



THE RESTORATIVE ECONOMY

COMPLETING OUR UNFINISHED MILLENNIUM JUBILEE

A discussion paper

tearfund

Following Jesus where the need is greatest

This paper is intended to help catalyse a much needed debate about how we shape the future of our society and of our world. The ideas encapsulated in it are bold and radical, and deliberately so. We recognise that some readers may find some of this report's recommendations unpalatable; others may yet prove unworkable. The details are open to discussion, but we believe it's time to start the conversation around these vital issues.

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FOREWORD

We live in a century of mingled promise and peril. The decisions we take now and the way we live will have an impact on our children and on generations to come – for good or ill.

Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal, assembled some of the risks to the survival of human life on our planet in his 2003 book which was published in the UK under the title, *Our final century*. In the US it had a more apocalyptic name: *Our final hour: a scientist's warning: how terror, error and environmental disaster threaten humankind's future in this century*.

The sense of peril is widely shared. Yet, since the financial crash, public concern about the longer-term situation has been diverted into a focus on short-term issues. The electoral cycle in wealthy countries compels politicians to respond to the immediate anxieties expressed in focus groups, and that is why we in the UK have heard rather less about the environment from our political parties of late.

Those who have a lively vision of the kingdom to which Jesus Christ points, and some appreciation of the hazards along the way, also have a responsibility to work to enlarge the room for political manoeuvring. Only then will politicians take action which they know is necessary even if, in the short term, it feels like electoral suicide.

This report describes a way to embrace promise and mitigate peril. Indeed, Christianity was originally called The Way but in much of the Western world the term has become much diminished. The Christian movement was called into being to embody and anticipate the kingdom of God so powerfully that it would exert a gravitational pull on the present. The prayer of Jesus Christ, 'Thy kingdom come', is all about praying down God's kingdom into the here and now. Finding a credible way to express and enact this prayer should be a priority for all denominations of the church.

As the report argues, it is often only crises which produce real change. But the action taken at moments of crisis depends on the ideas which are to hand. Things which appear to be off the political map one day can suddenly seem to be feasible and necessary the next.

The demands of this movement need to be related to a set of principles which can test particular policy proposals in a robust way. The report suggests three such principles:

- A wider us: a passionate concern for the common good
- A deeper now: a renewal of the implicit covenant between past, present and future generations
- A fuller life for all

The vision for a 'restorative economy' presented in this report springs from a biblical worldview that has suddenly become accessible and powerful again as we confront the global challenges to human flourishing in our time. Stories do not merely describe human experience: they shape it. The biblical narrative presented in this report has fresh salience in the context of our current situation.

Modern democracy is inextricably bound up with the new social media which tend to prioritise single-issue campaigns and campaigners. By contrast, here is a narrative that can integrate and energise a holistic approach to challenges which are interconnected but which are commonly seen in isolation. Tearfund has distilled years of experience in relief and development work into a compelling vision which touches every part of our lives.

Chapter 4 of the report demonstrates the fruitfulness and implications of the idea of the restorative economy for policy formation. Yet, as the conclusion makes clear, what we need now is for the words to become flesh and for the ideas to inform a movement. That movement is a community of people persuasive and powerful beyond their numbers because they have already started to transform their own lifestyle and relationships, restoring rhythm to life and living out the restorative economy.

There is peril and promise in our future and there are obvious threats which lie ahead. This report is not a contribution to apocalyptic literature but rather a signpost along the path set out by Jesus' mission: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' (John 10:10, KJV).

Richard Chartres
BISHOP OF LONDON

SUMMARY

'And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.' **Isaiah 58:12 (ESV)**

The best of times, the worst of times

In 2050, when we – or our children – look back on the kind of world that we have shaped over our lifetime and bequeathed to those who follow us, what will we see?

In many ways we are living in a golden age. As we set out in Chapter 1, the last 25 years have seen what the economist Branko Milanovic calls 'probably the profoundest reshuffle of people's economic positions since the Industrial Revolution'.

Millions of families around the world have made a 'great escape' from poverty. Life expectancy is increasing, diseases such as malaria and measles are retreating, and more children are in school than ever before. The global population is stabilising, due to progress in areas such as reproductive health services, women's rights and girls' education. And the number of children who die each day has halved since 1990: that's 17,000 more children, every single day, who will now live to realise their potential.

More and more women and men now have the chance to provide for their families, pursue their dreams and experience lives free from poverty. Millions of businesses have started and new jobs have been created, as an ever-increasing number of people have become able to fulfil their creative potential. At Tearfund, we've had the privilege of walking with millions of these families, sharing their troubles and celebrating their successes with them.

But this golden age does not yet extend to everyone. A billion people remain trapped at the bottom, predominantly in the world's war zones and ungoverned spaces, where the ascent out of poverty is harder than ever. That climb remains perilous and precarious, and large numbers of those who have recently made this ascent remain vulnerable: one slip or crisis can plunge them back into poverty. And we are also seeing increasing vulnerability in developed countries, as safety nets are eroded and wages stagnate.

Most fundamentally, the future extension of this golden age – to our children and grandchildren's generation – cannot be taken for granted. In fact, we think it is at greater risk today than it has been for many years.

This is because of a paradox: in our current model, the more we succeed in economic development, the more we fail on environmental sustainability. The earth's life support systems are now being stretched to breaking point. The Stockholm Resilience Centre recently concluded that the environmental changes we have seen in the last 60 years (from shifts in land use to nitrogen pollution to water use to climate change) are without precedent in the previous 10,000 years. We are in fact in the midst of the sixth mass extinction event in the earth's history – the first to be caused by a single species.

At Tearfund, we are already seeing the consequences for those whom we work with. Worldwide, more than a billion people live in water basins where human water use exceeds sustainable limits, and millions more are subject to increasingly erratic rainfall as climate change gathers pace.

The human cost of climate change

Tearfund partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has been working with poor people in rural areas for 60 years, helping them improve agricultural yields. However, the changing climate has made this increasingly challenging.

Until recently Bageshori and Gobardhan Joshi grew staple crops on their small plot in Bajhang district but ever-more erratic monsoons left them barely able to feed their family for seven months of the year. UMN has been able to help the couple earn a living and feed their family by switching to vegetable cultivation and managing their water use.

However, even small changes in temperature and rainfall patterns can have a big impact on poor farmers, so further climate change could have a devastating impact on Bageshori and Gobardhan – and millions like them.

“The more we succeed in economic development, the more we fail on environmental sustainability”

We are also aware that shortages in key resources – such as water or food – are often exacerbated by disparities in purchasing power and political power. Many of us are using far more than our fair share of water, land, energy and other resources, sometimes pricing poor people out of the market for these essential goods. Recent research by Oxfam shows that the richest one per cent of the world’s population now own about as much wealth as the rest of humanity put together. If this growing inequality translates into differences in purchasing power and political power – rather than stimulating increased generosity – it will make life much harder for many of the world’s poorest people.

We believe that the present golden age can be extended to everyone, and to future generations. But our present path will not take us there: instead, it will lead ultimately to the collapse of planet earth’s life support systems with countries and communities fragmenting rather than coming together. Unless we change course, we will undo all that we at Tearfund, our supporters, our partners and, above all, poor people across the world have worked so hard to achieve.

How change happens

But there is an alternative. Another, narrower path leads to a place where poverty is eliminated, where catastrophic climate change is averted, and where all human beings – indeed, all of the species with which we share this world – have the chance to flourish.

At present, that alternative path cannot be chosen for us by our elected leaders. Too much inertia carries us along our current path. There are too many vested interests with an incentive to block change. Our governance systems are not well adapted to dealing with the interconnected problems that we now face. Perhaps most fundamentally, many of us remain unconvinced of the need for radical change.

This is a moment when Tolstoy’s observation in *War and peace* rings true, that ‘more often, the ship of state alters course only because tides are vastly shifting underneath’.

“Another, narrower path leads to a place where poverty is eliminated, where catastrophic climate change is averted, and where all human beings have the chance to flourish”



The town of Basey in Samar, the Philippines, was destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

Looking back at key moments in history, it’s clear that the tides often turn because of the emergence of a movement for change. Right now, we need such a movement, one that follows in the footsteps of the anti-slavery campaigners, the US civil rights movement and all the other examples of ordinary heroes – Christians, people of all faiths, people of none – who together achieved the impossible. These movements faced almost insurmountable odds, but they overcame.

Each of these movements centred on a higher set of values: the steadfast belief that no human being should be the property of another, or that all men and women were created equal. And they grounded these values in both personal action and concrete demands for government policy – often taking advantage of the opportunities that come after economic, social or environmental shocks.

What gave the most successful movements the motivation and courage they needed to take on the vested interests and sometimes hostile public that opposed change? Above all, we believe, it was a *resonant story*.

What we need are stories that help people and societies to make sense of where they are, how they got there, where they are trying to get to and how to achieve change. Stories that define our worldview and have the potential to create our reality as much as they describe it. Stories like Jesus’ parables or the ones that Churchill told Britain in 1940. Stories that marry unflinching realism, a profoundly hopeful vision of the future and, above all, a deeply energising view of what people are capable of.

Today, we need stories that help us to think in terms of a *larger us* – one that moves from ‘people like us’ to simply ‘people – like us’. A *longer future* – beyond the next news cycle, the next financial quarter, the next election – looking out instead for generations to come. And a *better ‘good life’* – an understanding that security, consumption and well-being are not three words that all mean the same thing.

A different story

In Chapter 3, we set out why we believe that we can find just such a story in the biblical concept of jubilee: a story that has provided a source of hope and inspiration for generations of campaigners, and continues to do so today.

The *Jubilee 2000* campaign was based on this story. It achieved extraordinary things, with low-income countries' debt falling from nearly 75 per cent of their national income in 2000 to just over 25 per cent today. And it showed how the biblical idea of jubilee had the power to bring together Christians, people of different faiths and people of none.

But the idea of jubilee goes far beyond debt cancellation.

It speaks of *environmental restoration*. Each jubilee year was also a sabbath year – a time of 'solemn rest for the land'. Jubilees were about sufficiency, recognition of limits, the need for God's creation to rest. They recognised that the land, and by extension the rest of natural creation, belongs to all of us and ultimately to God (Leviticus 25:23; Psalm 24:1). As Old Testament scholar Chris Wright says, '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.'

The idea of jubilee also emphasises rest for *those living in poverty*. Liberty was proclaimed throughout the land; everyone, slaves included, was free to go home. No one was to lend money at interest to those in need, or sell them food for profit. While markets and trade were allowed, the jubilee principles aimed to ensure that human welfare was not made subservient to these markets. And if these principles were followed correctly, then 'there need be no poor people among you' (Deuteronomy 15:4), just as there were no needs left unmet in the community described in Acts 4.

Finally, the idea of jubilee proclaims the need for *fair allocation of wealth*. God tells Moses, 'The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers. Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land' (Leviticus 25: 23–24). This meant a managed reset of land ownership: as author Kim Tan puts it, 'Every fifty years each family had an opportunity to start afresh – free of debt and in possession of their own land.'

The idea of jubilee is intimately bound up with the restoration of right relationships between God, people and creation.

When humans act with wisdom, on the basis of steadfast love and justice, they act in ways that accord with the unity and wholeness of creation (shalom). But the bonds of this crucial web of relationships can unravel as a result of what the Bible calls 'iniquity' – for example, through idolatry (worshipping things rather than God), injustice or ignorance. When that happens, the result is catastrophic damage: as Isaiah puts it, 'The earth dries up and withers' (Isaiah 24:4).



Debt campaigners take to the streets of London with *Jubilee 2000*. Photo: Richard Hanson/Tearfund

The overarching story of the Bible – from the fall in Genesis, through Jesus' death and resurrection, to the arrival of God's kingdom on earth in Revelation – is a story about mending broken relationships through the process of *atonement*.

Atonement is the central element of Jesus' ministry – an act of self-sacrifice that was both intended to deal with sin and usher in 'his kingdom come' on earth. It is about reuniting relationships that have been torn asunder: about healing, reconciliation and peace in the fullest sense.

Atonement is also a very practical idea that finds its political and economic expression in jubilee. Jubilees, and the closely linked idea of sabbaths (every seven days and every seven years), set out concrete procedures for how to correct economic, social and environmental imbalances – in effect, providing an instruction manual for how to build and maintain a *restorative economy*.

“Jubilee: a story that has provided a source of hope and inspiration for generations”

The restorative economy

All of this makes us wonder: what might it look like to organise our 21st-century economy around the idea of jubilee? In Chapter 4, we start to explore this idea in detail, and argue that a restorative economy will:

- **Ensure we live within environmental limits** – so that our economy works with, rather than against, the creation that God has given us. We believe that the abundance of the earth belongs to *all* of us, and ultimately to God. And that comes with responsibilities to steward it carefully and also to share the proceeds of that natural wealth *fairly*, just as jubilees reset land ownership on an equal per capita basis.
- **Ensure everyone is able to meet their basic needs** – providing an enabling environment and basic floor of economic security and protection to each and every one of the world's 7 billion people, so that every human being can flourish and realise their full potential.
- **Keep inequality within reasonable limits** – including both income inequality and wealth inequality, at both national and international level. A restorative economy will also pay particular attention to the fact that *natural* wealth (such as land, or the atmosphere's capacity to store emissions) represents a shared inheritance from God – and that all of us should therefore share in its benefits.

