Theology: For a Just and Sustainable Economy

I. Introduction
Tearfund has a vision of an economy that will result in wholeness and completeness. A just and sustainable economy, where people and communities flourish, both physically and spiritually. This economy is one that works for everyone and one that operates within the planet's natural limits. Many societies today are starting to question dominant attitudes towards material wealth and what it truly means to flourish. People are thinking about how to live out their values and beliefs in the face of rising inequality, economic crises and environmental pressures.

Tearfund, with its strong Christian distinctive, is uniquely and vitally placed to share its vision for a just and sustainable economy, and to connect churches around the world in a holistic response to these issues. The connected global Church can resource and facilitate activities by countless local churches. The Church can provide different understandings of what it means to flourish, drawing on our understanding of God's mission as we read about it in Scripture.

In this theological reflection, we endeavour to present a compelling, credible, and biblical vision for social and economic systems. We also recognise that our own work is not sufficient to fully reveal God’s Kingdom, which will not come in full until Christ’s return. The Church is called to model God’s Kingdom in the world and be a transformative presence in the way that we live in and are a part of the world.

II. Summary: What's in the papers
Paper 1 Integral Mission
‘... the Gospel is not just “me and my salvation” - a means by which I can go to heaven when I die. ...the Gospel is the whole story of what God has done to take the creation - which has been broken and fractured by sin and rebellion - and bring it into unity and wholeness and redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Dr Chris Wright

This paper says that to do integral mission is to enter into the story of God, as told in the bible, and embrace a way of living:
- that stems from our relationship with God
- that is entered into in response to the cross
- that is rooted in prayer, worship and reflection on the Bible
- in which we (individually and as the church) communicate the Gospel through everything we are, everything we say and everything we do.
- that bears witness to the coming Kingdom of God.

2 This quote by Dr Chris Wright of Langham Partnership International is transcribed from a filmed interview by Tearfund, July 2014.
Paper 2 Sustainable lifestyles
When Jesus said, ‘I have come that they may have life, and life to the full,’ (John 10:10) He offered this to everyone who would receive Him (John 1:12). The good news is that there are enough resources on the earth for everyone to live life to the full. The biblical challenge is to ensure that everyone has enough in ways that honour God and value His creation.

This paper looks at the following principles and practices which reflect God’s purposes:

- **shalom** which means more than peace and incorporates ideas of wholeness. It demands a transformation of the way we live, and tells a different story of the world we are seeking and hoping for than the various utopian, dystopian, or nihilistic stories we often hear around us today.
- recognising the image of God in each other and treating each other accordingly
- bearing the Genesis 1-2 image of a creative God; and because of this, loving creation and looking after it well
- Sabbath and Jubilee practices in Israel which described the way the people of God should work, rest and live together. They ensured that success and failure were not entrenched in families for generations. This discouraged greed and exploitation, and reminded the people that what they owned had been given to them by God.

Paper 3 Care of Creation

‘For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.’ Romans 8:19-21

Care of creation is not a fringe element of our discipleship. Our participation in God’s mission requires that we value His creation, and bear witness to His final redemption of all of creation. This paper describes how:

- God has provided a richly varied, abundant and balanced creation, so that humanity and the rest of (non-human) creation can live and flourish
- ancient Israel was a community that was ordered to ensure that everyone had access to the land, for the benefit of all, and regarded anything less as an injustice
- the Sabbath and Jubilee practices emphasise that humans hold God’s land in trust, rather than owning it in perpetuity
- Jesus' resurrection marks the beginning of a 'remaking' in God's creation in which those saved by the Spirit (in the present, through faith in Christ)
provide a foretaste of what God wants to do for the entire creation, revealing the goodness of the Kingdom to all.³

Paper 4 Biblical economics

“Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.” ² Corinthians 8:13-15

This paper describes how:

● the Jewish pattern of work, rest and celebration, in the regulations of Sabbath and Jubilee show us there is more to flourishing than financial success.
● Israel was organised to ensure the financially unsuccessful did not go destitute but were supported economically by their community.
● our failure to re-adjust our economics reflects an unwillingness to rely on God, suggesting that we need to reset where our priorities in Christ lay
● the Eucharist is a space where we can come and be re-centred and re-ordered so that we are better able to live in Christ in the rest of our lives.

Paper 5 The Church as an agent of change

The Church, sharing the love and salvation of Christ for the whole world should inevitably be a transformative presence in the world. The New Testament concept of the Church is a community focused on Jesus Christ, showing their love for Him and sharing the good news of the gospel in their love for and service of one another and for those around them, especially in need. The church is the heir of Israel as God’s Royal Priesthood, his teacher, model and mediator to the world.⁴

Governments, businesses and civil society can seek the transformation of society, but the Church has a unique approach and a unique role in seeking to bring Gospel values to a world out of step with its Creator. The Church is able to heal relationships, and address systemic injustice through its ways of being and its call to others to follow its example. This includes living sustainably, being witnesses to and advocates for the transformation of societies, as well as proclaiming the good news of Christ’s salvation. In this way, the Church will express Kingdom values and help to enable communities to flourish physically and spiritually, and invite others to join the Kingdom of God.

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Paper 1: Integral Mission

I. Introduction

‘the very heart of the Gospel is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we have to understand that central event in the light of the whole story of the Bible, in accordance with the Scriptures. And the Scriptures begin with creation. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the Bible ends with new creation, when we see a new heaven and a new earth.

‘So the Gospel is not just "me and my salvation" - a means by which I can go to heaven when I die. ...the Gospel is the whole story of what God has done to take the creation - which has been broken and fractured by sin and rebellion - and bring it to unity and wholeness and redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Dr Chris Wright

Integral Mission describes a way of life which is embedded in the biblical story of God’s mission to redeem all of creation: all of life - both physical and spiritual - is a part of our worship and expression of our love of God, including how we consume, work, contribute to our community and so on. It describes an integrated life in which we worship, pray, preach, witness, serve and care: seeking to live as Jesus lived, love as He loved, and serve as He served.

