

Christian Vegan Voices

Here is a selection of statements from real-life Christian vegans who answered our 2021-2022 questionnaire. Where possible, we've included a photo. These are in no particular order, but the statements with photos come first.

The views expressed here are those of the individuals themselves and are intended as stimuli for deep thinking, discussion and debate in RE lessons.

Katherine, 31 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 1-2 years

Catherine is Christian and describes herself as 'somewhat religious'



I am motivated to be vegan by concern for animal suffering, the environment, and religious teachings.

As an RE teacher, I was teaching about the Orthodox Church fast during Advent (essentially vegan) and thought I'd try it myself one year. I enjoyed it so much and it got me into researching more about veganism, especially the environmental impact and how animals suffer, and I never went back!

Having done a lot of research into the meat, dairy and egg industries, it is definitely now all about the animals. I am involved in vegan activism.

To me, veganism means compassion, justice, kindness, wholesome, stewardship.

A diet and lifestyle (clothing etc) completely free from animal products. Vegan activism and encouraging friends and family. Posting about exciting vegan recipes on social media.

The best thing about being vegan is knowing I am not contributing to animal suffering, reducing my impact on the environment, inspiring others to do the same. Feeling healthier and happier. Enjoying learning and creating new foods!

The most challenging thing about being vegan is knowing how many animals are suffering every second of every day and trying to encourage others who don't want to know or haven't made the connection with the food on their plate to change. Once you know you can't un-know.

Linda, 68 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Linda is Christian and describes herself as ‘very religious’



I became vegan due to concern for animal suffering, and now I am also motivated by my religious beliefs as well.

Veganism is one of the central platforms of my life and I do all I can to promote it, including offering Vegan B&B. The best thing about being vegan is a deep sense of peace and connection with the whole of Creation and not harming animals, people and planet.

It can be challenging when being treated as a second-class customer, the lack of choice and the sheer ignorance of society as a whole around veganism. Living in a society that promotes animal cruelty and environmental destruction is not easy.

Sheila, 71 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 6-9 years

Sheila is Christian and describes herself as ‘religious’



I first went vegan out of concern for animal suffering. Now, I am also motivated by environmental concerns, my personal health as well as the teachings and beliefs of Christianity. I began to work actively for animals with two charities, and through them I learnt about the cruelty inside industrial farming. I had been vegetarian but gave up dairy and eggs when I discovered what goes on that makes animals suffer and die there. I have learned in recent years how much our planet and all living on it suffer because of production of meat for food. This motivates me to encourage others, who may not share my concern for animal suffering, to consider a vegan way of life.

Veganism means avoiding buying anything that results from animal suffering wherever possible. The best thing about being vegan is reducing animal suffering. The most challenging thing has been giving up hard English cheese and trying to find substitutes!

I think children should learn about veganism at school because it is important that as many people as possible understand the impact of their choices in life on the animals, on the planet as a whole, on our climate, and on the poorest people on Earth. A vegan lifestyle helps all these.

Chantal, 48 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 6-9 years

Chantal is Christian and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’



I first went vegan for reasons to do with animal suffering and the environment. Now, I am also motivated to be vegan for personal health as well.

Veganism, to me, is an ethical and moral conviction put into practice. I avoid anything that would support animal exploitation: food, clothing, entertainment, medication (where possible). I also take part in activism and volunteer at animal sanctuaries.

The best thing about being vegan is to know we do our very best to not cause pain and suffering to other sentient beings. The most challenging thing is to live in a carnist* world.

**Carnist world means one in which using animals for food and other purposes is the norm and goes largely (or completely) unquestioned by most people. It is a word coined by the psychologist, Dr Melanie Joy.*

Virginia, 72 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 10+ years

Virginia is Christian and describes herself as a ‘practising Roman Catholic’



Initially, I was motivated to become vegan because of my concerns about animal suffering. I was able to empathise with the suffering of others, whatever the species. I hate to suffer, even mildly, so I couldn't cause others to suffer if I could avoid it.

Now, I am also vegan for the environment, personal health, and because of the beliefs and teachings of my religion.

To me, veganism means

- 1) Concern for my conscience
- 2) Concern for all God's creatures
- 3) Concern for the natural environment which is home to all, and which incorporates many other concerns (pollution, destruction, waste, hunger...) Also, it means that the vegan has a spiritual side.