More broadly, a restorative economy depends on *restorative living* – with the whole of society engaged in repairing creation, taking opportunities to be producers rather than just passive consumers, building resilient communities that are creative and fun to be part of, and restoring bonds of fellowship and friendship.

Many of the changes required involve sacrifice – but also, paradoxically, offer us the chance to live more fully, in the same way that following Paul's call for us to be 'living sacrifices' brings opportunity for transformation (Romans 12:1). To live like this, we need to choose not to conform with the lifestyle patterns around us and to raise our voices in witness to the injustices that we see all around us – those breaches of right relationship with God, each other and creation. In short, we need to model a fresh approach. If we can rise to the challenge, then the force of our actions and words will have real prophetic power.

Change starts with our lifestyles

The lesson to be drawn from previous movements for change is that government policies and social norms only reflect fresh values when these are exemplified in the demands – and lifestyles – of a passionate movement. So in practice, we think there are five areas each of us needs to look at in our own lifestyle, which we explore in more detail in Chapter 4:

1. **Live within our fair share of the world's resources and environmental limits** – especially in four key areas: *food* (the diet we eat and the food we throw away), *travel* (whether we use a car or public transport, and how much we fly), our *homes* (where our power and heat comes from, and our home's energy efficiency), and finally *stuff* (where we need to refute the idea that 'we are what we buy' and instead just consume less).
2. **Respond to poverty and inequality with radical generosity** – Many people already tithe their income, but we believe that ultimately we should aspire to a higher standard, even giving away all income above the level that we actually need, as well as ensuring that we pay our taxes in full. With wealth comes responsibility: as Jesus said, 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded' (Luke 12:48).
3. **Speak out prophetically** – Christians have often been adept at harnessing the power of positive protest, from anti-slavery campaigners in the 18th and 19th centuries, to the US civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, and *Jubilee 2000* which helped force the issue of developing world debt relief onto the political agenda more recently. We can continue this tradition today in many ways, such as 'shareholder activism', boycotting companies or using worship as a form of witness against injustice.
4. **Use our power as a voter, a citizen and a consumer** – Politicians often assume that most of us vote on the basis of narrow self-interest. But if a critical mass of people are vocal and visible in demonstrating higher values, change will follow. At the same time, there's much that we can achieve through the power we exert when we make decisions about what to buy and how to invest.
5. **Live restoratively and prioritise relationships** – One of the deepest forms of poverty is a marred sense of identity (how we come to see ourselves), something that can be healed only through *relationship*. Each of us can use our time to huge restorative effect in this regard, whether as foster parents, mentors for young people, friends for older people or in thousands of other ways in which we can become the 'living sacrifices' that God wants us to be (Romans 12:1).

Ten transformational policy ideas

Finally, the report ends with ten examples of transformative policy ideas of the kind that we think could help to bring about a restorative economy in line with jubilee principles. We focus primarily on what we can do in the UK, as an illustration of the sort of changes that we believe should be made around the world:

1. **Create a circular economy** – through powerful incentives for resource efficiency, ensuring that nothing goes to landfill and that instead everything is reused over and over again, in keeping with God’s design principles.
2. **Double food production and halve resource intensity with a 21st-century Green Revolution** – above all in Africa, where crop yields are far lower than the rest of the world. Make the sustainable increase of agricultural productivity a top priority in Britain’s international aid programme.
3. **Accelerate the shift to a ‘zero-carbon’ economy** – in particular by banning coal-fired power generation by the early 2020s, ending fossil fuel subsidies (including the reduced rate of VAT for electricity and gas), and introducing mandatory carbon stress-testing for pension funds and institutional investors.
4. **Agree a carbon jubilee** by defining a safe global emissions budget which ensures that global average warming over the long term does not exceed 1.5°C. This budget should be shared between countries in proportion to their populations, on a per capita basis – recognising that the sky belongs to God, not us, and that this will create a major new source of development finance – from trade, not aid.
5. **Allow poor people everywhere to meet their basic needs by introducing a global social protection floor**, including healthcare, education, nutrition and basic income security. In the case of the poorest or most fragile countries, the funding for this will need to be raised internationally.
6. **Make the UK a world leader in ensuring markets work for poor people around the world.** While maintaining the UK’s commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of national income on aid, buttress this with a stronger focus on helping developing countries create environments where the private sector can flourish.
7. **Go much further in tackling international tax avoidance** – increasing developing countries’ capacity to finance their own development from their own tax revenue, and doing much more to help them recover stolen assets from abroad.
8. **Adopt a jubilee stance on inequality**, by implementing measures that give modern-day expression to the principles behind the jubilee reset of land ownership. For example, this could be through stronger and fairer taxation of property (via a land value tax) and of wealth transfers (via replacing traditional inheritance tax with a wealth receipts tax).
9. **Ensure that the financial sector contributes to shared prosperity – and does not jeopardise it.** In particular, we need to reduce the capacity for unsustainable levels of debt (or leverage) to build up, for example by radically raising reserve requirements for banks, or creating a new maximum leverage target for the financial system as a whole.
10. **Rebalance the tax system in line with jubilee principles**, by shifting more of the burden of taxation onto activities we want to *discourage* (such as carbon emissions, pollution, waste or the excessive concentration of wealth), and away from those activities we want to encourage (such as work).

These ideas are our first contribution. Some are new, but many build on existing thinking and best practice from around the world. We will be developing them further as our work in this area progresses – in particular, working with our country offices, local partner organisations and allies to unpack what jubilee principles might mean for policy and practice around the world.

And we recognise with humility that ideas such as these will only ever be implemented if they become the rallying cry of a passionate movement for change. A group of people prepared to organise their lives around jubilee values in the hope that others will follow, just as generations of activists have done before us.

So this is our invitation to you. We all face the temptation to avoid these issues and escape into the distractions that the modern world offers. Instead, we urge you to take these issues to heart – to debate them around the dinner table, in church, at work, over coffee.

We think that the triple challenges of poverty, environmental sustainability and inequality are the defining issues of our time, and our response to them should guide how we live, how we vote, what we buy and how we pray. We have tried to sketch out what is at stake, how we can change our future, a theological basis for thinking about our extraordinary moment in history, and a set of practical ideas for a restorative economy: one governed by the jubilee principles.

Where we go next is up to all of us: we hope you’ll join us on this journey.

Join the movement at tearfund.org/campaigns

INTRODUCTION

For nearly 50 years, Tearfund and our partners have been walking alongside some of the poorest women, men and children in the world, as they struggle to escape poverty and reach their full potential.

From small beginnings in 1968, when a group of Christians raised money to help people devastated by the Biafra famine, we have worked with millions of people. Indeed, since 2006 alone, we have helped 17 million people through community development projects and more than 7 million people through our work on disasters. We have worked with 75,000 churches, helping them to address poverty and injustice in their communities. We have been a part of global coalitions, from *Jubilee 2000* (which was co-founded by a then Tearfund staff member) to *Make Poverty History* and *The Climate Coalition*.

There's a huge amount to celebrate. During the last quarter century, the world has seen changes that the World Bank's top expert on inequality, Branko Milanovic, has called '**probably the profoundest reshuffle of people's economic positions since the Industrial Revolution**'.¹ Markets and technology

are flourishing. Inequality between nations is dwindling. Life expectancy is rising. Millions of children's life chances are better than their parents' were at the same age. And we have been privileged to play our part in bringing this about alongside thousands of other NGOs, governments, businesses and above all poor people themselves.

But we also see dark clouds on the horizon. We're sobered by the range of trends – above all, those related to environmental unsustainability – that threaten to undermine and undo all that has been achieved.

So as we approach our 50th-anniversary jubilee year, in 2018, we think this is the right moment to ask some searching questions about our advocacy and campaigning aims – and how we pursue them.

As we set out in this report, we think now is the right time to focus on big, transformative asks, and above all on the idea of a **restorative economy**: one built on the jubilee principles that run through both the Old and the New Testament.

1: THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES



Nairobi's ever-changing skyline reflects economic growth, creating jobs and helping people to escape poverty. Photo: WL Davies/iStock

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way...' **Charles Dickens, *A tale of two cities***

Millions have mounted a 'great escape' from poverty...

Between 1988 and 2008, the proportion of humanity living in extreme poverty was halved – an extraordinary and historically unprecedented breakthrough.² Progress actually accelerated over this period: people lifted themselves out of poverty after 2000 at a faster rate than ever before. For millions, the last 25 years have been a time of hopes realised and dreams fulfilled. And it's been our privilege to walk with some of these women and men on this incredible journey.

- **Most of this 'great escape' took place in emerging economies such as India, China and Brazil.** Between 1988 and 2008, the poorest third of humanity saw their incomes rise by between 40 per cent and 70 per cent – an astonishing leap in just two decades.³ The middle third of the world's people, especially in emerging economies, saw even stronger gains, with incomes increasing by 80 per cent on average.
- **Global hunger has been declining steadily.** In 2012–14, about 805 million people were chronically undernourished – down by more than 100 million over the last decade, and more than 200 million lower than in 1990–92 in spite of population growth. The prevalence of under-nutrition in developing countries fell from 23 per cent to 14 per cent over the same period.⁴
- **Markets have been crucial in enabling people to lift themselves out of poverty.** In developing countries, 90 per cent of jobs are created by the private sector.⁵ And the countries that have done best over the past two decades are ones that established the right enabling environment to foster private sector growth: contracts that are enforced, customs systems that work, educated workforces and dependable infrastructure, from roads to broadband.
- **Technology has turbo-charged the rate of progress.** Even as the world's population exploded over the 20th century, global food production kept pace – thanks to Green Revolution innovations such as new, high-yield crop varieties. Breakthroughs in medicine have extended life expectancy dramatically in wealthier countries. And we already have most of the clean technologies we need to shift the world on to a new, sustainable course.

- **Inequality between countries has fallen** – above all due to the incredible success of China.⁶ And while inequality has grown within many emerging economies, it is not inevitable. This is the lesson from Brazil's experience – where targeted social protection policies have helped to ensure that people living in poverty have benefited from growth, pushing down inequality in the process (albeit from a high starting point).
 - **Children are now much less likely to die at an early age, and fewer women die in childbirth.** Even despite population growth, the total number of children under five who die each day has halved since 1990. That's about 17,000 children *every day* who now live where before they would have died.⁷ And over the same time period, the number of mothers dying in childbirth in East Asia, North Africa and Southern Asia has declined by two thirds.⁸
 - **Global population growth has slowed as development has gathered pace.** Contrary to perceptions of a 'population explosion', global population growth has slowed in recent decades (having peaked in 1963), due to progress in areas such as reproductive health services, women's rights and girls' education.⁹ Rather than growing faster and faster at exponential rates, global population levels are actually on course to stabilise, at about 11 billion people – and the faster we develop, the lower the stabilisation level will be.
 - **The fight against disease in poor countries is being won.** Since 2000, measles vaccines have prevented more than 14 million deaths. The fight against malaria has saved another 3.3 million lives. Neglected tropical diseases such as trachoma, guinea worm, sleeping sickness and river blindness are being eradicated, country by country.¹⁰ And the number of adults between the ages of 15 and 49 who contract HIV each year has declined by 44 per cent since 2001.¹¹
 - **More children than ever are attending school.** Enrolment in primary education in poor countries has risen from less than 60 per cent in the 1980s to 90 per cent in 2010 – and disparities between boys and girls are narrowing all the time.¹²
 - **And the political participation of women and marginalised groups is increasing,** ensuring that their voices are heard and their interests reflected in government policies. There are now 46 countries where female MPs make up at least 30 per cent of one of the houses of parliament.¹³
- None of these positive trends happened by accident.** All of them were the result of vision, reflection, conversation, prayer, hard work, political support, human ingenuity and above all conscious decisions. **At the time of writing, with the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) close at hand, it's time to think about what comes next** – especially as governments move towards agreeing new Sustainable Development Goals to pick up where the MDGs leave off.

But the successes of recent decades are now at risk, as the earth's life support systems have become stretched to breaking point...

Our current model of development risks becoming a victim of its own success. Certainly, recent decades have seen some great environmental successes as well: a global breakthrough in phasing out ozone-depleting substances, far cleaner air and rivers in developed countries, huge new recycling programmes in many states, and new protected areas and ecosystem restoration programmes around the world.

But the biggest problem still remains: as more and more people become able to adopt the same unsustainable, high resource-consuming lifestyles as those of us in the West, so the strain placed on finite resources and the environmental systems that are essential for sustaining life increases massively. For example:

- **Water.** 1.2 billion people already live in water basins where human water use exceeds sustainable limits. By 2025, this will rise to 1.8 billion, with up to two thirds of the world's people living in water-stressed conditions, increasing the risk of violent conflict.¹⁴ Some of the world's great rivers – including the Colorado, the Yellow River, the Indus – now often run dry before they reach the sea, while the Aral Sea, once one of the four largest lakes in the world, has ceased to exist.