In this paper, the key biblical ideas that will help us in our work towards a just and sustainable economy are that:

- the overarching Christian mission to restore God’s relationship to humanity must integrate the physical and the spiritual, as modelled by Jesus
- our good works are acts of worship, coming from our knowledge and love of God
- God created a world of relationships: our relationships with God, with each other and with creation itself. Genesis 3 tells us how these relationships fell apart. The rest of the Bible is about how God is in the process of restoring those relationships
- we are not saved from the world, but for it, to reveal Christ’s redemptive mission to the world.

II. The nature of the mission

At the start of His ministry, Jesus was teaching at the synagogue in Nazareth, when He read from the book of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the

5 This quote by Dr Chris Wright of Langham Partnership International is transcribed from a filmed interview by Tearfund, July 2014
6 You might also hear it called ‘holistic mission’
prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke 4: 18-19

In this moment, Jesus explained His mission by using a passage of Isaiah that referred back to the laws of Israel laid down in Leviticus. He was letting them know that His mission was God’s mission: the restoration of God’s relationship with humanity after the fall. This mission began with the covenant with Abraham, continued through the Exodus and would be fulfilled by the Messiah, as foretold in Isaiah, and the new creation it brings will be revealed, ultimately, when Christ returns. This is the good news of the Gospel.

In Genesis, God creates humans as beings that are both spiritual and physical. The curse of the fall likewise affects both our spiritual and our physical life. These two are always inseparable:

“Spiritual maturity or spiritual fulfilment necessarily involves the whole person - body, mind and soul, place, relationships - in connection with the whole of creation throughout the era of time. Biblical spirituality encompasses the whole person in the totality of existence in the world, not some fragment or scrap or incident of a person.”

Jesus explained that His mission was about both proclamation and demonstration of good news to the poor. He continued to show this during His ministry, when He continuously refused to distinguish between the physical and spiritual needs of those who came to him:

“Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” Mark 2:9-11

As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to follow Him and participate in His mission. If we ignore ‘the world’ - meaning the whole of creation - we betray the God who sent His Son into the world, and we betray the Son who sends us out to serve the world. Equally, if we ignore the word of God we have nothing lasting to bring to the world, and betray the God who sent His Son to restore us to Him. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, and personal change and structural change, belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our mission.

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7 ‘The day of the Lord’s favour’ refers to the year of Jubilee, mandated in Leviticus 25.
8 This is the story of the bible, as explained by Wright, Christopher J. H. (2006) The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s grand narrative. Nottingham, IVP.
9 As David Bookless points out, humans are not, ‘disembodied souls living in a vacuum’ in Bookless, D (2008) Planetwise. Nottingham, IVP.
11 See Matthew 28
III. Living worship

Integral Mission is a way of life and worship for us as disciples. We root ourselves in God and it flows from who we are. As such, it does not come with a to-do list or series of checkboxes to help us make sure we are getting it right. As Jesus explains to Philip, knowing Jesus means knowing God, and **the better we know God, it follows that the more we will instinctively do His work:**

“The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” See the longer passage in John 14:8-12

Just as we cannot be truly human as we were intended, without worshipping and glorifying God, neither can the rest of creation. Psalm 19 declares:

‘The heavens are telling the glory of the God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.’

This is the way of life for which we and all of creation was created. Rowan Williams has said that the act of creation is an overflow of the divine life and love of the trinity, and that our entire existence is because of, ‘The look, the word, the act of God’.

Our whole life and work is an act of worship, coming from our knowledge of God. In the New Testament Paul challenges us to live lives of worship, sacrificing ourselves to God (Romans 12:1-2), concluding with the command:

‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.’ Romans 12:20

Paul reminds us that **while we can only be saved by Christ, not by our own works, we are still created, ‘to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do’ (Ephesians 2:8-10).** Of course, we know that it is not always easy to live like this: we find it difficult to put aside our own self-interest, and we do not always know the best way to express our worship in every different situation. To begin to live a life of worship like this we need to be in tune with God’s wisdom and love, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Restored relationships

Genesis tells us that we were created to live a life of worship and harmony with God. The Creator is in a covenant relationship with the whole of creation, which He

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12 NSRV Also cf. Psalm 96, 98, 104,27-28, 148, and 150.6
14 See the discussion about shalom in the Sustainable Living paper below.
brought into being: God created it, God ordered it, God loved it, and God was pleased with it. **He created a world of relationships: our relationship with God, with each other, and with creation.** And then Genesis 3 tells us how it fell apart. The breakdown of each of these three relationships, at the fall, is the result of humanity’s desire to have knowledge independently of God, and this breakdown, our sin and separation from God, is at the root of poverty in the world.

The rest of the Bible tells us the story of the way God reaches out to restore these relationships. His initial plan to govern creation in ‘life-giving wisdom through his image-bearing humans’ is redeemed by the promise of hope made by God’s incarnate Son, who came as a human to restore and redeem creation - physically and spiritually. The cross is the point in this narrative where the promises God made to Israel begin to be fulfilled. Here, the kingdom of heaven is inaugurated, though not yet fully revealed.

**V. Christ-centred**

Both living worship and restored relationships show that living a life of integral mission is Christ-centred. Our ability to live in this way and participate in God’s mission is rooted in Christ’s life, death and resurrection, and enabled through the gift of the Spirit.

Jesus summed up the whole law as ‘to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul and with all our mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves’ (Matthew 22:37-39). He showed us what that looks like in its ultimate form on the cross.