The best think about being vegan is doing the right thing. The most challenging thing is persuading others.

I think that it is essential that children learn about veganism at school. The spiritual health of humans depends on it, as does their physical health. The health of the planet depends on it, as well as ending waste and hunger.

Yohanna, 28 years old, lives in Tanzania, vegan for 1-2 years

Yohanna is Christian and describes himself as ‘very religious’



Becoming a vegan means saving animal life, protecting their right giving more opportunity of lives to them. I volunteer for vegan causes in my country. The best thing about being vegan is saving animals’ lives. There is nothing challenging or annoying for me about it.

I am vegan for the animals, the environment and for my own health.

Luis, 33 years old, lives the UK, vegan 10+ years

Luis is Christian and describes himself as ‘religious’

I am vegan because I am concerned about animal suffering, environment, and my personal health. I was 19 years old and questioning a lot of things in my life, trying to understand why I did or did not do something things. Diet was part of that questioning. Did I need to eat animals to live? No, so why to do it. I have always loved animals and if there is no reason to kill them, I cannot be part of that violent process.

I see veganism as a way of life, a philosophy of love. The best thing about it is that I am guilt free, I am in tune with my loving, peaceful beliefs. I know that my actions follow what I pray. There are social challenges that come with it, but they are disappearing.

As a trainee teacher I want to see veganism as part of school curriculum and ideally not just as part of RE but included in philosophy and ethics, and history (the subject that I am being trained in). I have started to include an animal perspective when I can (for example about the role of animals in WWI and their work and the millions killed, asking students to reflect on it). I think that I need to teach children about the world in a non-anthropocentric way. While we push that narrative we cannot help humans to connect to the planet and its challenges.

**Anthropocentric means to focus entirely or mainly on human beings. Luis is saying that he thinks education is too focussed on human beings’ interests and ways of seeing the world.*

Michelle, 62, UK, vegan for 10+ years

Michelle is a Quaker and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’

I became vegan when I realised that it was morally wrong to use and exploit animals. My beliefs and my actions were in such conflict, the only choice in ensuring non-violence and respect for animals was to go vegan

The Vegan Society definition of veganism is commensurate with my way of living. I have seen other definitions which include a moral imperative for vegans to actively advocate for animals. I don't think this is a necessary requirement. However, I did not find changing my eating habits and use of animals enough, I felt driven to try and make a difference for animals on a larger scale. I am involved in charities and campaigns for animal welfare/rights

Veganism means striving to ensure respect, compassion, non-violence and equal concern for animals, people and the planet.

By showing empathy, compassion and respect for all life I became more conscious and sympathetic to other interrelated social justice issues. The consequential benefits for health and the environment further endorsed the reasons to go vegan. All motivations are intrinsically linked. Although raised a Catholic I didn't identify with it, on reflection this was partly due to the notion of dominion (domination and superiority over animals) taught in my Catholic school and endorsed in the sciences. Having since learned many religious and non-religious groups include all life within their circle of compassion, it opened up the opportunity to explore the resonance of particular philosophies and beliefs in light of my own personal experience. Having experienced a sense of spiritual calling to actively advocate for animals, I feel a personal affinity with Quakerism.

The best thing about being vegan is being at peace with myself and the joy of experiencing the spiritual interconnection with animals and nature

Becoming vegan was the best and worst of times. Great to align beliefs with practice, but the horrors of discovering the gross cruelties humans inflict on animals for food, entertainment, experiments etc has, and continues to be, distressing and depressing - however, it's better to have learned the truth than live in ignorance.

I think it is crucial children learn about veganism so they can explore their own moral values. As a matter of factual evidence, they should also learn about the consequences of animal use for health and the environment. Teaching compassion for animals will also help them be more compassionate to themselves and others. Compassion does beget compassion. I wish I'd had this education when I was at school.

There are interconnections with other social justice movements. Also, they should know that everyone's journey is different, and being vegan isn't always possible for economic/family reasons but that's okay, just wanting to show empathy and compassion to animals, people and the planet is a wonderful thing.

