

The Interfaith Vegan Coalition: Its Values, Goals, and Mission
From [Lisa Levinson and Judy Carman, Compassion Consortium](#)
February 2024



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“We, the members of the Interfaith Vegan Coalition, do hereby declare that humanity has caused severe destruction to people, animals, and the earth. We believe there is still time to heal the damage and liberate all animals and the earth from human violence if human beings can awaken to our true nature. We recognize that all beings, regardless of species, value their lives, families, and friends. They want to live and be free from human domination and violence. As spiritual people who seek to align our values of loving-kindness and nonviolence with our actions, we declare that we will do our part each day to create a Vegan world of compassion, respect, and liberation for all beings.”

Thank you, Compassion Consortium, for inviting us at the Interfaith Vegan Coalition (IVC) to write about our favorite subject—Vegan values and spirituality. We, Lisa Levinson and Judy Carman, co-founded the IVC in 2015 at an animal rights convention with the help of Thomas Jackson, director of the film, *A Prayer for Compassion*. The timing for launching such an organization, that brought spirituality together with animal liberation, seemed to be perfect. We were met with tremendous encouragement from many people at that first meeting

Since the birth of IVC, we have discovered many other groups with very similar visions. The Compassion Consortium became one of our coalition members early on, and we have enjoyed many common projects together. It’s no wonder, because our missions and goals are so aligned and complement each other in many ways.

Our Declaration gets to the heart of why we formed IVC. Compassion Consortium and other groups and individuals have signed on to it as a statement that we can all uphold and treasure:

“We, the members of the Interfaith Vegan Coalition, do hereby declare that humanity has caused severe destruction to people, animals, and the earth. We believe there is still time to heal the damage and liberate all animals and the earth from human violence if human beings can awaken to our true nature. We recognize that all beings, regardless of species, value their lives, families, and friends. They want to live and be free from human domination and violence. As spiritual people

who seek to align our values of loving-kindness and nonviolence with our actions, we declare that we will do our part each day to create a Vegan world of compassion, respect, and liberation for all beings.”

From this basic vision that we share with the Coalition members, we have four prominent goals. **Our first** is to build an interfaith Vegan community in which we all find spiritual support and growth. We want to provide a loving space for spiritual Vegans who are struggling with their faith in the face of services, leaders, and sermons that ignore or even denigrate animals. The folks at the Compassion Consortium note “...that many people do not see their deeply rooted compassion for all creatures reflected in houses of worship or spiritual centers; some people have even left faith traditions after seeing animals excluded from the level of mercy they deserve; in many cases, they're even denied the possession of a soul.” IVC sees this as well.

Our **second goal** is to help people of faith introduce Vegan values within their own churches, temples and places of worship to “awaken the sleeping giant of religion.” The influence spiritual leaders could have on creating a Vegan world is immense. We and the animals need their help. It will take many members of these places of worship to introduce the revolutionary idea from the inside. We have created a lot of resources for those brave and dedicated people. [Watch this inspiring video](#) of our resources in action.



IVC tables at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 2018

Our Resources and Kits are free to use by anyone wanting to share their values of lovingkindness for all with their places of worship. Our growing set of resources includes:

- In person and online meetings, webinars, conferences and retreats, such as our [Vegan Spirituality Online Gatherings](#) and the annual [Whole Planet Spirituality Retreat](#) at Unity Village in Missouri.
- Access to our [Vegan Advocacy Kits](#) designed for introducing Vegan values to one's particular religion. So far we have Vegan Kits for Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, Gaudia Vaishnava Hindu, Hindu Advaita Vedantin, Islam, Jain, Jewish, Pagan, Quaker, Sikh, Unitarian Universalist, Unity, Zoroastrian, and General Resources for All Faiths. We are always looking to add more, of course.
- [Access to printable brochures](#) including “Are you Vegetarian for Spiritual Reasons?” (which explains why those very spiritual reasons lead us to Veganism) and “10 Steps: Bring Vegan Values to Your Place of Worship.”

- [Animals and Religion Traveling Museum Exhibit](#) curated by Dr. Lisa Kemmer includes 10 double-sided pull-up banners (or 20 wall-hanging banners) that display religious teachings to protect the vulnerable, respect life, and be kind from religious leaders like Gandhi, Mohammed, and Jesus with passages from sacred texts like Genesis, the Dhammapada, and the Mahabharata.

Our **third goal** is to provide forums for Vegan religious groups to collaborate on outreach projects. Some of our [projects](#) have included partnering with Plant Based Treaty and Jane Goodall to educate about [the cruelty of animal gifting charities](#) and partnering with the Episcopal Network for Animal Welfare to stop lobster boil fundraisers in Episcopal churches. We have also worked with several Catholic and Laudato Si groups to [implore the Pope](#) to encourage Veganism as consistent with Catholic values. We created a list, with All-Creatures.org, of [Vegan pastors](#), [Vegan friendly churches](#) and [Vegan churches](#). In Defense of Animals helps IVC immensely with sending out letters, alerts, and press releases regarding issues that involve animals and religions such as animal killing contests sponsored by churches.

And our **fourth goal** is to be a unified voice and a holy force for animal liberation. As a coalition, IVC represents a large number of spiritually oriented Vegan groups, adding great credibility and impact to our actions. IVC has three tiers of membership. Those groups and individuals that are in total alignment with our declaration, including the Compassion Consortium, can become members. Those that may not align completely, are not necessarily Vegan but are working hard for rights for animals, can join as allies, and those that are coalitions themselves may join as partners. The very busy and accomplished Animal Interfaith Alliance (AIA) is our partner. Currently [44 member groups](#) have joined our coalition, 4 allies, and one partner, namely AIA. IVC is also a Compassion for All Animals Partner with the Charter for Compassion.



IVC marches in the Parade of Faiths at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 2023

We made a big splash at the Toronto 2018 Parliament of World Religions (PoWR) giving vegan talks, creating an entirely vegan banquet for the Charter for Compassion's 300 guests, and hosting an information table surrounded by the beautiful "Animals and World Religions" traveling exhibit, curated by Dr. Lisa Kemmerer. We went on to attend the online Parliament in 2021. At the 2023 Chicago Parliament, we presented 19 Vegan talks, participated in the parade, displayed Dr. Kemmerer's art exhibit, and hosted an information table where many new and valuable contacts for the animals were

made. We created a Vegan menu for the annual Charter for Compassion banquet and dispersed Vegan materials to guests. [Watch this fun video](#) of us at the Parliament!

We love to participate in the annual Golden Rule Day and 7 Days of Rest & Renewal celebrations. These are both online, video events with large, diverse and pre-Vegan audiences. Our submissions of music and art, which encourage compassion for all beings, nonviolence, and Veganism, reach hundreds of people.

We continue to sail on toward the most beautiful of visions—a world of nonviolence, peace and love for all beings of all species. It is with tremendous gratitude that we find ourselves working with the esteemed Compassion Consortium and so many dedicated groups and individuals. Together, may we help all people to see that the universal Golden Rule applies to all beings, not just the human ones, and that by expanding our circle of compassion, humanity will find the greatest peace it has ever known.