On the cross we see Christ’s struggle for justice - spiritual and physical - most plainly embodied. The Kingdom of Heaven is defined in relation to Jesus’ entire agenda which is not about glory, fame and honour, but about a compassion and a willingness to suffer for His people. It is a kingdom that is ‘Now and Not Yet’. Christ's resurrection initiates it and shows us a glimpse of it, a glimpse sustained through the Church in history, but we won't see it fully until He returns. It is a Kingdom offered to the whole cosmos and everyone in it - but it is also one that we must accept in order to fully enter in and flourish within it when it comes.

**Christ and the Kingdom reminds us that we are not saved from the world, but for it.** Christians need to move first into a personal relationship with Christ, accepting the promise and hope he offers, and then beyond it, as we join in with His mission. This life is sustained by the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), as Christ promised his disciples:

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17 Ditto
“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper who will be with you forever. That helper is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him, because it doesn’t see or know him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17"  

For Christ’s redeeming love to flow through us we must:

- **Deny self:** ‘loving others like Christ loves us’ will look like living more simply, moving away from a selfish materialistic life style, using less of the world’s resources and treating the created order with care.
- **Take up the cross:** the cross-shaped life of generous and sacrificial love and giving up our greed.
- **Follow Jesus:** by His grace and acting out of His compassion for others and for the world, we see the created world as an expression of God’s order and love, see everyone as equally valued by God, take special care of the poor and the outcast and love our neighbour as ourselves.

**VI. Called to be Kingdom people working towards a just and sustainable economy**

This is our integrated mission, to follow in the footsteps of the God of the incarnation, in incarnating the values of the Kingdom of Heaven in a fallen world and to embrace a way of living:

- that stems from our relationship with God
- that is entered into in response to the cross
- that is rooted in prayer, worship and reflection on the Bible, and guided by the Spirit.
- in which we (individually and as the church) communicate the Gospel through everything we are, everything we say and everything we do.

Living as Kingdom people will shape our evangelistic witness, in word and deed, our lifestyle choices, the way we conduct our relationships and the way we participate in economic and political life.

Jesus’ life, and the prayer He gives His disciples teach us that the Kingdom of God is not an other-worldly entity, but that it is to come on earth, as it is in heaven. Wright describes the Kingdom as, “Not a future destiny, but the other, hidden dimension of our ordinary life - God’s dimension, if you like.” The coming of this Kingdom is initiated by the death and resurrection of Christ, is revealed by the church that lives

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18 Paul refers to the Spirit as a source and sustainer of our ability (as individuals and as a church) to imitate Christ in 1 Thessalonians 1:6: “Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.”

19 Matthew 6:10

in its ways in hope and expectation of its arrival, but will not be fully completed or revealed until his return.

The following papers consider the way the Church is called to express integral mission in this context, through:

- sustainable lifestyles
- care of creation
- biblical economics
- encouraging the Church as an agent of change.
Paper 2: Sustainable lifestyles

I. Introduction

‘If we are to worship God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbours as ourselves, then we need to change our lifestyles radically. At present, the average Briton uses such a large amount of the earth’s resources that we would need more than three planet earths if everybody in the world wanted to live the same way. This is both an issue of justice for the world’s poor and an issue of worship, as this excessive consumerism is actually an idolatry of greed - pure spiritual cholesterol.’

The report _Wholly Living_ suggests that political and economic thought, particularly in relationship to international development, is founded on an inadequate and ultimately harmful vision of what it means for human beings to flourish. It is a vision that is fundamentally acquisitive, where what it means to ‘live well’ is based on wealth, freedom and selfish choices. This vision has resulted both in damage to humans’ physical and mental well being, and in the planet’s ecological systems being pushed to dangerous limits.

An alternative vision of flourishing that includes the dimension of sustainability could in contrast protect both the planet and the people living on it, and ensure that current and future generations have the resources they need to live well.

In 1978 the Lambeth Conference affirmed this way of life as a mark of mission with a challenge to members to, ‘Renew [your] lifestyle and use of the world’s resources so that the service and wellbeing of the whole family comes before the enjoyment of over indulgent forms of affluence.’

In this paper, the key biblical ideas around sustainable living that will help us in our work towards a just and sustainable economy are:

- shalom or harmony in God’s creation
- all people are made in the image of God
- ways of doing life together such as celebrating Jubilee and the Sabbath
- the hope that Christ offers as we seek to pursue shalom.

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22 CAFOD, Tearfund and Theos (2010) pp11-12 _Wholly Living_, Theos, London Available online here
23 See Powley M (2010) _Consumer Detox: Less Stuff, More Life_. Zondervan, Grand Rapids and
24 See the concept of Planetary Boundaries described in ‘Doughnut Economics’ by Kate
Raworth on this youtube film.
25 The Lambeth Conferences are decennial assemblies of bishops of the Anglican Communion
convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
26 Quoted in Thabo Makgoba (2013) p58 _Hope and the Environment: A Perspective From the
Majority World_ Anvil, 29.1
The issues of creation care and biblical economics are also very relevant to shalom and to sustainable living, but they will be discussed in greater detail in other papers.

II. Shalom

We are familiar with the Genesis narrative of God’s creation, which tells us that in the beginning, things were good. Genesis gives a very rare account (in comparison to other world religions) of the world created by a God who is without a rival and is creating out of himself as an artist, and who is building a world in which there is harmony and shalom.  

The word *shalom* means more than peace: it incorporates ideas of wholeness, completeness, balance, healing, well-being, tranquillity, prosperity, security and justice. Shalom is broken because of the fall, God the Father returns it to His creation through the sacrifice of God the Son:

> ‘He was pierced for our transgressions... The punishment that brought us shalom [sic] was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.’ Isaiah 53.5

In the world we find broken relationships, sin, and a subsequent lack of shalom, but in the Kingdom, God will bring shalom, because all relationships are restored to God’s good and perfect creation (Col. 1:20, Eph. 1:8-10, 2:14, John 15:1-5). This restored shalom is the goal of God's purposes and as Christians we are called to play our part modelling it to the rest of the world.