Rich, 55 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Rich is Christian and describes himself as ‘somewhat religious’

I researched the animal farming industry and concluded it was bad for everyone. The only sensible response was to become Vegan. We are consuming vast amounts of Earth's resources, with 10 times as many farmed animals having to be fed in order to satisfy diets that are unnatural, unsustainable and bad for animals, people, wildlife, biodiversity, ecology and the environment. We are killing the planet in order to make a few thousand landowners rich. How can it not be immoral?

To me, veganism means showing compassion for the earth and all people. Doing no wrong while trying to live a reasonable life.

Julie, 61, lives in the UK, vegan 3-5 years

Julie is Christian and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’

I was vegetarian from the age of 10. I became vegan curious about 6 years ago after I received a leaflet from a charity (Viva!) about the egg and dairy industry. I realised that by eating eggs and milk etc I was still contributing to animal suffering and slaughter, and that being vegetarian wasn't enough. My motivations have not changed. I am still passionate about ending animal suffering. I love being vegan and don't feel deprived of anything.

Veganism means not consuming any animal products. Plant-based means a similar thing. The difference is that veganism goes a step further than just eating plant-based food; Veganism is more about ethics. Vegans also avoid using animal products such as leather and wool and try to use products which contain no animal-derived ingredients and are not tested on animals.

The best thing about being vegan is having a clear conscience; knowing that an innocent, sentient being has not had to live and die just to fill my stomach when there are so many other things to eat in this day and age.

Veganism feels completely natural and is my chosen way to live. I don't find it difficult at all, but the most challenging thing is when people try to undermine my lifestyle by dismissing it or making ill-informed remarks when I am quietly going about my life.

Brandon, 35, lives in the USA, vegan, 3-5years

Brandon is Christian and describes himself as ‘very religious’

As I've grown into my vegan lifestyle, my reasons have evolved. I was first motivated to eat a vegan diet for personal health, but now I am also motivated by concern for animal suffering, the environment and my religious beliefs.

I've watched documentaries and read countless articles and have educated myself about how the sufferings of our fellow earthlings (animals), as well as environmental impacts can be linked to our consumption of meat. This has led me to view meat consumption as an act that is morally and ethically repugnant.

In God's perfect world (the garden of Eden) shortly after completing creation humans and animals lived in harmony. There was no killing, no death. God had given them plants to eat and that was enough. Veganism and religion to me are one. How can we take these innocent beings that God has placed us in charge of, and abuse, neglect, and exploit them? When we do these things to animals, we lose what makes us human, what makes us made in God's image.

The best thing about being vegan is just feeling in harmony with nature. Like I'm living with other beings as God intended.

The most challenging thing is having to justify my lifestyle to people who are closed minded. They ask because they want to poke holes, not because they're curious.

Barry, 43 years old, lives in Canada, vegan for 6-9 years

Barry is Christian and describes himself as 'religious'

I was first motivated to become vegan due to animal suffering. I came across some PeTA magazines in the mid '90s that influenced me to stop eating meat; also, reading Peter Singer's Animal Liberation. Now I am also vegan for environment, personal health and as a response to Christian teachings.

Being vegan is now an aspect of my core identity and philosophical worldview. Being vegan helps me be ethically consistent; also, my physical health at 43 is significantly better than when I was 23.

There are many best things about being vegan! But perhaps the most unique is that veganism helps me be philosophically and ethically consistent. For example, rejecting violence is difficult to defend if one is willing to accept violence towards animals for the sake of a turkey dinner at Christmas.

The most challenging thing is that most social gatherings centred around food, so constantly announcing myself as vegan. This led to a typecasting in the minds of others, and I would be "the vegan". After a while it felt like my other characteristics were not really noticed - I was "the vegan". Smalltalk directed towards me would be about me being vegan.

Louise, 40 years old, lives in the Republic of Ireland, vegan for 3-5 years

Louise says she was raised Catholic but is no longer practising

My 5 year old son objected to us using animal products. He felt it was morally wrong, cruel and unnecessary. He challenged us as a family, and we felt it was no longer something we could excuse or pretend was OK.

For me, veganism is a way of life... a set of beliefs to respect the world around me. To do my best to live my life in a way that causes the least amount of hurt or environmental damage. To help reduce suffering for animals, but also for my fellow man with environmental damage. I feel it has become a spiritual guidance for me.

The best thing about being vegan, for me, is all the foods I would not have tried before. A sense of peace. It cannot be good for our soul's/spirits etc to ingest food that came from such suffering.

