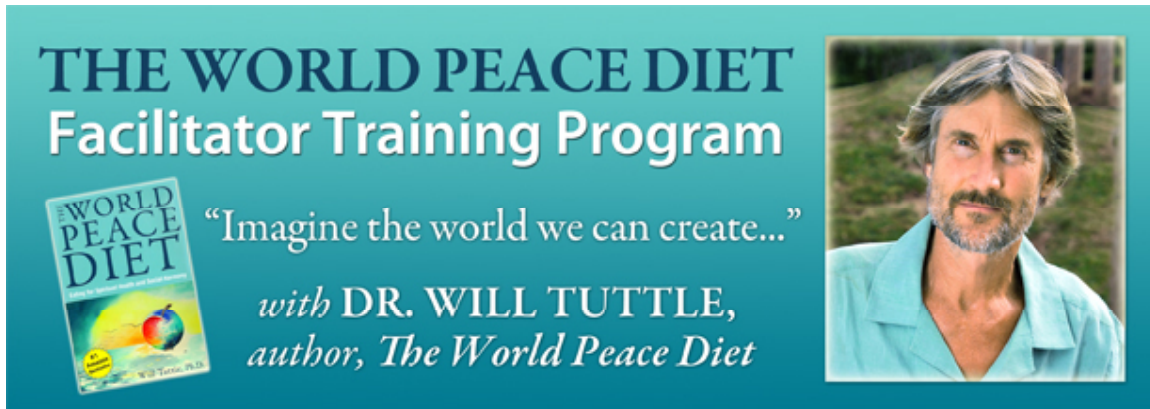




Module Five – Supplemental Reading

Comments by Congressman Christopher Shays At The Official Unveiling and Signing Of A Religious Proclamation for Animal Compassion

Thank you for inviting me to this official unveiling and signing of *A Religious Proclamation for Animal Compassion*.

The way a society treats its animals speaks to the core values and priorities of its citizens. We as a society have betrayed those core values of compassion, mercy and decency. We have reduced living, feeling, sentient beings – God’s creatures – to meager units of economic production. And, in the process, we have not only brutalized the animals but also degraded the workers in those industries and ourselves.

The Proclamation being unveiled today is the result of months of discussion, debate and hard work within the religious community. What has emerged is a consensus of principles calling on people of faith and their leaders to put compassion into action for all of God’s creatures. These principles address companion animals, factory farming, animals exploited in entertainment, medical and commercial testing and habitat protection.

Many of you are familiar with Matthew Scully, former speechwriter to President George W. Bush. Mr. Scully writes “...the persistent animal welfare questions of our day center on institutional cruelties on the vast and systematic mistreatment of animals that most of us never see.”

That most of us never see – that is the crucial point. Global warming isn’t the only inconvenient truth we need to confront. If the general public truly knew how animals were treated, they would be outraged. And, their outrage, under the proper leadership could be transformed into real reform.

As Co-Chairman of the Congressional Friends of Animals Caucus, I am addressing many of these issues through the legislative process.

However, you, the faith based community, are crucial to this effort – as you have been in all social justice movements in our history. You can bring the message to your congregations and by doing so, lead and transform the core spiritual values of kindness, compassion and mercy into effective legislation and ultimately, respectful and responsible stewardship of creation.