Shalom encompasses the whole of life – ‘being’, ‘having’, ‘doing’ and ‘interacting’. Our call is to live in Christ and reveal this shalom: to show the goodness of the Kingdom to come. This demands a transformation of the way we live.

Market economies have been central in enabling people to lift themselves out of poverty. In developing countries, 90% of jobs are created by the private sector. And the countries that have released the most people out of economic poverty over the past two decades are ones that have put in place the right enabling environment to foster private sector growth. However material wealth is just one aspect of human flourishing and does not necessarily result in shalom. Progress and success are often linked to maximising one’s own potential, but the paradox of unchecked capitalism is that it reinforces reactivity, anxiety and isolation.

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29 This is the NIV translation, with the original word ‘shalom’ inserted, instead of the NIV translation of this word as peace - in English we don’t have a single word that covers the whole meaning of shalom.
Shalom is inherently relational. It is about the wellbeing of the whole community, demanding justice, righteousness, and restored relationships. It is a way of life that is sustainable for generations. As such, we seek a restorative economy which enables greater shalom.

When Jesus said, ‘I have come that you may have life, and life to the full,’ (John 10:10), He came to offer this to everyone. There are enough resources on the earth for everyone to have enough to meet their physical needs. The biblical challenge is to ensure that everyone has enough in ways that honour God and value His creation. It is important to recognise that, ultimately, the fullness of life that Christ promises, physical and spiritual, will only be seen in the Kingdom of God, by those who have chosen to enter it.

III. The image of God
Shalom encourages us to live our lives in such a way that is mindful that every person, rich or poor, is made in the image of God. We are all utterly equal before God and in His creation. Seeking and restoring shalom calls us to recognise the imprint of God in each other and to treat each other accordingly. This relates to our direct impacts on the individuals that we come across in our day to day lives. It however also relates to our indirect impacts from the way we live our lives on the people we will never meet. This latter category is often the one where we need to pay more attention and is close to the heart of Tearfund’s work. The people who suffer the main indirect impacts of our high consumption lifestyles are people living in poverty.

In the face of this challenge, we need not despair. Understanding what it means to be made in the image of God can thankfully also help us to understand how to live in a way that contributes to shalom and ensure that all life remains sustainable. Being made in the image of God is not about appearance, but rather about:

1. Sharing in some of His substantive characteristics and gifts. These include rationality, morality, self-awareness, creativity, productivity, and generosity.
2. Sharing in some of His functions, giving us particular responsibilities in creation. These involve ruling or stewarding the world in a way consistent with our creativity, productivity and generosity - that is, in a Godly way.
3. Sharing in God’s relational qualities. We are created to be with Him, each other, and creation. This reflects the relational nature of the trinity.

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31 In 2 Corinthians 8, our example is of financial generosity from those with plenty to those with not enough, in the collection Paul encouraged from the church in Corinth to the poor in Jerusalem.
32 John 1:12: “To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”
33 For example, Tearfund has well documented the impacts of human induced climate change on people living in poverty. See the webpage here - particularly the Dried Up, Drowned Out report.
We reveal His image in the ways that we work, rest, and do life together. Christians bearing the Genesis 1-2 image of a creative God, will also love creation and look after it well. Creation sustains humans, and we are given the governance of it, but that does not mean that it is ours to exploit (see Creation Care paper below).

IV. Doing life together

Biblical principles that provide lessons for us as we seek to move towards shalom include relational principles and structural principles, as well as the example of Christ's sacrificial love. The latter include those enshrined in the economic and political systems of biblical communities.

Chris Wright notes that biblical ethics, "Flow from the reality of God," and are not planted directly into human consciousness, nor dictated as a book of abstract rules for all times and places, but hammered out within the cultural and historical particularity of Israel. Israel, in turn, is called to be, "for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," (Exodus 19:6), a teacher and model to the rest of the world, revealing God and His ways to them. They are a paradigm: "A model or pattern that enables you to explain or critique many different and varying situations by means of some single concept or set of governing principles." The laws were given to help shape Israel into the kind of paradigm God intended them to be: teaching them - and the rest of the world - how to be holy and live in His ways, as a community that lives generously, justly and sustainably together in the land God has given them.

The church, inaugurated by Christ, is the heir of Israel, in this, called to learn from Israel and from Christ, who is the fulfilment of the law, in enabling us to be a truly holy people, our paradigm of what it looks like to be a light to the nations. Christ supersedes the laws of Israel as the medium through which God’s people are able to live in a relationship with him, but the laws of Israel still provide good principles for us in helping to promote godly relationships with people and planet, as we develop sustainable lifestyles.

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35 Wholly Living (see above). See Creation Care document for more on this (both in this set of papers, and the longer Tearfund position paper available internally here).
(a) Jubilee and Sabbath
One of the great gifts that the Judaeo-Christian tradition can give to sustainable living is the inter-connected pairing of the concepts of Sabbath and Jubilee. Presented in Leviticus 25, **Sabbath and Jubilee describe the way in which the people of God should work, rest and live together.** In Genesis 1, we find that the culmination of creation is not humankind, but the Sabbath, instituted on the seventh day, when God rested and enjoyed what He had made. This was not because He was tired, but to set us an example of how to live, in work and in rest, as His images in His creation.