Local reservoirs are drying up around the world, making life much harder for individuals such as Sebastio, from north-east Brazil, pictured above on his regular journey to collect water. Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

- **Food.** The extraordinary agricultural yield gains of the 20th century are running out of steam, leaving food production reliant again on there being more land to meet rising demand, just as happened in the 19th century. But total arable land per person has halved since 1960, mainly because of population growth,¹⁵ even despite the huge deforestation of recent decades (still running at 5.2 million hectares a year).¹⁶ Competition for land is increasing from other sources such as biofuels and livestock too – accelerating the trend towards 'land grabs' by companies or governments in developing countries, which can leave poor people homeless or hungry. Most fish stocks are already fully or over-exploited; by 2048 the world's total fish catch could be just a tenth of what it was at its peak.¹⁷
- **Oil and gas.** At the time of writing, the world is experiencing an oil and gas surplus, with oil prices less than half their 2008 level. Yet, according to the International Energy Agency, global production of conventional oil peaked in 2006.¹⁸ So it is 'unconventional' oil and gas – such as tar sands, shale deposits and ultra-deep sea deposits – that are both meeting rising demand and creating enough excess supply, at least temporarily, to drive prices down. But this comes at a cost. Unconventional oil and gas are much harder to reach, with vastly more energy required to extract them than from traditional land or shallow water wells.¹⁹
- **Climate instability.** Right now, the world is on track for a 3.6°C to 5.3°C long-term temperature rise – *far* beyond the 1.5°C limit needed for a safer future.²⁰ Already, we can see climate change causing problems for Tearfund's partners all over the world. And increasingly, scientists are warning that we risk overshooting tipping points beyond which lies the risk of abrupt, irreversible chain reaction effects.²¹
- **Biodiversity.** We depend on the diversity of creation for all kinds of essential life support functions – from crop pollination to healthy soils, and from maintaining the water cycle to providing new treatments for disease.²³ Yet, we're living through a biodiversity catastrophe: the highest rate of extinction in 65 million years, the sixth mass extinction event in earth's history and the first to be caused by a single species – us.²⁴ New figures from the Zoological Society of London and WWF suggest that we've lost a staggering 50 per cent of earth's wildlife over the past 40 years.²⁵

In the earth's complex and interconnected life support systems, there's a real risk that each change sets in motion damaging chain reactions and unexpected consequences.

The further we push the global ecosystem, the greater the risk that we reach thresholds beyond which lie sudden and often irreversible changes. For example:

- **As the oceans warm, frozen sea-bed deposits of methane, a hugely powerful greenhouse gas, are now starting to break free** and bubble up into the air, accelerating warming that leads to more methane being released.
- **As the increasing amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is partially absorbed by the oceans, so they become more acidic.** At a certain point, shellfish, crustaceans and corals become unable to form and maintain solid shells – threatening their survival and posing a huge risk to parts of the oceanic food chain on which we ourselves depend.²⁶

Scientists at the Stockholm Resilience Centre have started to estimate where catastrophic thresholds might lie for a range of different environmental factors, from changes in the way land is used and the availability of fresh water, through to climate change and biodiversity. They call this work identifying 'planetary boundaries' – a process that can help us to understand the 'safe operating space for the global economy'.²⁷

And unfortunately, it's becoming all too clear that the economic successes of recent decades have hugely increased the speed with which the global economy is approaching (and in some cases overshooting) these environmental limits.²⁸ We're already in the danger zone on climate change, biodiversity, land use changes including deforestation, and altered biogeochemical cycles due to fertiliser use, and we're rapidly approaching the threshold on ocean acidification. **Truly catastrophic changes are not inevitable – yet. But we need to get much more serious, and fast, if we are to avert them.**

The human cost of climate change

Tearfund partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has been working with poor people in rural areas for 60 years, helping them improve agricultural yields. However, the changing climate has made this increasingly challenging.

Until recently Bageshori and Gobardhan Joshi grew staple crops on their small plot in Bajhang district but ever-more erratic monsoons left them barely able to feed their family for seven months of the year. UMN has been able to help the couple earn a living and feed their family by switching to vegetable cultivation and managing their water use.

However, even small changes in temperature and rainfall patterns can have a big impact on poor farmers, so further climate change could have a devastating impact on Bageshori and Gobardhan – and millions like them.

“The further we push the global ecosystem, the greater the risk that we reach thresholds beyond which lie sudden and often irreversible changes”

Why unsustainable development hits the poorest hardest...

The longer we postpone the shift to a sustainable global economy, the worse it will be for the people Tearfund serves. Poor families, communities and countries are by far the most exposed to extreme weather, to food price spikes (two of which have happened in just the last six years), to agricultural land grabs (an estimated 80m hectares since 2000²⁹) and to the 'consequences of consequences' that come with these changes, such as increased risk of armed conflict. Poor people also have much less capacity to adapt to the changes we will encounter in coming decades.

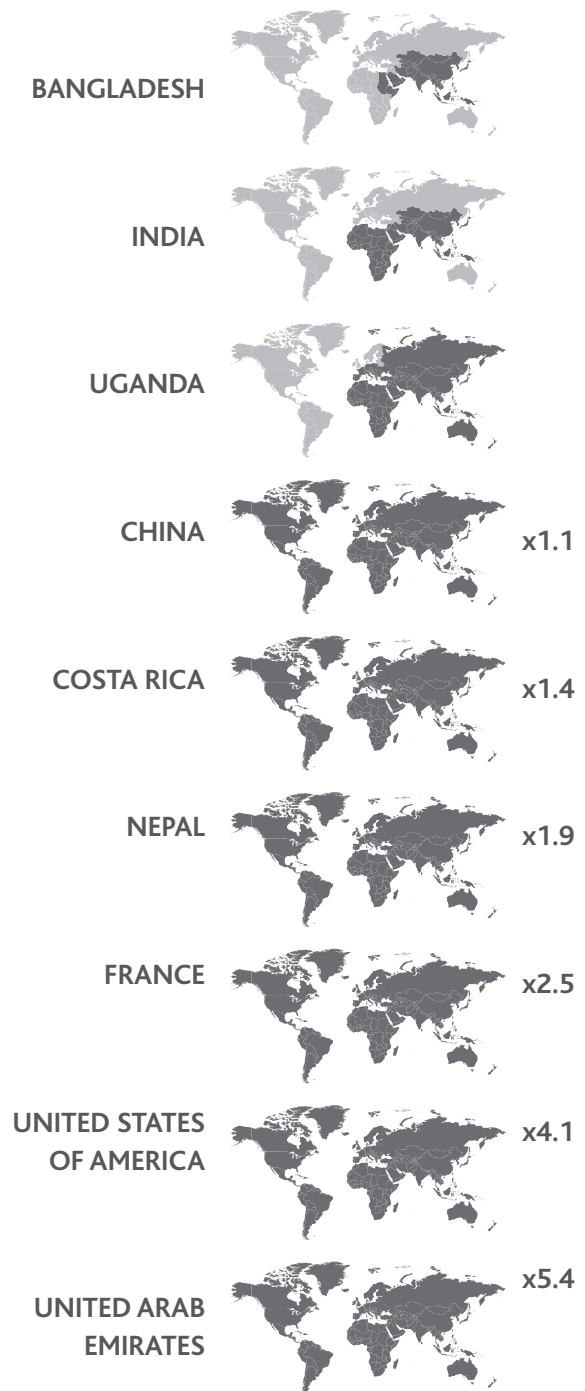
And for all the talk about how quickly emerging economies are growing, it's still people in developed countries who consume most per person – by far. The average American in 2013 emitted 16.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide, for example – more than twice as much as the average person from China (7.2 tonnes) or Europe (6.8 tonnes), more than ten times as much as the average Indian (1.9 tonnes), and *more than 50 times* as much as the quarter tonne emitted by the average citizen of a least developed country.³⁰

One way of capturing the big picture on unequal use of the world's resources is through measuring a country's 'ecological footprint': the total land around the world that it needs to grow its crops, graze its livestock, supply its timber, carry its buildings and infrastructure, and provide forests to soak up its emissions. On this measure, the UK uses 5.45 hectares per person, middle-income countries such as China 1.92 hectares, and low-income countries 1.14 hectares (see Figure 1 opposite). The earth's actual biocapacity is 1.78 hectares per person, and falling as population rises – so to live within our fair share of the planet, each of us in the UK needs to consume about a third as much energy and resources as we do today.³¹

The world's poorest people and countries need to have a significantly *larger* ecological footprint than they do today. Many of those we work with – and a billion people worldwide – do not have enough food to eat, or clean water to drink and wash with, or electricity for cooking or lighting. So, even as we're talking about reducing total global consumption of key resources to within sustainable levels, we need to keep aside enough space to allow those at the bottom to *increase* their consumption.

Figure 1: If the world's population lived like...

How much land would 7 billion people need to live like the people of these countries?³²



But the stark reality is that people's access to scarce resources such as food, water and land is determined by their purchasing power. And global disparities in purchasing power are now so great that when a shortage arises, it is poor people who are excluded. For example, when demand for food outstripped supply in the 2007–2008 global food crisis, the well-off (which includes most of us in the UK) were able to buy exactly the same amount of food as before, without even a second thought, while the UN World Food Programme found itself coping with unprecedented demand for food assistance and developing countries all over the world experienced food riots.³³

As a result of disparities of purchasing power, poor communities can often lose access to the natural resources that they depend on for their livelihoods. In Brazil, Tearfund's partners are working with people who have been displaced from their land by a logging industry causing huge deforestation. And in Bolivia, we help support communities whose land has been polluted by the local petrol chemical industry – and who have seen basic food prices rise exponentially.

Inequality is bad for development...

And this is one reason why we are so concerned by recent trends regarding income and wealth inequality. While inequality between *countries* is decreasing, inequality between the world's rich and poor *people* is increasing to extremes not seen in a century or more. As those at the top of the income distribution scale (either within countries or globally) consume more, those at the bottom can find themselves priced out of the market for their basic needs – and the problem risks getting much worse now that we face the challenge of bringing global consumption and resource use back within sustainable levels.

More broadly, research is increasingly showing that inequality is bad for development. The International Monetary Fund, for example, has found that countries with high inequality suffer from slower growth than those in which incomes are distributed more equally – and that redistributing income has a neutral effect on GDP growth.³⁴ The UN Development Programme, meanwhile, observed in its flagship *Human development report* in 2013 that 'inequality reduces the pace of human development and in some cases may even prevent it entirely' and that 'growth has frequently been much more effective at reducing poverty in countries with low income inequality than in countries with high income inequality'.³⁵

Furthermore, inequalities in wealth lead to inequalities in power. We see this all over the world in the developing countries we work in, where economic elites enjoy disproportionate influence over policy-setting and decision-making, and are able to extract rents through corruption, land grabs and other behaviour that oppresses people living in poverty. And now that the richest one per cent of the world's people own the same amount of wealth as the rest of the world put together, we believe that a similar dynamic is being played out at a global level.³⁶

The aftermath of the financial crisis has made these disparities worse in developed countries. While poorer people have suffered most from the economic downturn, unemployment and austerity measures, asset owners have benefited strongly from quantitative easing (QE) policies.* Forty per cent of the gains from QE in the UK went to the richest five per cent of households, according to Bank of England figures.³⁷

Overall, we are worried that the Aspen Institute's David Bollier may have it right when he asserts, '**Wealth and income distribution no longer resemble a familiar "bell curve" in which the bulk of the wealth accrues to a large middle class.** Instead, the networked economy seems to be producing a "power-curve" distribution... Relatively few players tend to excel and reap disproportionate benefits while the great mass of the population scrambles for lower-paid, lower-skilled jobs, if they can be found at all.'³⁸

We need to finish the job on poverty...

Although we've made huge progress in addressing poverty over the last 25 years, three challenges remain:

1. First, and most fundamentally, **1.2 billion people still live in absolute poverty surviving on less than \$1.25 a day.** Indeed, newer indicators that look at a definition of poverty which is broader than just income (by including areas such as education and nutrition) find that 1.6 billion people are poor on these 'multidimensional' measures.³⁹ On either measure, these people will be much harder to reach than those who have already escaped poverty.⁴⁰ For the most part, these people are either geographically or politically marginalised and, by 2030, they will be heavily concentrated in the world's war zones and ungoverned spaces, and at severe risk of violence or displacement.

*Quantitative easing is a form of central bank monetary policy that aims to stimulate the economy through the central bank purchasing financial assets from commercial banks and other private institutions.

