

This provides an update on World Vision's efforts to end extreme poverty by 2030 through Economic Empowerment.



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Greetings!

World Vision is delighted to send you our Executive Briefing for Economic Empowerment. You are an integral part of our work to end extreme poverty by 2030, so we want to keep you updated on our progress!

Natural Resource Management - A Biblical Foundation

Christopher Shore, Chief Development Officer, Economic Empowerment



This week many people around the world celebrated Earth Day – a day to support environmental protection. Recently I have been asked whether environmental protection is something that Christians should be engaged with.

Pragmatically, World Vision's THRIVE model has natural resource management as one of its core operating "pillars". The on-farm and off-farm natural resources (like the soil, the trees and forests, and the watershed) need to be proactively managed so that the farm is productive, gets the water and pollination it needs, is resilient to shocks like pests, disease, or too little rain or rain at the "wrong" time of year. Good natural resource management can be looked at simply as essential for good and resilient farming.

However, are there other reasons to think deeply about natural resource management?

From our reading of the Holy Scriptures we understand:

- God is the creator, and God has called creation 'very good' (Gen. 1:31).
- While humanity is God's appointed steward of creation, creation belongs to God. The earth is the Lord's.
- Since the earth is the Lord's and God is our ruler, humanity is accountable to God for our stewardship of and interaction with creation.

Since God is creator, owner and ruler, we seek to care for creation in the way that God calls for. The thoughtful and proper care for creation is the logical outworking of our love for God – caring for what God has made, which ultimately belongs to God. Humans are not independent actors with regard to creation, because creation is God's. We will be judged by God if we mar, degrade or destroy creation, and we must act towards creation in the way that God calls us to.

We also understand:

- Creation glorifies God.
- Creation reveals God and God's nature, character and purposes.

Because creation is a means of God's revelation and because of its inherent value and goodness being created by God, we care for creation. We interact with creation in a way that preserves its capacity to reveal God, restores and rehabilitates those parts of creation that have been misused, and stands

against uses of creation that destroy its revelatory role.

According to the Bible, God's intentions for creation were not only to reveal God's character, but also to:

- provide for all that God has made, including natural systems and non-human life needs
- provide for human physical needs, including food, water, shelter, clothing and energy
- provide for human and non-human life both now and into the future



God's twin purposes for creation are to reveal God's character and nature, and to provide for what God has made. Humanity's use of creation must promote – not compromise – the ability of creation to reveal God and to provide for humans and other creatures on the earth now and in the future.

Humans are entrusted by God with both dominion over and stewardship of creation:

- God has tasked humans to govern and supervise the rest of creation – by exercising dominion.
- The purpose of dominion is to carry out God's intention for creation, including revealing God, providing for human and non-human creation, and caring for our neighbor.
- Humanity's exercise of dominion is limited, as God has ultimate dominion over humanity. God holds humanity accountable for our exercise of dominion over creation.
- Humans' stewardship of creation means ensuring that it functions and prospers into the future, to the degree that we are able to influence – a command given before the fall and a command particularly important today. The word *stewardship* is connected with 'watch', 'guard' and 'protect'.
- Appropriate stewardship requires that we know God's stated purposes for creation and God's stated human responsibilities, including caring for the widow, the vulnerable and the oppressed.

God has given two roles to humanity regarding creation: exercising both dominion and stewardship over the earth. Our understanding of dominion is that it is not unlimited, but is intended to ensure creation functions properly, thereby accomplishing God's purposes. Stewardship is particularly connected with caring appropriately for creation.

As Christians we believe we understand something unique about our world since we know its Creator so intimately. Specifically:

- Jesus is creator and Lord over the earth, and we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to what he has made.
- Jesus is reconciling all things to himself including all of creation, thereby signaling creation's eternal importance.
- Jesus commands us to care for the poor and oppressed, the 'least of these' (Matthew 25).
- The 'least of these' often depend most heavily on creation's healthy functioning. Anyone concerned with the 'least of these' must pay special attention to care of creation. People whose actions knowingly or inadvertently harm the 'least of these' risk the wrath of the Creator and Judge of all things.
- Caring for creation is a relational act, intimately connected to our relationship with Christ, our relationships with others and our responsibilities in the shared ministry of reconciling all things to Christ.
- Caring for creation is an act of the mind and will; however, as with all things, the leading and filling of God's Spirit is required for true long-term success from a biblical perspective.

In Jesus' life, ministry and teaching we see a unique perspective on creation. Not only does the Bible say Jesus is creator and Lord, but also that it is Jesus who is reconciling ALL things to himself, including creation. Jesus' teaching about the 'least of these' is especially poignant for anyone working with the poor, as the poor are often most dependent on the healthy functioning of creation. Jesus instructs that we need the indwelling of the Spirit to accomplish the good works he's prepared for us in creation.