The most challenging aspect of being vegan is people's reactions, we still face a lot of aggression. People get defensive, presume you will judge them or criticise them. I never bring it up but once people know they often become defensive about meat eating. Questions/accusations about forcing my children to be vegan. Always the comments about nutrition, iron, etc. Or "I have a friend who was told by a doctor to eat steak" I hate that as a vegan any health issue you may have, is blamed on your diet. People are surprised to learn I am a health professional.

I think that children should learn about veganism at school. I feel my children are often faced with having to explain /justify to other children and adults. It is a way of life and a legitimate lifestyle choice.

Helen, 44 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Helen is Christian and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’

I am vegan because of concerns about animal suffering and the environment. My initial motivation? Getting a rescue dog! Went vegetarian first for 2 years, then vegan. Just thought it made no sense to love one animal as a pet and eat other animals and cause their suffering. Even more concerned now about the environmental impact of farming than ever. It is madness to chop down rainforest to clear ground for crops to feed to animals. Opinions are changing rapidly on this which can only be a good thing.

Veganism, to me, is a way of thinking about life that informs all my choices. A kindness and empathy towards others, animals and the environment. I try to absolutely minimise all harm to animals in my food choices and purchases, but it isn't possible to be completely ethical. For example, I have to wear leather products in my work uniform. I'm not an activist but I do try and keep up to date and continually educate myself. I also try and eat ethically sourced foods and products i.e. Fair-trade.

The best thing about being vegan is feeling like I make a small but positive difference every day!!

The most challenging thing is other people's reactions!

Holly, 31 years old, UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Holly is Christian and describes herself as ‘not very religious’

I became vegetarian because I didn't enjoy eating meat and wanted to have more control over what I ate when I lived with my partner's parents. I took part in Veganuary in 2019 because I wanted to become vegan but didn't know how to make the transition. I stopped consuming milk and eggs overnight and since then have learned more about products to avoid to stop suffering in animals.

I will be vegan for life now because I feel passionately that no being should suffer for what I eat, wear, or use every day. I use my purchasing power to make my point and try to buy from local vegan shops or specialist vegan websites. I was proud to have a fully vegan and healthy pregnancy but felt hugely let down by the care in the maternity unit when the only options for me to eat in the middle of the night included animal products. My son is now fully vegan, and I am motivated to show him how he can have a happy life being compassionate.

Being vegan means everything to me. It is something I think about and try to learn more about every day. I think of how I can teach my son to be kind and caring and how this will go beyond what is on his plate and affect how he treats other people, his belongings, and the planet. I feel like I have always been vegan but was only able to make the choice for myself when I was an adult. I don't blame my parents for not encouraging me to make the choice when I was a child because people didn't seem to be as aware then as they are now. I wouldn't let my son experience my heartache and sadness knowing that an animal had died for my meal.

We support vegan charities, avoid all animal products where possible, insist on offering only vegan food in our house. We are having a small wedding and offering vegan food for our guests. We adopted a rabbit because we knew we could keep him on a vegan diet, we don't plan to have a cat or dog because we feel it could be difficult to avoid giving them animal products.

The best thing about being vegan is the happiness and joy you feel from knowing you aren't contributing to animal suffering.

The most challenging thing is the anger at knowing so many animals are suffering because meat consumption is increasing, food is cheap and not valued, there is so much waste, etc.

Rachel, 41 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 1-2 years

Rachel is Christian and describes herself as ‘somewhat religious’

I’m an environmentalist and it was an obvious choice to go vegan. I am now also motivated to be vegan for my concern for animal suffering and personal health. Since taking part in Veganuary 2019 I learnt so much about the impact of whole food plant-based (WFPB) diet on human and planetary health and although I knew a bit about animal cruelty, I had no idea how bad it really was. I also want to role model healthy and ethical choices to my 3 children

Veganism, to me, means causing no harm to animals through my life choices, including food, materials/products and leisure activities. In practice, this means I eat no animal products, don’t buy any new animal products (eg furniture, clothing etc) but will continue to use stuff I already have, take children to animal sanctuaries instead of zoos, plan to get rescues as pets in the future, teach my children and will take them to a march/involve them in activism when they’re slightly older.