2. Second, **the escape from poverty of emerging economies' 'breakout generation' remains acutely insecure.** For all the successes of recent decades, this is a game of snakes and ladders, with 'until recently poor' people highly vulnerable to a slowdown in emerging economy growth rates (which now appears to be happening). These people are also far more likely to be: in insecure, informal or low-paid jobs; reliant on urban infrastructures creaking under the pace of demand growth; usually without access to any kind of social safety nets; and highly vulnerable to growing resource scarcity and its effect on prices.
3. And third, **economic insecurity has increased markedly in developed countries.** In real terms, incomes have been stagnant for about two decades (with the exception of those at the very top).⁴¹ In part, this is the result of a process of economic rebalancing that has also pushed

incomes up for many people in the developing world – a process that we welcome – and as we have argued elsewhere in the report, we also believe that the developed world needs to consume less, not more. What we are concerned about, however, is the growing economic insecurity that many people and families are now facing in developed countries – a process that is now being accelerated by the automation of many kinds of work.⁴² Young people are getting the worst of it: where the baby boomers had stable growth, jobs for life, cheap homes, final salary pensions and well funded state healthcare and education, the millennials and those following them face structural unemployment, zero-hours contracts, student debt, far less generous pensions and benefits, unaffordable housing and rising tax burdens – as well as the generational impacts of high levels of national debt.

The challenges are immense – but we believe that big challenges will bring out the best in us...

Globalisation is already entering a period of increased stress. True, the world averted a lapse into 1930s-style tariffs after the financial crisis. But G20 countries have introduced 1,500 'stealth protectionist' measures since promising not to do so in 2008; competition through currency devaluation is especially significant.⁴³ Trade has expanded slower than global GDP for the past three years – ending a 30-year trend that played a crucial role in driving growth and raising incomes in emerging economies.⁴⁴ And support for globalisation is waning in rich countries amid stagnant wages, high unemployment and the 'squeezed middle'.

Continued progress cannot be taken for granted; globalisation has, after all, collapsed before. During the early-20th century, the world saw another period during which money, people and ideas were able to flow freely across borders – a situation that appeared, as famed economist John Maynard Keynes noted later, 'normal, certain, and permanent, except in the direction of further improvement'.⁴⁵ Only when World War One broke out did it become clear how fragile the 'first globalisation' had really been. Two world wars and one Great Depression intervened before globalisation would recover.⁴⁶

And this is before we consider the issue of resource scarcity. Perceptions that 'there isn't enough to go round' are among the most fertile breeding grounds for conflict and competition, instead of cooperation. Think of what happens during a run on a bank, when panicked customers suddenly lose confidence in the bank's ability to give everyone back their deposits. Resource scarcity can trigger similar dynamics between

countries. That's what happened with the 2008 and 2011 food spikes – when many producers imposed export bans, leading import-dependent countries to start panic buying on global markets. It's a dynamic that we see too, in slower motion, in the trend towards land grabs: 80 million hectares of land (more than three times the area of the UK) have been tied up in such deals since 2000.⁴⁷ We see it too in the growing risk of conflict over water.⁴⁸ With developed country publics as yet unwilling to consider consuming less, even as emerging economies grow their consumption levels, the risk of competition over scarce resources is increasing steadily.

But the lesson we draw from Tearfund's work around the world is that big challenges bring out the best in humanity. Our experience of working in emergencies confirms what behavioural experts say: that contrary to the myth that disasters always result in antisocial behaviour such as panic or looting, the reality is that more often disasters are 'characterised by great social solidarity, generosity and self-sacrifice, perhaps even heroism'.⁴⁹

These characteristics resonate with us above all because they are the same values that we aspire to as Christians. We believe that the ability to see moments of great peril – such as the one that we think we are entering now – as opportunities for renewal and transformation is right at the heart of the Christian worldview. And in the next chapter, we'll say more about how we think change happens, and how each one of us can be part of that change.

“Big challenges bring out the best in humanity”

2: HOW TO CHANGE THE TIDE



The civil rights movement in the US helped transform public attitudes on racial discrimination. Photo: The US National Archive

As Tolstoy says in *War and peace*, 'It's hard to thank any single individual for altering history; more often, the ship of state alters course only because tides are vastly shifting underneath.' **As we look to the future, we believe one of the most important roles that we and other Christian development NGOs can play is to help shift those tides.** The changes that need to happen now are at the level not just of policy change but of the wholesale *transformation* of lifestyles, institutions and systems. We think churches are central to this endeavour, given their scale and reach.⁵⁰ And as we set out in this chapter, we think this involves a far-reaching change in values, building a grassroots social movement on a much bigger scale than anything we've seen in recent years, and being ready for the moments of opportunity that come after shocks.

The slow pace of progress: what's the hold-up?

There's no one reason for the slow pace of progress on the big issues that are defining the future outlook for global development. Instead, we think it's about a convergence of a whole range of factors that combine to create the stalemate that we can see before us now, especially in three key areas: our governance systems, the power that vested interests have over them, and the fact that public attitudes aren't yet conducive to the big shifts we need.

Governance systems built for a different age

- **Our policy-making structures struggle to see the big picture.** While today's defining issues are complex and straddle different ministers' and departments' areas of focus, they are dealt with as if the opposite were the case. Issues are divided up into finance, development, environment and so on, and left to the 'relevant' tribe of ministries and international agencies, populated by single issue 'experts' rather than people who can join the dots across issues. Our systems of government were built for a different age, long before today's boundary-defying problems arose.⁵¹
- **So the toughest issues increasingly get escalated upwards** – to heads of government at home and to bodies such as the G7 or G20 internationally – where there is too little capacity to do much more than react. **The urgent often ends up crowding out the essential**, with long-term risk management giving way to fire-fighting whatever crisis is currently underway. Governments thus often manage symptoms rather than tackling root causes: cleaning up after floods rather than getting serious about reducing emissions, bailing out banks rather than putting in place a new approach to financial regulation.⁵²
- **Most of all, there's still the basic tension implicit in a world made up of sovereign states but defined by trans-boundary global challenges.** Solutions need to involve multiple countries rather than just one. Yet, no government can be coerced by others into reducing its emissions, or improving its weak financial regulations, or tackling its unsustainable fishing practices. **Instead, it is the citizens of each country that must hold their government to account on these international issues.**⁵³

The power of vested interests

- **There are strong vested interests in maintaining the existing economic architecture, including our dependence on fossil fuels and over-use of natural resources.** Any process of big structural change in the economy creates losers as well as winners – and just as plantation owners, shipping tycoons and bankers feared they would lose out through the abolition of the slave trade, so there are many today who would lose out from the shift to a more sustainable and just economy (as well, of course, as many who would win).
 - **These groups expend a lot of time, effort and above all money influencing government policy.** Spending on lobbying in the United States totalled an incredible \$3.5 billion in 2010.⁵⁴ There are four times as many financial sector lobbyists working in Brussels than there are European Commission officials working on financial issues.⁵⁵
 - **And the same vested interests also spend huge amounts on persuading the wider public of their arguments.** By one estimate, billionaires in the US channelled almost \$120 million to groups casting doubt on the science of climate change between 2002 and 2010.⁵⁶ Combined with the media's appetite for sensation and scandal, the result is confusion and a lack of reasoned and evidence-based debate.
- distributed.** Trust in politicians is at an all-time low: in 1986, only 38 per cent of Britons said they trusted governments 'to place the needs of the nation above the interests of their own political party', but by 2012 this had fallen to just 18 per cent.⁵⁷
- **Also, the public does not yet appear willing to consume less in order to leave environmental space for poor countries to develop.** The 2014 Greendex poll by National Geographic and GlobeScan found that, while concern about environmental problems is increasing rapidly, 'sustainable consumer behaviour has only grown slowly' – with developed countries' willingness to change lagging behind that of emerging economies such as China or India.⁵⁸ We are not yet prepared to 'live simply so that others may simply live', as Gandhi put it – perhaps because we do not feel confident that, if we make radical changes in our own lives or nations, others will follow suit.
 - **But there are signs that things are changing for the better.** People are now much more likely to have signed a petition or contacted their MP than 20 years ago, while the number who agree that 'people like me have no say in what the government does' has declined markedly.⁵⁹ Social media has made it *far* easier for ordinary people to make their voices heard and organise for change. What's more, a majority of people in the UK would now choose greater equality over greater national wealth, while the number of people who think climate change is real, human-caused and urgent is at its highest level in recent years.^{60,61} A moment when real change – *big* change – is possible may finally be coming into view.

The importance of public attitudes

- **Finally, public attitudes matter more than ever in an age when power has never been more widely**

Real change requires a movement

When extraordinary things are achieved against apparently impossible odds, it's often because of a shift in values coupled with (or arising from) a civil society *movement* that pushes for change.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, for example, the West Indies Lobby represented hugely powerful vested interests opposed to the abolition of the slave trade, including many of the wealthiest men in the UK. They had the money to make their case and buy votes as needed, and they argued vociferously that giving up the slave trade would do huge damage to Britain's economic interests (and people's lifestyles). **But by 1807, the slave trade had been abolished throughout the British Empire – as campaigning and growing popular awareness and horror helped pave the way for legislative change.**⁶²

The civil rights movement in America provides another compelling example, where success depended on the 'real work of the movement: the cultural delegitimation of segregation':⁶³ in other words, change in social values.

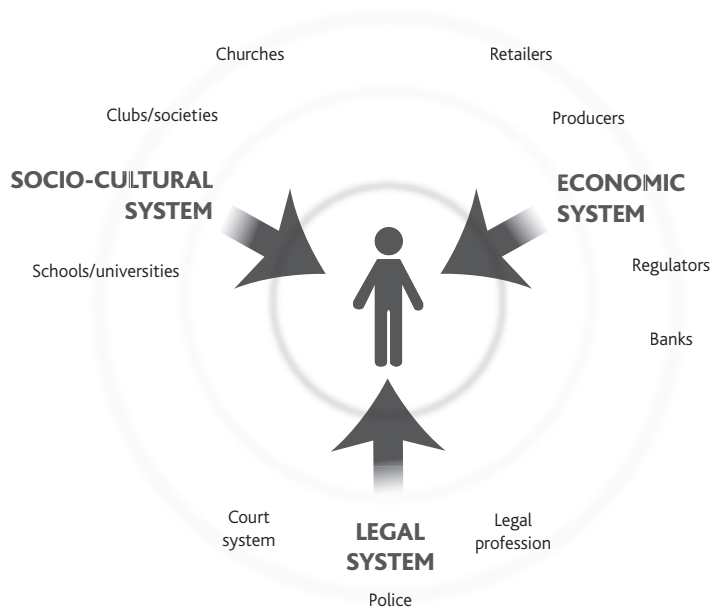
There are plenty of other examples of movements achieving the impossible – from women's rights to Gandhi's groundswell of non-violent resistance and *swadeshi* (self-reliance) in India. Christianity is perhaps the most successful movement of all time: an initially obscure, marginal and widely despised religious movement that nonetheless managed to transform the mighty Roman Empire over the course of 300 years.⁶⁴

What needs to change?

The most successful movements drive changes in three crucial areas – three 'spheres' that describe the system we live in:

- **What the economy incentivises** (prices, taxes, spending, investment)
- **What the law allows** (legislation and its enforcement)
- **What society expects** (the social norms that govern much of our behaviour)

Figure 2: Three systems that affect our choices in life



The economic system determines what we can buy, what we can earn and what we can produce. New products emerging from the economic system (such as mobile phones) can transform the way we live. Similarly, differences in price often determine what we buy (if renewable energy were cheaper than coal, we would probably all be using it already), and differences in (risk-adjusted) returns often determine which ideas attract financial investment and which don't.

The legal system sets out the formal rules of the game, through legislation, regulation and judicial precedent – covering everything from how contracts are drawn up and enforced, to what you can be arrested for and what the punishment will be. This too is a hugely important lever for affecting the behaviour of people and companies.

But we think the *most* important,⁶⁵ and perhaps least recognised,⁶⁶ influence on how we live our lives is the socio-cultural system. This frames what society expects of you, what's considered 'normal' and – conversely – what's considered unacceptable or shameful.⁶⁷

In the words of Cass Sunstein, a legal scholar and expert on social norms:

*'There are social norms about littering, dating, smoking, singing, when to stand, when to sit, when to show anger, when, how, and with whom to express affection, when to talk, when to listen... in fact there are social norms about nearly every aspect of human behaviour.'*⁶⁸

Change starts with our values

At the root of all three sets of drivers is a common foundation: values.^{69,70} Research consistently shows that it's the cultural *values* held by an individual's family, friends, colleagues and other networks that matter most.⁷¹ In fact WWF's Tom Crompton goes as far as to say, 'It seems that individuals are often predisposed to reject information when accepting it would challenge their identity and values.'⁷²

Major changes in the external system of influences on our behaviour, as described above, are normally only possible if first there is a change in people's values. The abolition of slavery, for instance, centred on enough people holding the value that no human being should be the property of another. Similarly, civil rights legislation in the US was ultimately based on a tipping point towards the value that all men were created equal.

Movements are often crucial in facilitating the spread of both new values and new social norms, often doing both at the same time. In his detailed study of how societies' values change, Thomas Rocha suggests that movements have a 'uniquely powerful ability... to create controversy about ideas that were once consensus values' in society.⁷³ Similarly, individuals cannot change social norms on their own (and risk social disapproval by flouting them).⁷⁴ Change only occurs when a large enough number of individuals act at the same time – something that requires coordination, which a movement is well placed to provide. The way in which a movement's members live, act and work sets out an alternative to the status quo – it demonstrates seriousness of intent and makes it clear that 'there is another way'.⁷⁵

When a large enough number of people all begin to live in ways that conflict with existing social norms, change can happen very rapidly: a norm 'can be abruptly abandoned when people who have helped sustain it suddenly discover a common desire for change'.⁷⁶ Think of relatively recent changes in attitudes to race or sexism,⁷⁷ for example. Like a bandwagon gathering pace, the process of change becomes unstoppable, such that society rapidly shifts from one set of norms to another,⁷⁸ to the point where adherence to the old set of norms meets with social disapproval.

