

Voices of Faith #61

“The United States will have a new first doggie soon. The Humane Society of the United States reports there are approximately 74.8 million owned dogs in the United States — 39 percent of households, and approximately 88.3 million owned cats — 34 percent of households. Does your faith address the treatment of and responsibility for animals, specifically pets?”

As an animal lover, this question is one with which I can identify.

Christianity recognizes that all things are God’s, and that we are to be good managers of the gifts that God gives. Animals are included in this and so though man was given dominion over the animals in the very opening chapters of history, our treatment of them should be kind even as we are allowed to use them for our good. For example, oxen were used as work animals, but they were allowed to eat their fill of grain while they worked. Our concern should echo God’s who feeds the animals of his earth.

Pets specifically are treated only indirectly in the Bible. King David heard a story of a man who had a “little ewe lamb” that grew up with his master’s family and “was like a daughter to him,” and although this was a story used to make a point, it was likely based on a feasible situation.

Of greater concern should be the skewed position of many animal rights groups. While we need to be kind and responsible to our animals, they are not our equal, they are still a different (not simply “lower”) form of life, which should never be equated with, or given the rights of, human beings. Contrary to the evolutionist’s claim that man is merely an educated ape, the truth is that man, and man alone, is made in the image of God, which sets him qualitatively apart from animals.

Rev. Gene L Crow
Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church
Shasta Lake