The Mosaic covenant\(^{39}\) commands regular seasons of work and rest: six days on, one day off; six years on, one year off, and an additional year ‘off’ in the year of Jubilee, every fiftieth year. In these years slaves were to be freed, debts forgiven and land restored to families who had had to sell it since the previous Jubilee. Jonathan Sacks explains the importance of the Sabbath for Jews:

> “On the Sabbath, we do not work, nor are we permitted to employ others to work. All relationships of hierarchy and dominance are temporarily suspended, one day in seven. During the six weekdays, we think of ourselves as creators. On the seventh, we become aware that we are also creations - part of the natural world order, whose integrity we are bidden to respect. The Sabbath is thus the most compelling tutorial in human dignity, environmental consciousness, and the principle that there are moral limits to economic exchange and commercial exploitation. It is one of the great antidotes to commercialization and commodification.”\(^{40}\)

Jubilee and Sabbath practices reminded Israel who they were, whose they were, and why they were here: people made in the image of God, belonging to God, made to live in relationship with each other, creation, and their God. They enabled them and us to live flourishing lives by bringing us all together:

> ‘The only way to reweave and strengthen the fabric is by weaving yourself into it.’\(^{41}\)

(b) Generosity and justice
At the heart of the pursuit of shalom is the way that both the Jubilee and Sabbath promote generosity and justice in the community. Israelites were allowed to buy and sell land and other property, but over time some succeeded and some failed. The **Jubilee laws and Sabbath principle ensured that success and failure were not entrenched in families for generations:** the rich could not get richer while the poor

\(^{39}\) The promises and laws that made up Israel’s relationship with God and their way of life, which are detailed in the Torah

\(^{40}\) Sacks J (2005) *To Heal a Fractured World, the ethics of responsibility*, Continuum, London p.169

got poorer, because things should return to their original owners each generation. This discouraged greed and exploitation, and reminded the people that what they owned had been given to them by God.

Tim Keller describes two different ‘kinds’ of justice. The first is *mishpat* (seen in Micah 6:8), which is a ‘rectifying' justice, seeking to punish wrongdoing and give people their rights. It is a very active pursuit of justice - as Psalm 146 makes clear in talking about the way God executes justice for the oppressed. *Tzadequah*, on the other hand refers to a life of righteousness and right relationships. In this formulation the righteous are those who are right with God and therefore committed to putting right all other relationships in life. It is inescapably social in its orientation to the world, as Job explains (29:12-17 and 31:13-28). It is the primary justice that would, if universally expressed, render *misphat* unnecessary.

The laws of Israel required *misphat*, but also encouraged the Israelites toward *tzadequah* - to defend and support the other members of their community, living generously towards each other. This means justice should include generosity (Deut. 10:18-19; 15:4-11; Isa. 58:6-7; Matt. 6:1-2), which is rich, full, open-handed and freely given. The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) challenges us to understand that Jesus refused to set limits on how or who we should defend, support, and love. His crucifixion shows us that there are no limits to which his generosity does not extend. God is the creator of all; we are not our own but God’s; and everything we are and have is by His grace (Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:14ff).

**V. Hope**

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” Romans 1:1-2

Christ’s death on the cross brought about true and lasting justice, and gives us the example of the ultimate sacrifice made in a life that pursued generosity and justice. With the resurrection, it gives us the hope we seek for the restoration of both, and of shalom - of a life lived together with God in His restored creation in the Kingdom to come - a hope that both calls and enables us to persevere. Christians are called to a hopeful discipleship in the light of our ultimate hope in God’s promises and purposes. Out of this hope we act justly and live generous lives on behalf of others.

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Paper 3: Care of Creation

I. Introduction

“We care for creation because we love the God to whom it belongs and because we long to see God’s glory enhanced through creation and God’s pleasure in creation served through our loving care.” - Chris Wright

Care of creation is part of our calling as people made in the image of God: it may have other, missional consequences, but we should need no other mandate. This is affirmed by both the Lausanne Movement and the Anglican Communion (in its five marks of mission).

In this paper, the key biblical ideas around care of creation that will help us in our work towards a just and sustainable economy are:

- The Genesis account of God’s act of His creation which marks it as important to Him and therefore to us.
- God’s gift of the land to His people, in order that they might live and flourish, and the way we should honour this gift
- Christ’s mission to redeem all of creation, and what that means for our lives within it.

II. God’s creation mandate to us

Genesis 1-2 presents a picture of the beginnings of the universe and of this world. God creates, orders, and loves creation. Creation is richly varied and abundant and the creation order is harmoniously balanced and humanity and the rest of (non-human) creation can live and flourish with God, in a state of shalom.

Central to a Christian understanding of God’s intention for his creation is the concept that life is inherently about intertwined relationships and relatedness. Millennia before the emergence of modern ideas of symbiosis, ecology, or complex adaptive systems, the creation account of the Bible centres on wholeness, holding together, and the fundamental integrity of all of God’s creation. The creation account situates human beings in three distinct but interconnected relationships: human relationship

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43 Tearfund also has a full care of creation position paper available internally [here](#).
45 The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, more commonly known as The Lausanne Movement, is a global Movement that mobilizes evangelical leaders to collaborate for world evangelization. The *Lausanne Consultation in Jamaica in 2012 came to two primary conclusions*: a) that creation care is a Gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ, and b) that we are faced with an urgent global crisis which is affecting all peoples and all ecosystems.
46 The Lambeth Conference 1968 described the fifth mark of mission as being, ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of earth.’
with the environment and with each other and with God. These relationships emphasise the unity and wholeness of creation (šalom), the centrality of loving kindness (ḥesed) and justice (mišpat), and the power of wisdom for rightly ordering relationships.

Within these relationships God gives humanity a specific role, making Adam and Eve in His image to look after creation in the Garden, with the right to rule (Genesis 1:28) and the responsibility to nurture and care for it (Genesis 2:15). God’s covenant with Noah in Genesis 9:1-17 emphasises God’s delight in and commitment to His creation, and humanity’s place within it, as He promises to preserve creation, but also makes Noah accountable for the way he (and his heirs) treat it. The story also makes clear that this covenant is with all creation - not just the nation of Israel (which it pre-dates) - and it underpins all the other covenantal promises God will make. No matter what happens, we are a part of creation, and commanded to care for it:

> ‘Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you - the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you - every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth...’’ Genesis 9:8-11

Our work within creation is is not about keeping creation unchanged. God gives us the right to use and enjoy creation, but we must do so in a way that acknowledges that we are keeping creation and its resources in trust. Our model for rule is that of servant-kingship, in which the king exists to serve his people - to care for them and not to exploit them. Jesus models this kind of rulership for us, in his love, generosity, and self-sacrifice.