Movements can also ensure that new values are reflected in government policy. If large enough sections of the public demonstrate that they believe dramatic action on a given area of policy to be warranted because they believe that it's the *right thing to do*, then this has the power to overcome politicians' fears and drive legislation. In other words, national budgets are not merely financial plans but 'moral documents' that reflect the values of society.⁷⁹

“When extraordinary things are achieved against apparently impossible odds, it's often because of a shift in values and a civil society movement that pushes for change”

The sorry tale of how US climate legislation failed at the last hurdle in 2009 is a perfect example of the power that movements can exert over political processes – for ill rather than for good in this case. As political scientist Theda Skocpol observed afterwards in a widely cited analysis, prospects for US climate legislation looked excellent in 2008, given that both the Democrat and Republican presidential candidates supported it. But while NGOs had cause to be optimistic initially, especially when climate legislation was passed in the House of Representatives in June 2009, it then all started to unravel:

*'[Environmental NGOs] got a big shock almost at once as oppositional lobbying and media campaigns went into overdrive and fierce grassroots Tea Party protests broke out. During the summer Congressional recess, telegenic older white protestors carrying homemade signs appeared at normally sleepy 'town hall' sessions to harangue Congressional Democrats. Protests were bolstered by generously funded advertising campaigns...'*⁸⁰

The result: legislation rapidly became bogged down and by July 2010 it was clear that climate legislation was going nowhere. Skocpol's conclusion: **environmental NGOs' key mistake was to focus on insider lobbying, in stark contrast to the Tea Party's movement-building approach.**

So whole system change begins with values change – but it doesn't end there. To create real transformation, values change has to be reflected in all three sets of external influences on behaviour: what society expects, what the law allows and what the economy incentivises. And this is why movement building is so important. Movements provide the most promising route for 'norms entrepreneurs' to pioneer and live out new values, and to express those new values to politicians.

So what makes a movement succeed? We think three key requirements really stand out.

Key requirement #1: Clear and actionable demands

First, a movement needs to know what it wants. This is partly about having a compelling and resonant vision, which we look at in more detail below. But it's also about having concrete demands that are specific enough that there is a clear yes/no answer to the question of whether a government, politician or other actor supports them or not.

More specifically, movements have to focus on bringing power to bear on ballot boxes. This is an area where the Tea Party has consistently excelled, in effect making the Republican Party into an instrument of its will on a range of issues it cares about. By contrast, the fact that young people in the UK and other developed countries are so much less likely to vote than older people⁸¹ means that their views figure much less prominently on the political agenda. This in turn is an important reason why, in the UK, young people have borne so much more

of the burden of austerity policies than elderly people. As *Daily Telegraph* columnist Alex Proud puts it:

*'You need to do more than take 30 seconds out of Facebooking your mates in Thailand to sign an online petition or upvote a video... You need to get involved and you need to vote. This is the only way politics will reflect your views and needs.'*⁸²

Above all, movements need to think politically. As well as knowing what they want, movements need to be able to navigate the political context in which they operate. That means they require a deep understanding of the incentives, pressures and constraints that influence how politicians see the world, position themselves and make decisions. And movements must have the ability to use that understanding to work with, rather than against, the grain of change wherever possible.

Key requirement #2: Patience in speaking truth to power

A movement pushing for big changes needs to be ready to play a long game. Political and social change doesn't unfold in a steady, linear fashion: instead it is complex, unpredictable and takes *time*. There is often a long period when our efforts seem to yield few results. But then comes a tipping point, after which events snowball and things suddenly start to fall into place. The *Jubilee 2000* campaign is a great example: comprehensive debt cancellation was an idea that was first put forward in the 1980s, but it took nearly two decades for it to come to fruition.

These patient efforts often bear fruit during shocks and moments of crisis. As the author and climate change expert

Paul Gilding observes, crises have the capacity to unlock change in a way that almost nothing else can:

*'As a species, we are good in a crisis, and passing the [environmental] limits will certainly be the biggest crisis our species has ever faced. Our backs will be up against the wall, and in that situation we have proven ourselves to be extraordinary. As the full scale of the imminent crisis hits us, our response will be proportionately dramatic, mobilising as we do in war. We will change at a scale and speed we can barely imagine today, completely transforming our economy... in just a few short decades.'*⁸³

However, **while shocks and crises can unlock positive transformational change, there is no guarantee that they will.** Some crises fail to lead to really transformational change: for example, the all-time high global food price spikes in 2008 and 2011 (the first coupled with a record-breaking oil price spike); or increasingly frequent and violent extreme weather events all over the world, including Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005 and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.

Other crises do lead to change, but not necessarily in a helpful direction – as for instance with the South-East Asian economic crisis in 1998 or the global financial crisis ten years later. There is a real risk that shocks can prompt kneejerk actions, scapegoating of other groups, or other reactions that make things worse (especially for poor people) rather than better.

The key factor is that someone has to be ready and waiting to use moments of crisis when people are prepared to think the unthinkable. As Milton Friedman famously pointed out in an essay written for economists sharing his monetarist approach, long before their ascent to the commanding heights of global influence, when they set the economic agenda for the political era of Thatcher and Reagan:

*'Only a crisis, actual or perceived, produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.'*⁸⁴

Being ready will often involve a 'wilderness period' before new ideas are taken seriously. For a long time during the 1930s, Winston Churchill made the case that Germany was re-arming and that the international community needed to confront her. By the time Churchill was heeded, war had become inevitable. But when that recognition finally came, it was Churchill, more than any other British politician, who was ready to move decisively into the political space that had opened up.

In practical terms, readiness for shocks and crises has two key elements:

- **Having clear policy demands**, so that options are ready and waiting 'on the shelf' when moments of opportunity arrive, in the recognition that, once the crisis has arrived, it is far too late to start developing new ideas from scratch. We've touched on this already.
- **Having the right stories**, a subject we'll turn to now. We have already noted that successful movements are able to live out their values in a way that challenges existing social norms and government policies. What gives them the courage and motivation to do this?

Key requirement #3: A resonant story

As we mentioned earlier, research consistently shows that people don't take decisions primarily on the basis of facts. Instead, it's the cultural *values* predominant in an individual's family, friends, colleagues and other networks that matter most.

In practice, people's cultural values are embedded in stories that they use to make sense of the world: stories that explain where we are, how we got here, where we're going, how to get there, and (underlying it all) who 'we' are. And these kinds of stories become *especially* important during moments of crisis – for good or ill.

During a crisis, shared stories that lead on themes of purpose, solidarity, resolve and renewal bring out the best in societies and can be hugely powerful in driving transformation. In large

part, Winston Churchill's greatness as a prime minister lay in his ability as a storyteller to prompt wartime Britain to find unsuspected capacity within itself, through speeches that brought together:

- *Gritty realism* ('blood, toil, tears and sweat')
- *A profoundly hopeful vision of the future* ('If we can stand up to [Hitler], all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands.')
- *A deeply energising view of what his compatriots were capable of* ('Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, This was their finest hour.')

“Someone has to be ready to use the moments of crisis when people are prepared to think the unthinkable”

We think that the kinds of story we need for our own situation in the early-21st century must stress three key themes in particular. These are:

1. A larger us

We need to think less of 'people like us' and more of 'people – like us'. The whole sweep of human history is a story of expanding the size of the 'we' with whom we empathise – from itinerant bands of hunter-gatherers to chiefdoms, from city states to kingdoms, and on to modern nation states and the staggeringly diverse communities of affinity and ethnicity in today's globalised world. This expansion of empathy was perfectly captured by Martin Luther King in his 1963 'Letter from a Birmingham jail':

*'I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What affects one directly, affects all indirectly.'*⁸⁵

Above all, we need to think in terms of 7 billion 'us' – recognising that we are more interdependent than we have ever been, that **the consequences of our individual actions and lifestyles can ripple across the world as never before**, and that the challenges that are already defining the 21st century are above all *global* in nature.

2. A longer future

We've fallen out of the habit of thinking about the long term. Instead, our political leaders rarely have the luxury of thinking beyond the next election; our business leaders, the next financial quarter; our journalists, the next 24-hour news cycle. Scientist and author Danny Hillis observed in 1994:

*'When I was a child, people used to talk about what would happen by the year 2000. Now, thirty years later, they still talk about what will happen by 2000. The future has been shrinking by one year per year for my entire life.'*⁸⁶

In particular, there has been a catastrophic implosion of the implicit covenant between past, current and future generations. As noted in Chapter 1, today's young generation in developed countries face a far more uncertain future than their parents, with unaffordable housing, costly higher education and student debt, and the end of 'jobs for life'. Globally, meanwhile, the next generation faces a future of increasing climate change and resource scarcity – unless decisive action is taken now to prevent that from happening.

3. A better 'good life'

Recent years have seen a wealth of research challenging the idea that material consumption levels have much to do with happiness above a certain threshold level of income. Surveys that measure people's subjective well-being routinely find that the correlation between life satisfaction and income starts to break beyond a certain level of GDP per capita.⁸⁷ The then US president candidate, Robert Kennedy, recognised this nearly 50 years ago, when he observed:

*'Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, **it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.**'*⁸⁸

So our stories need to focus on a broader idea of human flourishing. As *Wholly Living*, a 2010 report from Tearfund, CAFOD and Theos, argues, 'Human creativity and productivity, our relationships and responsibility, our participation and contribution to society, our environmental stewardship, and, crucially, our generosity are all fundamental to flourishing as human beings.'⁸⁹

“We need to think in terms of 7 billion 'us' – recognising that we are more interdependent than we have ever been”

3: A DIFFERENT STORY



Maguhudze and his nephew Lucky are profiting from increased crop yields thanks to simple conservation and sustainable farming techniques they have learnt through Tearfund partner River of Life in Zimbabwe. Photo: Eleanor Bentall/Tearfund

In the last chapter, we set out some of what we need from a resonant story – one that can help us to think in terms of a *larger us* (interdependence and justice); a *longer future* (an intergenerational covenant and a focus on conserving/restoring creation); and a *better 'good life'* (not just focused on consumerism but having a more fundamental sense of purpose and belonging in the cosmos).

In this chapter, we'll explore four interrelated theological ideas that we think add up to exactly such a story. These are as follows:

- First, **one of the oldest and deepest ideas in the Bible is God's intention for right relationships.** The creation account situates human beings in three distinct but interrelated relationships: with God, each other and the environment. These relationships all emphasise the unity and wholeness of creation (*šalom*), the centrality of steadfast love (*hesed*) and justice (*mišpaṭ*), and the power of wisdom for rightly ordering relationships.
- Second, the Bible warns repeatedly that **there are consequences to human ignorance, injustice and idolatry** – all of which can lead to an 'unravelling' of the
- Third, **the biblical idea of atonement and sacrifice sets out how right relationship with God, neighbour and creation can be restored.** This idea is central: to the Old Testament, where the Day of Atonement is the holiest day of the year; to the New Testament, where Jesus' ministry is, at its core, an act of self-sacrifice that restores relationships; and to our own times, where atonement and restoration remain hugely relevant and powerful ideas.
- Fourth, **the related ideas of sabbath and jubilee help us to apply the restorative concept of atonement to politics and economics.** While this includes the commonly understood concept of debt cancellation, the idea of jubilee is much more transformational and includes meeting the needs of poor people, the need for wealth redistribution once a generation, and environmental restoration.

What's Christianity got to do with it?

We think that Christian theology has great relevance today for building social movements – for three key reasons:

- First, because **Christians and church groups have so often been central to movements pushing for progressive political change:**⁹⁰ from the abolition of slavery and the US civil rights struggle in the 1950s and 1960s, up to recent campaigns such as *Jubilee 2000* and *Make Poverty History*. At a local level Christians have been inspired by their faith to form an unrivalled network of passionate volunteers and activists who will throw themselves into action to bring about change. The Christian faith has provided hope and inspiration for generations, and continues to do so today.
- Second, because even among people who are not Christians, **our society's Judaeo-Christian heritage remains a fundamental source of norms and of some of our most resonant stories.** Many of these norms – that 'all are created equal', for example – have provided the moral foundation for previous movements. The *Jubilee 2000* campaign is a recent and vivid illustration of this, with the Old Testament idea of a jubilee proving powerfully resonant with people far beyond the church groups that formed the campaign's backbone.
- Third, and unfortunately, because sometimes we have to 'first take the plank out of [our] own eye' (Matthew 7:5) – and **recognise that Christians can be part of the problems around justice and sustainability.** There's a need to engage in robust theological debate, as Bono did with the US Republican politician Jesse Helms, winning him over to the cause of debt relief for the developing world and provision of antiretroviral drugs.⁹¹

So our approach to movement building is based on a conversation: between different kinds of Christians, between Christians and people of other religions, between those of faith and those of none. *All* of us have something to bring, and we recognise that this kind of conversation doesn't lead to everyone having a shared faith. If we're to avert a catastrophic global tragedy, we urgently need some common values and reference points. And we think that the ideas that follow can make a unique contribution to that conversation.