The best thing about being vegan is feeling healthy and having a clear conscience for the animals and the planet.

The most challenging thing is people asking stupid questions and mocking. Not having easy access to vegan food when eating out or at the children’s school. Anger at the governments around the world for putting money before everything else.

If children are learning about climate change, then veganism/plant-based diet has to be included.

Julia, 66 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 10+ years

Julia is Christian and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’

I am motivated to be vegan to reduce animal suffering, for the environment and my personal health – health is now even more important

Veganism means Everything to me - it is my life!

I eat a plant-based diet, avoid eating with non-vegans, have no animal products in household cleaners, cosmetics, furniture, clothing. I have volunteered in the past at animal sanctuaries, been part of activist groups, attended vigils outside slaughterhouses, etc.

The best thing about being vegan is feeling so good - in my head and my stomach! The most challenging thing is that not everybody else is vegan

Emma, 47, UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Emma is Christian and describes herself as ‘religious’

Seeing first-hand the suffering in both intensive farming practices and the slaughterhouses motivated me to be vegan. Now I’m also motivated by concerns about the sustainability of modern farming and the impact on the environment.

Veganism is important to me as I have no wish to be part of any species suffering.

The best thing is that I feel slightly less guilt about the suffering of animals.

The most challenging thing is that I always liked eating meat and do miss it.

Joanne, 44 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 3-5 years

Joanna is Christian and describes herself as ‘spiritual but not religious’

I felt like a hypocrite and someone who was contributing to animal suffering by not being a vegan. It felt like the natural and logical next step. Now, I am also motivated by concern for the environment, personal health and Christian teachings. I have a strong feeling that this is the right diet for me, free from suffering and spiritually pure.

To me, veganism means living cleanly and without causing suffering. It’s also a spiritual practice because I am not infected by the suffering of the animal transmitted through its flesh.

The best thing about being vegan is knowing I’m not contributing to animal suffering.

The most challenging thing is people assuming vegan food or vegans are boring.

Tracy, 59 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 6-9 years

Tracy is Christian and describes herself as ‘somewhat religious’

My boyfriend and I became vegetarians at the age of 18 after he was invited to go inside an abattoir (slaughterhouse). Being vegetarian was one of the best life decisions I have ever made. I became vegan when I fully understood the cruelty of dairy farming. It seemed hypocritical to me as the dairy industry, in my view, is as cruel if not more cruel than other parts of animal industry and farming.

I believe in equality and human rights. I feel even more strongly now about the rights of all sentient beings to live in peace with each other. From an ethical perspective, humans should keep evolving to the highest set of values and beliefs. That is progress. What is happening to animals globally is barbaric and should not be acceptable in a civil and fair society. Veganism to me means living my best life without consciously causing harm to any other living being. It is essentially about having true compassion and respect for all forms of life and not discriminating against one just to satisfy my appetite.

I try not to eat, wear or use any product that have made animals suffer. The health and environmental benefits of being vegan are a bonus. I am a craftivist. I make crafts to fundraise for animal sanctuaries and to raise awareness of animal cruelty. I admire activists who stand in towns and cities trying to educate people. I have often been accused of forcing my beliefs on my children (now adults) for bringing them up as vegetarians. I have never forced my beliefs and one son remains vegetarian whilst the other chooses to eat meat. I brought them up to be kind and respectful and independent of mind. You cannot force someone to have compassion for all animals, it has to come from your heart and your own values and beliefs about what animal lives are worth. Yet we raise children every day to eat meat with lies about where their food comes from and are not honest with them about the immense suffering and incredibly short lives of farmed animals.

Being vegan enables me to be a true lover of all animals and not just some. It helps me to be a better, kinder and more compassionate human being with the capability to respect all forms of life as being of equal value.

Staying friends with people who choose to eat meat is challenging. I find it intensely hard to understand how people who have a strong and natural ability to fight for equality and human rights yet fail to apply these same values to the lives of animals.

I think it’s important for children to be taught that they have a choice about how they live their lives and that it is possible to live a healthy cruelty free life. It would be great to include films and talks from vegans to help children to understand that we are ordinary people who simply love animals too much to want to harm them for the sake of fashion or our appetites. Dispelling the myths and legends, for example, the lack of protein argument would be good as greater knowledge and understanding help us to make the right decisions.