The Scriptures paint a clear picture of God's creation and humanity's roles and responsibilities. God is the creator, and creation belongs to God, not to humanity. God wants to be known, and creation is a means of revealing God's character and nature. Creation is a means of providing for humanity and the rest of what God has made, and humanity has been given both dominion and stewardship over creation.

- We understand that these roles and responsibilities are given so that creation can fulfill its

purpose of providing for all humanity now and into the future. Since the poor are especially reliant on creation, we are careful to manage and care for creation so that creation provides well for the poor.

- We know that there will be a judgement against those who abuse God's entrusting of resources, and we stake everything on Christ's mercy for our many failings.

With this understanding, World Vision has concluded, and we affirm:

We are stewards of God's creation. We care for the earth and act in ways that will restore and protect the environment. We ensure that our development activities are ecologically sound.

To read the full version of Why We Are Stewards of Creation, [click here](#).

OneVision Tech Fund Webinar

Did you join us for the webinar we hosted this past week? You can watch to the recording [here](#) if you missed it!

Upcoming Calendar Events

- **Vision Trips** (please contact your World Vision representative about participating, or cshore@worldvision.org or kbarta@worldvision.org)
 - Malawi (July 13-20, 2018) with Christopher Shore
 - Zambia (November 3-10, 2018) with Christopher Shore and Bob & Sandy Hoover
- **Fork to Farm SEEP Event** – 30 September, 2018 – Washington, DC – a chance for prospective and current donors to meet World Vision's global Economic Empowerment leaders ahead of the annual SEEP conference
- **Strong Women Strong World** – 30 November, 2018 – New York, New York
- **South Florida Economic Empowerment Summit** – January 25-26, 2019 – Naples, Florida
- **Every Last One Conference** – March 8-9, 2019 – Carlsbad, CA
- **THRIVE / Building Secure Livelihoods Forum** – April 1-5, 2019 – Lilongwe, MALAWI



Global Findex

The Global Findex Database 2017

News Flash

The World Bank has released its triennial report on how adults save, borrow, make payments, and manage risk. Financial inclusion is rising globally – accelerated by mobile phones and the internet. However, gains are uneven across countries, and men remain more likely than women to have an account with a bank or financial service provider.

From the report:

Globally, 69 percent of adults – 3.8 billion people – now have an account at a bank or mobile money provider, a crucial step in escaping poverty. This is up from 62 percent in 2014 and just

51 percent in 2011. From 2014 to 2017, 515 million adults obtained an account, and 1.2 billion have done so since 2011, according to the Global Findex database. While in some economies account ownership has surged, progress has been slower elsewhere, often held back by large disparities between men and women and between the rich and poor. The gap between men and women in developing economies remains unchanged since 2011, at 9 percentage points.

The situation in Africa is interesting. Financial inclusion has NOT significantly progressed, but it has changed to becoming more dominated by mobile money. That points to both the potential and the value of World Vision's "**One Vision Technology Fund**" which aims to massively reduce lending costs for rural lending by harnessing mobile data collection and mobile money.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile money drove financial inclusion. While the share of adults with a financial institution account remained flat, the share with a mobile money account almost doubled, to 21 percent. Since 2014, mobile money accounts have spread from East Africa to West Africa and beyond. The region is home to all eight economies where 20 percent or more of adults use only a mobile money account: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Opportunities abound to increase account ownership: up to 95 million unbanked adults in the region receive cash payments for agricultural products, and roughly 65 million save using semi formal methods.

Access to financial services is not just nice. Most of those living in extreme poverty do not have a job, and so run their own business or farm for self-employment. Financial services are needed to grow and improve the farm or business, as well as for savings against shocks or emergencies (like illness, accidents, failed harvests). 1.7 billion people remain "unbanked". Growing VisionFund International through programs like World Vision's **Women's Empowerment Fund** helps reduce that number.

To directly read the World Bank report, please click on [here](#).



Staff Transition

Itzbeth Menjivar at VisionFund International is departing the organization in mid-May. Itzbeth has been working with us in the USA to help people better understand the role of microfinance in economic empowerment and the work of VisionFund International. For some time now, Itzbeth has been feeling the Lord calling her to get involved with issues of poverty and injustice closer to home, in the Washington DC area, where she will be working on youth leadership development and building bridges for reconciliation. It is with sadness that we say good-bye to our friend and colleague as she leaves international development to help equip servant leaders to promote social justice in the US and around the world.

Prayer Requests

PRAISE

- Vic and Mary Jury will be our donor ambassadors for THRIVE Rwanda.
- For recent Vision Trips to Honduras and Malawi and Tanzania.

REQUESTS

- For the planning process for the April 2019 WV THRIVE Forum in Malawi.
- For the funding needed for THRIVE Malawi.



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World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

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