Creation, peace and unity

From the beginning, God's intention for peace in creation (*šalom*) meant much more than just the absence of violence.

Central to a Christian understanding of God's intention for his creation is the idea that life is inherently about intertwined relationships and relatedness.⁹² 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. As theologian Margaret Barker writes:

*'The biblical world view is a vision of the unity of all things, and how the visible material world relates to another dimension of existence that unites all things into one divinely ordained system known as the eternal covenant, the creation covenant.'*⁹³

This is a worldview that stands in marked contrast to the instrumental, materialist approach to creation that is one of the defining hallmarks of modernity. Far from what theologian Michael Northcott refers to as the idea of 'conscious rational dominion over a material earth that is empty of moral or spiritual significance apart from humanity's rational reordering',⁹⁴ the Christian worldview on creation starts from a universe that is radically alive and precious. In this universe, humans have a unique role that encompasses, but also goes far beyond, 'stewardship'.

However, Christianity has been accused of promoting an instrumentalist, exploitative approach towards nature in the past – in particular because of the passage in Genesis 1:28 in which God says, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over... every living thing that moves upon the earth.' (Lynn White famously argued in the 1960s that 'Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen'.⁹⁵) **To understand why *nothing* in the creation account would support such a reading, we need to briefly explore three of its core ideas.**

Wisdom

A sacred, unified approach to knowledge called *wisdom* is a vital component of a Christian creational worldview. Wisdom gives humans an appreciation of the intricacies and the interconnected nature of creation, and the consequences of our actions. According to Walter Brueggemann, wisdom involves learning 'how to live well, faithfully and responsively in a world governed by the creator God'.⁹⁶

Steadfast love

A core part of wisdom, and of holding together peaceful relationships, is *hesed* or 'steadfast love'. Isaiah makes clear that humans can expect *hesed* from God (Isaiah 54:10), but God expects humans to show *hesed* to him and to each other too (Hosea 6:6). It is also one of the central ideas in the New Testament: at the Last Supper, Jesus says, 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).

Hesed is in turn linked in the Bible with both justice (*mišpaṭ*) and righteousness (*ṣdqh*) repeatedly. *Hesed* is connected to *mišpaṭ*, which means both justice and right judgement; *mišpaṭ* in turn is connected to *ṣdqh*, righteousness and right actions; and the result, finally, is a third key concept: *šalom*, or peace.

Peace (*šalom*)

Šalom means much more than peace in the modern sense of an absence of violence: instead, it incorporates ideas of wholeness, completeness, balance, well-being, tranquillity, prosperity, security and justice.⁹⁷ It underlines the inherently *relational* nature of God's intention for creation as it points to the perfect unity God intended to exist between God, humans and creation. It does *not* allow for an exploitative attitude towards each other or creation.

God-given relationships in pieces

When the bonds fray in this crucial, intricate web of relationships between humans, God and creation as a result of what the Bible calls 'iniquity', multidimensional **catastrophic damage occurs and the whole of creation is affected.**

'The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant (Isaiah 24:4–6)

'There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land... Because of this the land dries up, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea are swept away...' (Hosea 4:1, 3)

These are descriptions that resonate in the early-21st century. As Royal Society of Arts Fellow Jonathan Rowson puts it:

'Look deeply into unfettered capitalism and there seems to be a deluded self, scrambling to make itself real; buying itself into existence, until it finds it is fading again, until we buy some more...

'Pay attention to the myriad addictions of apparently normal behaviour and what passes for everyday consciousness begins to look like a low-level psychopathology; we are literally caught up in our smart phones, our social medicines, our curated identities...

*'And reflect on the epidemic of loneliness in big cities and you sense that love has lost its way. We are all surrounded by strangers who could so easily be friends, but we appear to lack cultural permission not merely to "connect" – the opium of cyberspace – but to deeply empathise and care.'*⁹⁸

Themes of disintegration are also a consistent preoccupation of some of the greatest poets of the last century. WB Yeats, for instance, wrote after World War One:

*'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere,
The ceremony of innocence is drowned
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.'*⁹⁹

There are three important ways in which humans can break the web of relationships connecting God, creation and humans, a web that sustains life itself.

1. **Idolatry: worshipping things, rather than God.** As if anticipating the hyper-consumerism of the 21st century, Isaiah denounces idolatry, declaring, 'Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made' (Isaiah 2:8). In our own times, too, Pope Francis has written of the 'idolatry of money', observing in 2013:

*'The current financial crisis made us overlook the fact that it originated in a profound human crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human person! We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (Exodus 32:1–35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose.'*¹⁰⁰

“When the bonds fray in this intricate web of relationships between humans, God and creation, the whole of creation is affected”

2. Injustice: failing to observe the requirements of steadfast love and justice towards other humans.

Like idolatry, this is a common concern in Old Testament prophetic texts, for example:

'Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers... 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, 5, 6)

'Everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely... they do not know how to blush.' (Jeremiah 6:13–15, ESV)

Here too it's not hard to find parallels in our own times. As Chapter 1 set out, today's world is hallmarked by staggering extremes of income and wealth inequality and, at the same time, more than a billion people still live in absolute poverty. And we also continue to sin against those who will come after us, through climate change, environmental damage and other ways in which we plunder the future.

3. Ignorance: a distorted view of reality or a failure to understand the consequences of our actions – including those that result from wrong teaching of sacred texts. The book of Proverbs warns: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). Again, this is something we see happening in our own times – for instance in the extent to which our capacity for technological innovation constantly risks outstripping our capacity to use it maturely.

As TS Eliot wonders in *The Rock*, 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?'¹⁰¹ More fundamentally, and to an alarming extent, the modern approach to knowledge is about *splitting* – subject from object, knowledge from values, sacred from secular.

All three of these contemporary breaches of right relationship have been instrumental in creating the problems described in Chapter 1. Our time in history is characterised by brutal injustices, perpetrated on people alive today, on people in the past and on generations still to come.

We have lost a great deal – and grief is an appropriate and necessary response. We see this in the Bible in the lament psalms or the book of Lamentations – which, as theologian Walter Brueggemann notes, start from a key insight:

*'Life is not right. It is now noticed and voiced that life is not as it was promised to be. The utterance of this awareness is an exceedingly dangerous moment at the throne. It is as dangerous as Lech Walesa or Rosa Parks asserting with their bodies that the system has broken down and will no longer be honoured... Lament occurs when the dysfunction reaches an unacceptable level, when the injustice is intolerable and change is insisted upon.'*¹⁰²

When lament is refused and the reality in front of us is denied, the result can be hugely debilitating – as James Hillman, one of the most eminent Jungian psychologists of recent times, has observed:

*'The [psychological] depression we're all trying to avoid could very well be a prolonged chronic reaction to what we've been doing to the world, a mourning and grieving for what we're doing to nature and to cities and to whole peoples – the destruction of a lot of our world. We may be depressed partly because this is the soul's reaction to the mourning and grieving that we're not consciously doing.'*¹⁰³

How to restore broken relationships

Rather than just a series of separate books and texts, there is an overarching story that unfolds from the fall in Genesis, through Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross, to the arrival of God's kingdom on earth in Revelation: a story about mending broken relationships through the process of atonement. It's a profound idea that is fundamentally about restoration: about reuniting relationships that have been torn asunder; about dealing with sin and about bringing healing, reconciliation and peace in the fullest sense. **At its heart, it is about the power of sacrifice.**

In some ways, the power of sacrifice is self-evident and has long been recognised by those working for restoration, both within the Christian tradition and outside it. Martin Luther King, for instance, said: 'Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice...'¹⁰⁴ Gandhi too understood the power of sacrifice, saying, 'The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful answer yet conceived by God or man to insolent tyranny.'¹⁰⁵

The Old Testament system of temple and sacrifice sets the scene for the ultimate restoration of the covenant achieved by Jesus. But where atonement in the Old Testament was undertaken through sacrifice by the high priest, in the New Testament Jesus – himself described as a 'great high priest' (Hebrews 4:14) – undertook the atonement not 'by means of the blood of goats and calves' but 'by his own blood, thus obtaining an eternal redemption' (Hebrews 9:12), 'for all time one sacrifice for sins' (Hebrews 10:12).

Jesus' death on the cross was about both dealing with sin and ushering in 'his kingdom come' on earth. Paul interprets the death of Jesus in a multifaceted way, including this perspective:

'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' (Colossians 1:19–20)

So for Christians, the death of Christ is a decisive moment in the reconciliation of creator, humanity and creation. As NT Wright puts it, 'Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonise earth with the life of heaven.'¹⁰⁶ Jesus' ascension was understood by early Christians as a reversal of the fall from Eden, with 'Adam restored to his intended place, enthroned again above the angels'.¹⁰⁷

The early Christians also understood that they shared in the process of sacrifice and restoration. They saw themselves as priests but, in their case, death was not part of the sacrifice. Rather, Christians were enjoined by Paul to be 'a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God' (Romans 12:1). Their bodies were 'not your own; you were bought at a price' (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Instead, Christians' bodies were 'temples' (1 Corinthians 6:19) – which is to say, 'places where heaven and earth meet'.¹⁰⁸

This approach to life is what Tearfund calls 'integral mission'. It sees all of life as an act of worship, 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.

This is important because the restoration of all creation is intricately tied up with the restoration of human beings.

In a crucial passage in Romans, Paul describes how,

'The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God... in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. (Romans 8:19–22, ESV)'

As Leon Morris comments, Paul looks forward to a time when the total effect of sin will be done away with and creation will stand forth in all its glory as God intends it to be.¹⁰⁹ In the final verses of the book of Revelation, we are given a glimpse, albeit in poetic form, of atonement completed, and the consummation of human history. One image is of a heavenly city coming down out of heaven to a restored earth, with the tree of the life from the Garden of Eden at its heart. God himself is present in the city with his people and God's radiance means there is no longer any need for the sun.

We catch a glimpse here of the reconciliation of all things: God's kingdom on earth, 'thy kingdom come'. God's intimate and personal contact with his people in a heavenly city speaks of a reconciled community, and the restored creation within which this city is located speaks of the completion of the *shalom* that was intended in creation and damaged by the fall. This image of the victory of God's purposes – an apocalypse in the strict sense of being a revelation in which things are made clear – is a deeply sustaining vision. It is a vision that can empower our participation now with God in bringing to our all-too-often fractured, unjust and unequal world a taste of what is to come.

Yet, as we'll see in a moment, the work of restoration to which we are called is also a very practical, hands-on affair – one that's *profoundly* concerned with how we organise our economy, and above all how the operation of the economy impacts on inequality, poor communities and the environment.

Jubilees, sabbaths and the restorative economy

The celebrated Old Testament idea of jubilee was inextricably bound up with atonement – so much so that it can best be understood as the political and economic expression of atonement in practice. Jubilees, and the closely linked idea of sabbaths (every seven days, and every seven years), set out concrete procedures for how to correct economic, social and environmental imbalances – in effect, setting out an instruction manual for how to build and maintain a *restorative economy*.

The idea of sabbath was inextricably linked with creation and the creation covenant. Every seventh day, humans were to rest and enjoy creation – just as God had done when he finished creating the world. Sabbaths were about recognising the *sufficiency* of creation, and all the abundance in it: enough was enough. Former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explains the relevance of sabbath today:

*'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 commercialisation and commodification.'*¹¹⁰

Every seventh year was a sabbath year – a time of environmental restoration and 'solemn rest for the land' (Leviticus 25:4, ESV). No crops were sown; instead, people lived off what the land produced naturally. The land needed time to lie fallow in order to maintain its fertility. As Old Testament scholar Chris Wright says, '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.'¹¹¹

“Integral mission sees all of life as an act of worship, including how we consume, work and contribute to our community”

Sabbath years were also deeply concerned with family, friendship and social as well as environmental restoration.

The fact that land was to be left uncultivated for a year meant that every seven years saw 'enforced rest for everyone, including the servants [and] hired workers... for a whole year' – hence the word 'sabbatical'.¹¹² Instead, people were to return home, rest and spend time with friends, family and the communities from which they first came.

Sabbath years also entailed cancellation of debts and the release of slaves and indentured labourers (Deuteronomy 15:1–2). Exodus 22 also forbade lending of money to poor people at interest: 'If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest' (Exodus 22:25).

Every seventh sabbath year (ie every 49 or 50 years) was a jubilee year, when land ownership would be 'reset'.

Proclaimed on the Day of Atonement, jubilees were – like sabbath years – times of rest for people and for the land, for debts to be cancelled and for slaves to be freed.