The Old Testament provides a model of the right way to relate to and govern God's creation. **We are tenant, given the land to keep in so far as they keep their covenant with the Creator, and held to account by their Heavenly King.** We are called to respect the animals and the land, with tithing and giving of first fruits, **acknowledging that the land is God's** (Genesis 4:3-4; 9:1-17).

God’s subsequent covenant with Abraham and His promises to Moses and the Israelites (echoed by the prophets) share this certainty that **humanity has power**

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49 Wright, Christopher J.H. (2004) Old Testament Ethics for the People of God. Nottingham, IVP, p.122. Wright argues that this is more than stewardship or management of resources, it is a way of ruling in God’s image.
within and responsibility to God’s creation, and in the establishment of the nation of Israel, God ensures that the laws help Israel to know how to care for the creation.

III. God’s gift of land to Israel:

‘I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.’ Genesis 17:7-8

God places His people in the land, giving it to them to look after. God’s covenant with Abraham included the promise of land - of a part of God’s creation that would belong to Him and His descendants. Through the story of the Exodus we see this finally coming to pass, as Joshua leads the Israelites into the land they were promised. The book of Joshua details the way in which the land was divided among the tribes of Israel so that everyone had access to enough land to sustain themselves and their families, and all were responsible for it. Humanity’s presence in the land, and our relationship to it, matters.

A strong moral link is made in the Bible between human actions and the state of creation: sin produces ecological stress. Deuteronomy 28 outlines the consequences of obedience and disobedience. The Jubilee laws of Israel regulated the Israelites’ ownership and use of the land so that it was sustainable and so that shalom might exist in the community.

Michael Northcott contrasts the concept of commons (communal sharing) with that of sovereignty (ownership). This is a helpful way of thinking about the creation God has entrusted to and intended to bless all of us who bear His image. In ancient Israel we see a community who were all responsible for the land they held (although each family had their own share) for the benefit of all, and who were taught to regard anything less as an injustice.

Both Sabbath and Jubilee emphasise that humans hold God’s land in trust, rather than owning it in perpetuity. We should care for creation in order to ensure that all have enough rather than a few having more than enough. God creates and gives abundantly, but that does not give us the excuse to be greedy with it. The pattern of Sabbath and Jubilee also show that non-human creation, just like humanity, needs to rest and refresh in order to flourish as God intended, in relationship with him.

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50 Wright C (2010), Mission of God’s People, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p55
**IV. Redemption in Christ:**
The Old Testament shows that we need to understand our responsibility to creation as holistic and relational: we are made with created bodies, to be in creation, to enjoy it and to look after it. Our understanding of this is enriched when we arrive in the New Testament and see how Christ’s mission redeems all of creation. Care of creation is not a fringe element of our Christian walk, it is a central component of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

God is love and He created all things in love. Creation comes into being through the Word of God, who became incarnate in human form (John 1.1-14). Christ’s death and resurrection - marked in the physical world by eclipse and earthquake - bring a new creation into being, which will be fully revealed on his return (Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:8-10; Revelation 21-22).

Jesus’ resurrection marks the beginning of a ‘remaking’ in God’s creation in which those saved by the Spirit (in the present, through faith in Christ) are a foretaste of what God wants to do for the entire creation. Our role is to model a Kingdom care for creation, in the hope and expectation of the final revelation of the new creation, and anticipation of the life we will have in that new creation when Chris returns.

> ‘For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.’ –Romans 8:19-21

There is a growing consensus in contemporary evangelical scholarship that when Jesus returns He will not whip us away from creation, but redeem and restore us and the creation we are in. He teaches us to pray for God’s ‘Kingdom to come, on earth as it is in heaven’ and He shows us, in His incarnation, what it truly is to be human. When we locate ourselves in Christ, in the power of the Spirit, we find ourselves in harmony with God’s purpose for the well-being of creation.

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53 There is much debate over what this will look like and whether the new creation will follow in continuity from the present creation, purged and redeemed by the ‘Refiner’s fire’, or whether a wholly new creation will replace the current one as the picture of destruction seen in 2 Peter 3: 10-13 might suggest. Regardless, the point being made in 2 Peter 3.11-14 is that, in the light of redemption, we must live holy and Godly lives, looking forward to the full revelation of the Kingdom.
Paper 4: Biblical economics

I. Introduction

Following biblical economics is part of our calling as people made in the image of God and is essential for establishing shalom.

Craig Blomberg’s survey of the Mosaic laws of gleaning, releasing, tithing and Jubilee concludes that the biblical attitude toward wealth and possessions does not fit into any of the normal categories of democratic capitalism. A single-minded pursuit of economic growth devalues the social, cultural and environmental relationships in which we are embedded and on which we depend. Left unchecked, human behaviour can encourage exploitation, huge inequalities and an idolatry of acquisition. We believe that biblical principles and values can be helpful as a check.

A study of the Bible requires us to rethink the way we consume and produce within our economies:

- God has provided generously and plentifully in Creation, but more than 1 in 7 people on the planet still live in absolute poverty (on less than US$1.25 a day).
- All humans are made in the image of God, and are therefore of equal value or worth, but the single-minded pursuit of economic growth crowds out values of what it means to be human.
- The Bible guides us in how to allocate and share natural resources so that everyone’s needs can be met and everyone has the opportunity to flourish, but some of us are living as if we have more right to those resources than others; and we seem to be never satisfied.
- God loves creation and humans depend on it, but we are failing to steward it in a way that honours God and will be sustainable for the next generation.

