church emphasises, that in each human being according to God's will there is a kind moral instance to which a man is obliged to unconditional obedience. This concerns human conscience. This view resonates with the same significance and consequence in case of confrontation with suffering animals, even if it goes against current law, including the law of Church.
69. New man (new Adam), created in the image of God (alter Christus) is the one, who with humility and respect cares for salvatory effort of God himself and his creation, adopts the role of a gardener and with due respect undertakes the responsibility given to him. This a prototype of the man, for whom the whole of Godly creation is longing (Romans 8).
70. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32; Matthew 16:15). Education is an indispensable element in the process of freeing the world from suffering as well as contributing to





its authentic, long-term transformation. It must therefore be present in every phase of human being's life. The topic of suffering of our brothers and sisters, animals, cannot be avoided in education. The church, appointed to preach the truth and gospel to all the creation (Mk 16,15) must face this challenge.

71. Prayer for animals has the same power as prayer for human beings.
72. The claim that animals exist to serve us (Catechism of the Catholic Church, p.2417/2418), is wrong and contradictory to God's plan for his creations.
73. Christian communities are required to provide care not only to humans in need but also to animals.
74. One of the most important, main tasks and calling of the church, is to bring help to those in need. To exclude from this mission suffering animals is against the spirit of this calling.
75. The Church has been called upon to preach the gospel/ the Good News not only to human beings, but also to all God's creation (Mark 16:15; Romans 8:20). This calling must also find its reflection in the context of animal rights' protection.
76. If the Church desires to be favoured by God, it must side with ecology and animal rights' protection. Otherwise, the Church breaks its alliance/ covenant with God, the creator and follows a path, which is alien to the Lord.
77. As the Lumen Gentium (6) teaches, the nature of Church's calling is first and foremost to be a sheepfold, where the gate is Jesus Christ himself (John 10:1-10). An image of Christian church therefore does not exist without the image of the Good Shepherd.
78. The Church itself is also to be seen as the flock, which is to be led by God, who foresaw that he himself will be the shepherd (Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:11). The flock, whose sheep, even though led by shepherds-people, are infinitely led and fed by Christ himself, the only good shepherd and prince of the shepherds (compare John 10:11; 1 Peter 5:4). The one who sacrificed his life for his sheep (compare John 10:11-15). The serving role of the church, also in the context of animals, is nothing else but written in the nature of its calling.



79. In the *Gaudium et Spes* (11), the Catholic Church binds itself to remain open to signs of time and to interpreting these in the light of the Gospel. Animals cannot be excluded from this openness of the Church. The Church is therefore bound to familiarise itself with the newest developments of branches of science such as ethology, zoosemiotics and psychology of animals and to draw their own conclusions from them.
80. The Church, defining itself as 'the sacrament of salvation' (*Catechism of Catholic Church*, p.780) must consequently make all possible efforts, to become what God intended for it. That is to say to become a tool that brings peace and unity to the world. Performing of this task while excluding animals from it, is impossible.
81. The self-consciousness of the church is shaped by the dialogue undertaken by the Church (compare *Redemptor Hominis* 11). We therefore expect that the Church will undertake a dialogue regarding the suffering of beloved by God beings. Avoiding such dialogue threatens the identity (self-consciousness) of the Church as well as its calling.
82. Jesus has come to Earth by the will of his Father, to begin the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth (*Lumen Gentium*, p.3). The Kingdom of God on earth is irreconcilable with the present situation of our forgotten and suffering brothers and sisters, animals. Proclaiming and beginning the Kingdom of God on earth will never be reconcilable with any form of discrimination, racism or species chauvinism.
83. Christianity must introduce elements of empathy concerning all beings awaiting the revelation of sons of God (*Romans* 8:20) to its praying and meditational practice and by the same token to encourage all other people of faith to do the same in their homes.
84. The Church constantly calling for the process of evangelical conversion (*Matthew* 1:15), that is to say to think and live according to principles of Gospel as well as to encourage (as in the case of *Laudato si* Pope Francis's ecological encyclical) change in the perception of the world surrounding us and undertaking responsibility for it, should itself be the prime example of such a conversion.



85. The depth of thought present in Pope Francis's encyclical 'Laudato si' should find its place during the season of meditation and lent and retreat as well as the everyday teachings of the Church such as pastoral letters, Sunday sermon and the teachings of catechism.
86. Due to the reason that all beings are interconnected, each and one of them must be appreciated with love and admiration (encyclical of the Pope Francis, Laudato si). We expect that given this papal message, the Church will undertake a much more serious stance in this issue.
87. Every creature has its own goodness and perfection (encyclical of the Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 24.05.2015, p.69). It emphasises priority of mere existence (means in and of themselves) over existence in the utilitarian sense (means to an end). The Church in its teaching and practice of faith must continue to give attestation to this.
88. Charitable activity of the church must also include animals in need. Erecting a 'caritas network' supporting our brothers and sisters, animals in need, would be concordant with evangelical mission of the Church.
89. Christian Churches are called upon to abandon contradictory to the Bible anthropocentrism and to direct itself to rooted in the Bible ecotheology.
90. The evangelical deposit of faith given to the Church embraces the authentic potential to transform the earth including improving the situation of suffering animals.
91. Animal Spirit Church is a community of Christians, who relate to the deposit of faith, evangelical message and Christian tradition as well as views and teachings of Fathers of the church and want to live the values of Good News of Jesus from Nazaret, without exclusion of animals. Animal Spirit Church sees in animals its neighbours, places them on the same level as humans and fights for their rights and embraces their suffering with the same care as the suffering and needs of men.
92. Animal Spirit Church being a community rooted and based on the foundations of values of Christian tradition is an ecumenical community undertaking cooperation with any church or faith, community of people who believe in God as well as atheists if only they undertake or will undertake actions aimed at improving life and the situation of suffering world of animal beings.
93. As per example of twelve Jesus's disciples as well as 70 chosen, Animal Spirit Church sends its members all over the world to bring Good News of Jesus from Nazaret, also to suffering world of animal beings. To the world, which longs for revelation of Godly sons (Romans 8:19).



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- 94.** Members of Animal Spirit Church commit themselves to devote 1% of their income or alternatively at least one hour per month working for animals suffering or in need.
- 95.** Following the teachings of Jesus Christ himself, who claimed that who is not against us is with us (Mark 9:40), Animal Spirit Church is prepared to undertake cooperation with everyone who is determined to truly and authentically engage for improvement of the situation of suffering world of animal beings.
- 96.** To be with us or to participate in our Church, you do not have to share every our view or even believe in our God. It is good enough to care about the fate of our brother and sister animals and aspire to put an end to the suffering of animals together with us. Animal Spirit Church sees in animals its neighbours.