Uniquely though, jubilee years also involved a reset of land ownership, with houses and fields returned to their original owners (Leviticus 25:23–24). Underlying this rule were a number of key principles:

- First, **creation belonged to God, not humans**. As Psalm 24 puts it, 'The earth is the LORD's and everything in it' (Psalm 24:1). Humans could, in effect, lease land for up to half a century – but they could not own it outright.
- Second, the timing of jubilee years every half-century **prevented wealth inequality from building up over generations**. Land ownership was reset to its initial, per capita distribution: for as business leader and Christian author Kim Tan explains, 'When the nation of Israel entered the Promised Land, the country was divided up in an equitable manner. The territories were divided up in proportion to the size of the tribes.'¹¹³
- And third, **this provided equality of opportunity**. As Kim Tan puts it, the idea of a jubilee was that 'every fifty years each family [would have] an opportunity to start afresh – free of debt and in possession of their own land'.¹¹⁴

The rules in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy about sabbaths, jubilees and tithing all showed God's profound concern for justice and kindness – which, as we saw earlier, were crucial means of upholding and protecting relationships between God and humanity, humanity and the creation, and between humans themselves.

- Rules on tithing in every third year required people to give a tenth of their produce not only to the priests but also to 'the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows' (Deuteronomy 14:28–29).

- Farmers were to leave some of the harvest aside for the poor: 'Do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor' (Leviticus 19:9–10).
- Exodus states explicitly that food produced by land lying fallow during sabbath years was for the poor (Exodus 23:11).
- Above all, as long as the rules for sabbath were followed correctly, then poverty would not exist: 'There will be no poor among you' (Deuteronomy 15:4, ESV).

Failure to observe jubilees properly led to jubilees imposing themselves. Jeremiah records with appalled contempt how, in a jubilee year, the Hebrew aristocracy freed their slaves but then promptly re-enslaved them. The result: they were punished by being enslaved themselves in Babylon (Jeremiah 34:11–18). Meanwhile, the book of Chronicles continues, Israel's exile meant that the land could at last enjoy its long overdue rest. 'The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed' (2 Chronicles 36:21).

Jesus and jubilee

Jesus described his mission in explicitly jubilee terms. In his first speech, at the very beginning of his work, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour' (Isaiah 61:1–2) – before concluding, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (Luke 4:21). The 'year of the LORD's favour' was a direct reference to the idea of jubilee, and of proclaiming freedom and release.¹¹⁵

Jesus' death and resurrection begin the ultimate jubilee in which all things can be released and restored – starting with us – and his life and words show what this restoration looks like. He calls us to a radically different way of living, taking the Old Testament teaching to a whole new level: 'You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I tell you, love your enemies' (Matthew 5:43–44).

But the New Testament also shows Jesus' concern for embedding jubilee principles on an ongoing basis, to prevent imbalances building up in the first place. There are instances that act as a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God, examples of *shalom*. For example, after Pentecost there was a brief period in which the church demonstrated a form of community life in which 'all believers were together and had everything in common' (Acts 2:44) and 'there was no needy person 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 4:34–35).

Jesus also encourages a much more radical approach to wealth, lending and generosity, recognising that fullness of life comes through restored relationships (*šalom* again), not possessions. 'If you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?... But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great' (Luke 6:34–35). And to some, Jesus even gave the call: 'Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me' (Luke 18:22).

21st-century restoration

As Margaret Barker puts it, **the Bible has a 'beautiful and sophisticated account of the creation and the role of human beings within it. It is, in a very real way, a theory of everything: politics, economics, social cohesion, justice, the integrity and the security of the creation.'**¹¹⁶ In this chapter, we've seen how:

- God's intention for creation includes a powerful emphasis on humans' role to show steadfast love for God and each other, and care for God's creation as part of an interconnected set of *šalom* relationships.
- Maintaining these multifaceted relationships between God, humanity and creation involves living by divine wisdom, a sacred form of knowledge that allows humans to live in correct relationship with both God and creation.
- On the other hand, breaking relationship with God – for example, through idolatry, injustice or ignorance – would lead to catastrophic consequences for humanity and creation.
- But relationship with God, humanity and creation can be repaired through atonement. Jesus' self-sacrifice deals with the consequences of our mistakes and provides access again to heaven's life and wisdom and makes restoration possible, with Christians participating through being 'living sacrifices', willing to give freely of themselves.
- Jubilee was a practical political, economic and social expression of atonement. In the Old Testament, this was expressed through periodic 'reset' moments for the economy involving debt cancellation, freeing slaves, giving to those in need, land returning to its original egalitarian distribution, and years in which God's creation could rest.
- In the New Testament, on the other hand, Jesus was concerned with embedding jubilee principles on an *ongoing* basis – above all through his commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31), but also through his teaching that 'you cannot serve both God and money' (Matthew 6:24).

At the end of Chapter 2, we argued that we need resonant stories to orientate ourselves in the 21st century, navigate the choppy water ahead of us and build the shared sense of purpose that can mobilise an effective movement for change. And we said that these stories will need to stress three key ideas: **a larger us, a longer future and a better 'good life'**.

We think that the theological ideas we have explored in this chapter – which are rooted in the grand biblical story of salvation itself – stress exactly these three ideas.

We believe that, just as the biblical idea of jubilee catalysed a world-changing mobilisation of ordinary people with big ideas in 2000, these ideas have extraordinary potential to drive change for the better today too. So what needs to happen now?

In essence, we think a 21st-century understanding of jubilee principles leads us to the idea of a restorative economy.

We need an economy that restores and safeguards God's covenant of peace – through justice, care for creation, healthy relationships, wisdom, balance and human flourishing – rather than breaking it.

In practice, we believe this economy would meet three objectives:

- First, **it would live within environmental limits** (the critical thresholds we described in Chapter 1) – ensuring that our economy works with, rather than against, the creation that God has given us. In keeping with Psalm 24, we believe that the abundance of the earth belongs to *all* of us, and ultimately to God. And that comes with responsibilities both to steward it carefully, but also to share the proceeds of that natural wealth *fairly*, just as jubilees reset land ownership on an equal per capita basis.
- Second, it would **ensure that everyone was able to meet their basic needs** – providing an enabling environment and basic floor of economic security and protection to each and every one of the world's 7 billion people, as a foundation for human flourishing and all people being able to realise their potential.
- Third, it would **keep inequality within reasonable limits** – including both income inequality and wealth inequality, at both national and international levels, and with particular attention to wealth that has been inherited from God rather than earned – for the reasons we set out in Chapter 1.

More broadly, a **restorative economy** will depend on restorative living – with all of society engaged in repairing creation, using opportunities to be producers rather than just passive consumers, building resilient communities that are creative and fun to be part of, and restoring bonds of fellowship and friendship.

4: THE RESTORATIVE ECONOMY



A restorative economy would ensure that everyone was able to meet their basic needs. Photo: Cally Spittle/Tearfund

What would a restorative economy look like?

At the end of Chapter 3, we outlined how a 21st-century application of the biblical idea of jubilee would help to build a restorative economy that would have three key features, and allow all of us to engage in restorative living:

- First, **it would ensure we live within environmental limits**
- Second, **it would ensure that everyone was able to meet their basic needs**
- Third, **it would keep inequality within reasonable limits**
- Dramatic changes in **policy** at both national and global level – including both what the law allows (in terms of legislation and how it's enforced), and what the economy incentivises (how prices, taxes and information affect patterns of spending, investment and so on)

To bring about a real transformation towards a restorative economy along these lines, we'll need to see two types of change:

- A dramatic shift in the **values and social norms** that underpin and govern our society's behaviour, and define the boundaries of the politically possible within which governments and politicians operate

In Chapter 2, we described why movements are crucial to bringing about these changes. In this final chapter, we begin by saying a little more about the three defining features of a restorative economy, before **describing five ways in which we – as a movement – can personify the changes that we want to see**. Then, finally, we set out **ten big policy ideas to take us towards a restorative economy**.

Living within environmental limits

In Chapter 3, we saw how the linked ideas of jubilee and sabbath were strongly concerned with conserving the environment and giving God's creation time to rest. The first thing a restorative economy would do, then, is conserve our environment and work actively to repair it when it has been damaged or degraded – based on the recognition that a healthy creation is the basis for every other aspect of life. A restorative economy would recognise that we ourselves are *part of* creation, not separate from it; that we rely on it for every aspect of our lives without exception; and that caring for it is part of what we are here to do. In practice, we think this means that we have to shift to a 'zero-carbon' economy, with global emissions peaking well before 2020 and developed country emissions falling to zero before 2050; we need to shift to a circular, rather than linear, materials economy, in which *everything* gets reused or recycled and nothing goes to waste, exactly as happens in nature; and we need a new Green Revolution in the way we grow our food, making agriculture twice as productive but half as resource intensive.

A 'zero-carbon' economy is not only essential for stabilising levels of greenhouse gases in the air, but would also reduce ocean acidification and pollution, with huge knock-on effects in reducing the rate at which we are causing other species to become extinct. In practice, we believe that global average warming should be limited to a maximum of 1.5°C (but in the sections that follow we sometimes quote data on what it would take to limit warming to 2°C, as this is the current agreed UN target and the basis of most available data).

A circular economy, meanwhile, would ensure that everything is re-used and recycled, and that future economic growth arises from being more productive with fewer natural resources (rather than using an increasing amount of them).^{*} It would also apply the same logic to how we produce and consume our food, by searching out ways to make agriculture more productive and less resource intensive – reducing pressure on water, energy, land and biodiversity – as well as drastically cutting down how much food is wasted.

A 21st-century Green Revolution, finally, would aim to repeat the successes of the 20th-century Green Revolution in producing much more food – which is needed to feed the world's growing population, and to meet growing demand for a global shift towards 'Western diets'. But it would do this in a way that uses less water, less land for each tonne of crops, and less energy and fertiliser. In particular, this new Green Revolution will need to take place in Africa, which has far lower crop yields than the global average, and could become a new breadbasket for the world if the right kind of policies were put in place.

Our approach to living within environmental limits is based on our belief that, **while we aren't facing limits to economic growth per se, we are facing limits to the sustainable use of various key resources.** So we do need to consume less, both globally and (especially) in developed countries, and be *much* more efficient with what we do use. At the same time, as we set out in Chapter 3, **we firmly believe that the abundance of the earth belongs to all of us, and ultimately to God. Natural wealth that's been given to us by God** – land, water, oil, minerals, oceans, the atmosphere – is not something we've *earned*; it's something we've *inherited*. So we have a responsibility to steward it carefully, and to share it *fairly* – just as jubilees reset land ownership on an equal per capita basis.

Ensuring that everyone can meet their basic needs

Ensuring a basic floor of economic security and protection as a foundation for God's plan of human flourishing was another key concern for sabbath years and jubilees, with their rules about setting aside a share of crops for poor people and not profiting from people living in poverty by putting up prices for basic goods or lending them money at usurious rates of interest.

In our own times, meeting everyone's basic needs has to start with ending absolute poverty – but it can't end there. Instead, this has to be a *universal* agenda that applies to people in developing and developed countries alike. While the income needed to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare, education, energy, clean water and housing clearly varies from one country to another, the bottom line is that we believe every person on earth should have enough for a life with dignity.

Looking at the progress of recent decades, it's clear that markets are crucial to meeting these needs. The explosive growth of emerging economies over the past two decades has been due to *markets*, not to aid – with investment from both domestic savings and foreign investors, remittances from workers overseas (now worth three times as much as aid) and above all trade. So governments need to put in place the right enabling environment: no one above the law, contracts enforced, impartial courts, customs systems that work, educated workforces, dependable infrastructure, from roads to internet connection, and so on.

But, left to their own devices, markets won't necessarily provide living wages or affordable basic goods – and can result in poor people being exploited, which was forbidden under the jubilee system. In these instances, we think there's a case for policy to address market failures and for public funding to plug the gaps. Successful countries have done exactly this: using policy to design markets intelligently, fund basic services and provide a social safety net available to all.

“While we aren't facing limits to economic growth per se, we are facing limits to the sustainable use of various key resources”

^{*}GDP (which is what economic growth is based on) is a measure of the monetary value of an economy's production, not a physical measure of the amount of stuff or pollution an economy produces, or the resources it uses. This is a key distinction: it is possible to increase monetary value while reducing resource use, by increasing the efficiency with which these resources are used.

There are also special cases where different kinds of policy interventions are needed. For example, by 2030, most of the world's poor people will live in fragile states (or parts of states)¹¹⁷ – a category that will include almost all of the world's dwindling number of low-income countries, but also a surprising number of regions within middle-income countries facing problems ranging from rural insurgencies to endemic urban violence that blurs the line between organised crime and conflict.¹¹⁸

Keeping inequality within reasonable limits

Third, we believe that a restorative economy would keep inequality within reasonable limits. Given our starting point, that all 7 billion of us are made in God's image, we look at inequality as a *global* issue – not as something that's only of concern within individual countries. Just because the world's poorest and richest families may live on opposite sides of the world doesn't mean that the gulf between their life chances matters any less.¹¹⁹

But we also think that the best way to do something about inequality is to look at it on two levels: inequality between countries, and inequality within countries. As we saw in Chapter 1, while inequality between countries (as measured by their GDP per capita) has been falling in recent decades, it has been rising *within* most countries. But there are exceptions.

