

Cat and Dog Theology

Have you noticed how house cats walk around with a regal air about them? Perhaps it is because they were once, in ancient Egypt, worshiped as gods, and they still remember those good ol' days.

Then there is the witty related bit of humor, which compares certain canine characteristics with their feline counterparts. It is said that a dog thinks to itself regarding his master, "He feeds me, he shelters me, he cares for me, and he loves me. He must be god!" The cat makes similar observations but says "He feeds me, he shelters me, he cares for me and he loves me, therefore I must be god!"

This was meant to be merely a humorous illustration regarding the general attitudinal differences between these two animal species man most values as pets. However, it can also serve as a useful, perhaps even very powerful analogy and comparison between Christians and non-Christians, and even between Christians of variant attitudes and beliefs within the Christian community. What follows is not meant to suggest that animals have any spiritual sense, or that they can comprehend God or good and evil. It is merely these differences in instinctual characteristics between most members of these two species, which lend themselves to be used as analogies regarding human religious attitudes.

Let us first examine dog theology. Dogs, by their nature, seem to have a capacity for what appears to be a very powerful, unconditional love for their masters. They demonstrate intense loyalty. Most dogs yield readily to training and unquestioning obedience. Dogs will, and at times have, given their lives for their masters. The high point of a dog's life comes when its master gives it attention, whether it is by walking, petting, playing or anything else, as long as it is some form of one on one fellowship. It lives to please, and is heartbroken when it knows that it has displeased its master. As I write this, my heart aches, as I realize how much more Christian-like a dog is to its master than I am to mine. Oh, if I could only have in my heart the completeness, the

totality of love, faith, devotion and obedience toward my Master, my Lord and Savior, as a dog has to its master. God must have given us these wonderful creatures to show us, if we are willing to see, what the highest state of these divine qualities can be, and to humble us by expressing them through a mere animal. Even a dog's bark, which we commonly spell as W O O F provides a descriptive acronym of what should be our own living motto as Christians: W.O.O.F. "**W**e **O**bey **O**ur **F**ather! Or perhaps, **W**orship, and **O**bey **O**ur **F**ather! Can anyone do better than that?

Now, let us examine what may be called the "Cat theology." In essence, it could be summed up in a cat's favorite word, MEOW, when put in the form of the acronym M.E.O.W. **ME** Over Whatever, or perhaps **My** Effort Over Worship.

It is this meow theology, or me-ology, which has taken over the world, and to some extent, and in some ways even Christianity. It seems evident, as far as I can see, that most of the religions on earth, except for real Biblical, evangelical Christianity, observe some form of M.E.O.W., My Effort Over Worship theology, in that some individual effort must be applied in order to qualify for heaven, or, as many believe, to reach some other higher spiritual state or reality. True Christian faith claims eternal salvation in the sufficiency of Jesus and what the cross symbolizes.

The MEOW theology suggested by the acronym of Me Over Whatever, is quite sadly, and unintentionally symbolic of many Christian's attitudes and of those of others who call themselves Christians. They read the Scripture and almost everywhere find God's love for his creation. He loves us so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross in propitiation of our sins that we might share eternity with Him. He tells us to ask and we will receive. His Word is a guide to health and long life. One can find any number of verses, which suggest that the Scriptures are for each of us individually, For Me, and that God is For ME. Scripture is for My knowledge, My health, My wealth, and My salvation-ME, ME, ME, -MEOW!

In one context, all of this is true. It is God's book of promises and instructions for each of us. But let's look a little further into His instruction, because, along with this "for me" aspect of the Bible there is another and preeminently overriding theme and message.

The words glory, glorify, etc. appear in the Scripture over 500 times. Mostly they refer to God's glory and His charge to us to glorify Him. He created us not for ourselves, not for Me, but for Himself, for His glory "according to His good pleasure and His will " (Ephesians 1:15). Isaiah 43:7 tells us "...everyone that is called by my name for I have created him for My glory..." 1Corinthians 6:20 Tells us, "For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God..." From these and many, many more verses in both the Old and New Testament we are given the clear message that our purpose here is not for ourselves but for Him, for His glory. To glorify means to Honor, Praise and Worship.

So if you want to live and believe and serve as God wants us to and has instructed us to, think W.O.O.F. and not M.E.O.W. But when you think of your pets, neither blame nor credit them for how they act. Just as He created us for His pleasure, so also He created them just as they are, for our pleasure. However, perhaps now, after this, we may also see them as another one of God's instruments for our learning.