In this paper, the key ideas around biblical economics that will help us in our work towards a just and sustainable economy are how:

- The Sabbath and Jubilee show us that while work is good, and a part of our creation mandate, it needs to be in the context of a life of worship: there is more to flourishing that financial success.
- Israel was organised to ensure the financially unsuccessful did not go destitute but were supported economically by their community.
- Our failure to re-adjust our economics reflects an unwillingness to rely on God, suggesting that we need to reset ourselves in Christ, placing the Eucharist at a the heart of our community in God and as a guide to our economics.

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57 CAFOD, Tearfund and Theos (2010) p18 Wholly Living, Theos, London Available online here
For a summary of the report do visit http://whollyliving.tftech.org.uk/
II. Sabbath and Jubilee.

Sabbath and Jubilee provide principles for how we think about economics. By requiring people to cease all work, every seventh day, and for the land to rest every seventh year, we are not only ensuring that our work is part of our worship, and that justice exists within the community, we are also resetting where our priorities lay. We are reminding ourselves that other things are more important to our flourishing than money and success.

The Jubilee laws do not prevent ownership or buying of property: every family had their own piece of land, and might gain more, if they did well through hard work and good fortune. By ensuring that property returns to its original possessors every fiftieth year, the laws ensured that inequality did not spiral, that people did not benefit or suffer in perpetuity for things that happened to their ancestors, and that people remained accountable to God for their property and hold it lightly and in trust for the whole community. Failure to do this - putting individual self-interest ahead of the common good - brings inequality and division, and for Israel it also brought divine retribution, as shown in Jeremiah 34:8-22. God declares that as the people of Israel have not kept this element of their side of the covenant, He is going to release them from the protection He had promised:

‘You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the Lord- freedom to fall by the sword, plague and famine.’ Jeremiah 34:17

III. Community economics

The Old Testament presents a picture of Israel as a community whose economic practices should be for the good of the community (although we often learn about this from the stories of Israel’s failures in this area). There are rules about:

● lending money to fellow Israelites, which is allowed as long as interest is not charged (Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35-37)

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58 The effects of our disobedience on our lives and the world around us is a difficult topic to consider, and it is important that we do not assume or declare that unfortunate events (such as disasters) are God’s retribution. God’s relationships with modern nations and with the Church are different to His relationship with ancient Israel as depicted in the bible, as we are in a new covenant created by Christ. Yes, our failure to live in Godly ways does have negative consequences for us, because we will always fall short of the perfection of creation, but our response should be less about blaming ourselves and others for sinful behaviour that has brought judgement and more about seeking Godly responses and ways of living to transform the future. In John 9:1-3 Jesus makes it clear that to enquire about the connection between sin and its consequences in this specific case is to ask the wrong question. The relevant question is, ‘How can the blind man’s calamity become an opportunity for God’s work to be displayed in his life?’ This is a better approach to difficult situations. You can find a collection of Tearfund material reflecting on theology and disasters here.
the Levites, who were set apart as priests to serve the Israelites, and had no share in the land but were supported by the tithes of their fellow Israelites (Numbers 18:20-24)

how the Israelites must not harvest the edges of their fields, but leave some of the grain, grapes or olives for the poor to glean (Lev. 19:9-10 and see it ‘in action’ in the story of Ruth (chapter 2)).

The prophets later criticise Israel for the way they break their covenant with God and the shalom of their community through their unjust treatment of the poor and the vulnerable, and through their failure to care for the land.

Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists... Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?” Isaiah 58:3-6 (and see Jeremiah 34:17 above too.)

The New Testament depicts the creation of a new covenant community - the church. Throughout Jesus’ ministry He continually directs His disciples’ attention to caring for the poor and meeting physical needs as well as spiritual needs (see Integral Mission paper), and this mission is to be continued by the church. The most clear model of this is in Acts 4, in the church in Jerusalem:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.’ Acts 4: 32-35

Paul also encourages churches to give generously and to support the poor (2 Corinthians 9, Ephesians 4:28, Galatians 2:9-10, Romans 15:25-27).

IV. Fully reliant on God

The emphasis on giving and receiving, and on holding things like creation, finance and property in common among the people of God should counterbalance the fear of being left in poverty, should something go wrong. However that fear can lead us to prefer our own economic security to the wellbeing of all.
It is not that money is the root of all evil, but the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10). The problem with money and economic security is not that they are undesirable or wrong, but that we tend to trust them over God (James 4:13-15) and Luke 12:13-21). In Revelation 18 the rulers of earth are pulled away from God by the wealth created by the world’s economic practices.

As disciples of Christ we are called to put our trust in Him, not in the world, which in practice may feel a lot like we are being irresponsible and becoming over reliant on our fellow citizens. In the community of the local church, the Bible shows us that this is a risk we should be willing and able to take. If a Christian felt secure that God and her church family would provide for her if the need arose, then she would be free to be more generous at a time of ‘plenty’, when she had surplus to her needs.

“Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.” 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

V. The relevance of the Eucharist
Church practices and liturgies, like communion (i.e. the Eucharist), shape us for our engagement with the world around us, which we help to make through our words and deeds. Communion is a part of the regular life of the church: a space where we can come and be re-centred and re-ordered so that we are better able to live in Christ in the rest of our lives.

William Cavanaugh and Norman Wirzba have both suggested that the Eucharist is the moment in which we come, physically and spiritually, to enter into Christ and become part of the larger body, and that in this sacrament we are centred outside ourselves, in Christ.

‘Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”’ John 6:35-37

Christianity’s emphasis on community and on communion underlines our call to press the reset button and attach to Christ, and to be absorbed into His life. In taking part in the Eucharist, we become more aware of others, more attentive, sympathetic, and caring of the world we live within, and more understanding of what it means to

consume in a Christ-centred way. This impacts our economic habits, as well as our treatment of creation, and the general sustainability of our lifestyle.\textsuperscript{60}

Paper 5: The Church as an agent of change

For sustainable living, care of creation, and a biblical economy to be developed, integral mission needs to be worked out by Christians as individuals in their daily lives, and as the corporate body of Christ in the Church.

This paper sets out the key biblical ideas related to the Church being an agent of change that will help us in our work towards a just and sustainable economy. It describes how this is a core part of the overall mission of the Church

I. What is the Church and what is her mission?
The ‘Church’ is many different things, but also one thing: a community that embodies the character of Christ.

The ancient ‘ekklesia’ was the gathering of the believers and the term is applied both to those meeting and living in specific locations (Acts 9:31, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Corinthians 14:19 - 35; Philippians 4:15) and to the whole body of believers (Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; Hebrews 12:23). The Church has always been both local and global, and has always been transformative.

The New Testament concept of the Church is a community focused on Jesus Christ, showing their love for Him and sharing the good news of the gospel in their love for and service of one another and for those around them, especially in need. The church is the heir of Israel as God’s Royal Priesthood, his teacher, model and mediator to the world.61

‘God has called the church to be a reconciled community. We define the church as communities of people who follow Jesus Christ linked together as part of the worldwide people of God.’62

As the body of disciples, we are called to do corporately what we are called to do individually - to love our neighbour as ourselves and to follow the great commission to ‘go and do likewise’ - to imitate Jesus in our way of being in the world. The Church is central to God’s saving purpose. It is the community in which God lives by His Spirit, and which models the Kingdom to the rest of the world.

This means that we do not equate the church with denominations, structures, institutions or hierarchies. We believe that denominations and parachurch organisations have a role, but we believe they must serve local Christian communities where these exist, or have a vision for indigenous local churches where they do not currently exist.

The Church’s mission should always involve the teaching and discipleship of the congregation and the witness of the Gospel in its community in both preaching and

62 Tearfund, Mission Beliefs Values available online here.
serving. The Anglican Communion has described the mission of Christ, expressed by the church, in its Five Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

II. Church as an agent of change

A church expressing the love and salvation of Christ for the whole world will inevitably be an agent of change in the world. As the corporate body of Christ, the Church has a more powerful presence in the world than individuals can have when acting alone.

The Church acts as an agent of change in two key ways. Firstly, by telling the story of God’s love and salvation, the Church is able to bring hope and possibilities into a world that can see no way out of its current struggles, by telling a different story about the future of the world, which ends with redemption and the new creation, and by inviting people into that story by responding to Christ. Secondly, by bearing a faithful witness to Christ’s love in the world the Church shows the certainty of its hope and the goodness of the Kingdom, as it reveals the Kingdom in the world today.

(a) Providing Hope

Christ’s death and resurrection give us the true and lasting hope of redemption and restoration, and of a future lived together with God in the new creation.

We are currently faced with global failures in politics, economics, and the state of our environment. It can be hard to see a future in which God’s shalom will be revealed. From a theological point of view, sustainable and ethical solutions require a wisdom that goes beyond human rationality and talent. When we are in tune with the wisdom of the Creator of the universe and of human life, and have the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen our resolve, there is hope and it will be fulfilled.

Our hope that the Kingdom of Heaven is already coming here on earth is not simply a promise we accept of something to be made manifest at the end of time: we are called to be a part of the revelation of this hope in the present, sharing it with those around us. The Church is called to a hopeful discipleship in the light of our ultimate hope in God’s promises and purposes. The task may seem to be beyond us, but our ultimate hope is always in God, in the coming of the Kingdom that Christ began on the cross.

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(b) Being a Faithful Witness
Governments, businesses and civil society can seek the transformation of society, but the Church has a unique approach and a unique role in seeking to bring Gospel values to a world out of step with its Creator.

As the embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world today, the Church is something of an alien in the world (1 Pet. 2:9-12). In this, we are called to declare the One who has brought us out of darkness and into the light: into a place of hope.

James Davison Hunter argues that the Church has a vocation to be a ‘faithful presence’ in the world. That is, it is called to bear witness to and to be an embodiment of the coming Kingdom of God. He follows Miroslav Volf in maintaining that Christian difference is not the presence of something new from the outside breaking into the old, but the bursting out of the new within old order, in ways that we cannot fully predict.

However, our faithful witness to the coming Kingdom will have an impact upon the complex social, political, economic and cultural forces that prevail in a particular time and place. Christians live and act prophetically, seeking to be faithful as much as they seek to be successful; confident in God’s power to overcome and our hope in Christ (Ephesians 1:18-23; 3:14-21).

At all levels, the Church has the ability to heal relationships and addresses systemic injustice, in the way it is and the things it talks about. As Hunter suggests:

‘To be a Christian is to be obliged to engage the world, pursuing God’s restorative purposes over all of life, individual and corporate, public and private. This is the mandate of creation, in which ‘all are participants, all are enjoined to participate in ways framed by the revelation of God’s word in the creative and renewing work of world-making and remaking... Every person is made in God’s image and every person is offered his grace and, in turn, the opportunity to labour together with God in the creation and recreation of the world.’

III. Tearfund’s role towards a just and sustainable economy
Tearfund’s current vision is to see 50 million people release themselves from material and spiritual poverty through a worldwide network of 100,000 churches. We seek to share our vision for a just and sustainable economy with local churches and the global Church, who together have a key role to play in overcoming poverty. A vital part Tearfund plays is in connecting churches around the world in a holistic response to the issues of justice. The global Church connected and networked, as

well as emotionally and spiritually bound together as the body of Christ, can resource and facilitate activities by countless local churches in their own communities. They, along with connected faith-based organisations can provide different understandings of what it means to flourish, and of the kind of world we are seeking with our work.

We want to see churches discipling their members to live out of an understanding that God’s mission is a holistic - integral - mission. This includes living sustainably and being witnesses to and advocates for the transformation of societies. In this way, the Church will express Kingdom values and help to enable communities to flourish physically and spiritually.

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66 Tearfund (2012) Overcoming Poverty Together p55 available online here