A growing number of countries have shown that sustained action to tackle inequality can go hand in hand with strong economic performance, from developed countries such as Denmark or Norway to emerging economies such as Brazil which has recognised the challenge of high inequality and started to take serious steps to tackle it. In practice, we think a good benchmark for the UK to aim for would be the kind of low inequality levels that we see in countries such as Denmark (which has a Gini score¹²⁰ of 24 per cent, on a scale where 0 per cent is perfect equality and 100 per cent is absolute inequality), Sweden (25 per cent) or Norway (26 per cent) – as compared to 34 per cent in Britain, 42 per cent in China, 48 per cent in the United States or 63 per cent in South Africa.¹²¹

But we think that preventing the build-up of excessive concentrations of wealth across generations (as well as income inequality) is important too – an area in which the Bible has a lot to say, especially in jubilees' emphasis on the need for resets in land ownership every half-century. As Chapter 3 sets out, a reset in land ownership was, in the agrarian context of the time, effectively the same as a reset of wealth ownership more broadly. And the fact that this was supposed to happen every 50 years shows **a clear concern for ensuring that inequalities did not build up over the course of successive generations.**

At the same time, as noted earlier, the fact that land was to be reset back to its original distribution at the time when the Israelites entered the Promised Land – with land allocated in proportion to each tribe's population – shows how **natural assets such as land were understood as a common inheritance that all should share in equally because these assets belonged to God.**

And in the New Testament, too, we find strong emphasis on equality. Acts 2:44–45, for instance, says: 'All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.' 2 Corinthians 8:13–14, meanwhile, says: '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.'

Supporting all of us in living restoratively

Finally, it's worth noting that sabbath years (and therefore also jubilees) placed strong emphasis on rest, friendship, family and restoration in a social as well as an environmental sense. We saw in Chapter 3 that sabbath years were times of rest for people as well as for the land, when everyone – including servants and indentured labourers – would return home to rest among their families and communities. Jesus too promised his followers that 'I will give you rest' and that in him 'you will find rest for your souls' (Matthew 11:28–29), calling himself 'lord of the Sabbath' (Matthew 12:8; Luke 6:5).

In our own times, we suffer from a paradox: some of us are rich in money but poor in how much time we have available for our families and friends, while others have too much time and too little money to meet their basic needs (and some of us have neither enough money, nor enough time for our families).

In a truly restorative economy, all of us would have enough time to observe sabbath principles in a modern setting: to rest, learn, grow; to take time for ourselves, make time to care for and nurture our relationships with those closest to us, and give our time away in helping our communities and the 'least of these' (Matthew 25:40).

A lifestyle consistent with our values

So what role can each of us play in changing the political context within which our policy-makers operate, helping to transform values in wider society and raising our voices to demand transformational changes?

As we set out in Chapter 2, we believe that **transformative change will not occur without a movement** that embodies the changes it is calling for. A movement that lives differently, that demonstrates real seriousness of intent and that creates a 'congregational network'* so that members know that they are not alone in taking action.

Many of the changes needed involve sacrifice – but also, paradoxically, offer us the chance to live more fully. They require us to reject conformity with the lifestyle patterns around us and blaze a new trail. To raise our voices in witness to the injustices and breaches of right relationship with God, creation and each other that we see all around us – and to live out a fresh approach. To embrace the calling to imbue our actions and words with real prophetic power that challenges the status quo.

In practice, we think there are five areas that each of us needs to think about, which we describe in more detail below:

1. Live within our fair share of the world's resources and environmental limits
2. Respond to poverty and inequality with radical generosity
3. Speak out prophetically
4. Use our power as a voter, a citizen and a consumer
5. Live restoratively and prioritise relationships

Our aim in choosing these five areas, and within each area the specific examples highlighted below, is to **identify those that make a big contribution in their own right, but also demonstrate our core values and challenge conventional norms regarding behaviour**. This means choosing areas that are totemic, in the sense that they send a powerful signal about the need for system-wide change, both to politicians and to those in our families, social circles, workplaces and communities.

We are the first to admit that Tearfund has much to do in each of these areas, both corporately and as individuals. But we want to be part of the movement we have described, which is why we are committed to doing more. And in so doing we hope to inspire many others to take up the same challenge.

“Many of the changes needed involve sacrifice – but also, paradoxically, offer us the chance to live more fully”

*The phrase refers to community groups, schools, trade unions and so on, as well as churches and religious communities. Credit for this phrase goes to Tim Jackson and Ian Christie at Surrey University.

1. Live within our fair share of the world's resources and environmental limits

In Chapter 1, we used the concept of an 'ecological footprint' to show how different countries are currently consuming more than their fair share of resources and environmental space. The same concept can also be used at an individual or household level, where your footprint is a measure of the total amount of land that it takes to sustain your consumption levels: to grow your food, soak up your emissions, provide your water, and so on.

Part of the reason we like the idea of ecological footprints is that they leave each of us to decide how to use our 'fair share' of resources and environmental space, rather than being rigidly prescriptive. We'll all need to make a number of different changes, but one person might decide to start by changing their diet in order to reduce their overall level of resource use; another might make different choices about how to get to work; and someone else might make changes in their home, for instance to increase energy efficiency or reduce waste. (And as we'll see later, the same principle can apply at country level too, with governments simply putting a price on carbon and leaving the rest to markets, companies and individuals, rather than micro-managing their decisions for them.)

In practice, your ecological footprint is determined by your choices in four areas: food, travel, home and 'stuff'.¹²² Below, we identify some of the main ways in which you can reduce this footprint:

- **Food.** Everything we eat has been produced using land, water and other inputs such as fertilisers and fuel (to transport it to our tables). Some types of food are more resource intensive than others, with **meat and dairy often the most intensive**, including in terms of their greenhouse gas emissions. Cutting down on these types of food – and **crucially, wasting less** – will help leave more 'environmental space' for others around the world, and keep food prices within reach of poor consumers. (Almost half of the 15 million tonnes of food thrown away in Britain each year comes from households.)¹²³

- **Travel.** This relates to whether you drive a car, how far you drive and your car's engine size and fuel type; how much you use trains or buses, or whether you cycle or walk instead; and – above all – how many flights you take. A single return economy class flight from London to New York emits more than half of one person's annual sustainable carbon allowance, at the equivalent of 1.06 tonnes of CO² per passenger.¹²⁴ **So flying less is one of the single biggest steps you can take towards reducing your carbon footprint**, and it's also one of the strongest ways of sending a message to friends, family and colleagues that you think climate change is real and urgent, and that you're willing to make sacrifices to help stop it.
- **Home.** Here, the biggest variable is how much energy you use – and where that energy comes from. A huge part of tackling climate change is de-carbonising our electricity system, so if you **switch to a renewable energy supplier**, especially one that promises to use your custom to invest in new renewable-generating capacity, then this transforms your electricity use from being part of the problem into part of the solution.

Of course, for many of us, electricity does not heat our homes or provide hot water: we rely on gas or heating oil instead. This is why it is also important to think about **energy efficiency measures** such as insulation, condensing boilers and double glazing. You can also consider **generating renewable energy yourself, from ground or air source heat pumps, a wood-fired boiler (or stoves), or solar water heating**: government grants are available in many cases, sometimes worth thousands of pounds.

Community-led renewable energy

We're inspired by the Westmill Cooperative in Oxfordshire, Britain's first onshore community windfarm – a great example of ordinary people working together to bring about positive change. It is funded by more than 2,000 local shareholders and operates five 1.2MW wind turbines – enough to power 4,000 homes. The cooperative's next project is to set up a community-owned solar farm.¹²⁵

- **Stuff.** This word covers everything from purchases of goods (especially big ticket items such as furniture, white goods, electronics and clothes) through to recycling and composting. Reducing your footprint in this area requires a change of mindset: we need to distinguish ourselves from a culture that says 'we are what we buy' and instead consume less. For example, although turning off the tap while you brush your teeth might save a litre or two of water, choosing not to buy a t-shirt will save 2,500 litres, the amount needed to grow the cotton to create the shirt.¹²⁶

Steps to reduce your waste

We've been struck by the enthusiasm and advice given by pioneers such as Bea Johnson, author of the 'Zero waste home' blog. Bea has been interviewed by media including CNN, the BBC, *The New York Times* and *People* magazine.¹²⁷ She and her family have now more or less eradicated waste (and thus excessive dependence on 'stuff') from their lives – to the extent that her family's entire waste for each of the last four years has fitted into a single large Kilner jar. Her core advice is: 'Get your 5Rs right: Refuse what you do not need, Reduce what you do need, Reuse what you consume, Recycle what you cannot Refuse, Reduce or Reuse, and Rot (compost) the rest.'¹²⁸

Karen Cannard, meanwhile, has developed The Rubbish Diet, a four-week programme that takes ordinary households through a step-by-step programme to reduce the amount they throw away. The programme borrows ideas and language from familiar slimming clubs, with people setting themselves a target and making small changes towards 'slimming their bin'. Each week there is a new challenge, from finding out what can be recycled locally, to cutting out food waste, to a final challenge week where the aim is to throw away as little as possible. Eight weeks after Karen began the challenge with her own family, she had got so close to zero waste that all she had to put out for the refuse collection was a single plaster!

As Bea Johnson sets out on her blog, shifting to a lower-impact lifestyle is not some 'hair shirt' existence of doing without – on the contrary, **living more lightly can build a better quality of life.** It can save money, improve health, build a sense of satisfaction and purpose and above all provide a liberating release from the rat race and 'keeping up with the Joneses'.

Taking the actions recommended above would go a long way to help shrink your personal carbon footprint. Knowing the size of your current footprint can be a strong motivator too. Comprehensive ecological footprint calculators are still being developed, but a carbon calculator is a good place to start. To calculate the climate change-related aspects of your personal footprint – and get a personalised action plan for how to improve it – we recommend the calculator at carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx

“ A single return economy class flight from London to New York emits more than half of one person's annual sustainable carbon allowance ”

2. Respond to poverty and inequality with radical generosity

While many people don't earn enough to make ends meet or to be able to support their families, many of us are fortunate enough to earn or own more than we really need for the essentials of life. Many people already tithe (ie give away a tenth of their income) – including many Christians, given tithing's clear biblical basis (eg Numbers 18:30, Deuteronomy 14:23 and Deuteronomy 26:12–14); the practice is also growing in popularity more broadly as a basis for charitable giving.

Ultimately, though, we think we should aspire to a higher standard than just tithing. Jesus commends the widow in Mark 12:41–44 not because of how much she gives in absolute terms, but because what she gives *is such a high proportion of her income*. In Matthew 23:23, he observes that while the Pharisees do tithe, they have 'neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness'. Throughout the gospels, Jesus insists that 'life does not consist in an abundance of possessions' (Luke 12:15) and encourages radical generosity. So while we strongly support tithing, we would ultimately argue that each of us should work towards a higher standard, even giving away all income above the level that we actually need.

John Wesley (who famously preached, 'Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can') provides us with a compelling example. His biographer Richard Watson writes, 'When he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year, he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two... He gained all he could by his publications, and saved all he could, not wasting as much as a sheet of paper; yet by giving all he could, he was preserved from laying up treasures upon earth.'¹²⁹

With wealth comes responsibility: as Jesus says, 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded' (Luke 12:48). Each of us has both the privilege and the responsibility of deciding where to direct the money that we have. Clearly, managing our resources wisely – saving for the future, and looking after our families and those closest to us – is a crucially important part of this responsibility and it also extends to our giving. We think it's essential that we consider carefully where our giving is directed, ensuring that it makes as large a contribution as possible to addressing the problems identified in this report.

Finally, generosity and being responsible with our wealth means paying our taxes in full. In this paper we have argued that the state should provide a safety net for those who, for whatever reason, find themselves in need. This is only possible if individuals and corporations are committed to paying their fair share of tax, rather than doing all they can to evade tax. On the same basis, we might consider boycotting businesses which avoid paying their fair share of tax (see also next section).

3. Speak out prophetically

Previous movements marched, sang and opted out of systems that they felt embodied the injustice they were fighting – from the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 and 1956, to the refusal of Gandhi's followers to pay the stringent British salt tax. This is a tradition stretching right back to the furious denunciations of injustice by Old Testament prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah. It's one that is alive and well in Jesus' ministry too, for example when he turns the money-changers out of the temple (Matthew 21:12).

The theologian Walter Wink argues that Jesus also teaches a way of prophetic protest when he tells his disciples, '**Do not resist the one who is evil' (Matthew 5:39)**. Wink observes: 'Jesus is urging us to transcend both passivity and violence by finding a third way, one that is at once assertive and yet nonviolent.' Similarly, Wink continues, Jesus' injunction in the same chapter of Matthew, 'If anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well' (Matthew 5:40, ESV), was advice to impoverished debtors 'who have nothing left but the clothes on their backs, to use the system against itself' to expose injustice.

In this example, the protest takes advantage of the fact that nakedness was taboo in Judaism, as Wink explains: 'Shame fell less on the naked party than on the person viewing or causing the nakedness (Gen. 9:20-27)...[thus by allowing the creditor to take all he has,] the debtor has brought shame on the creditor... Imagine the guffaws this saying must have evoked. There stands the creditor, covered with shame, the poor debtor's outer garment in the one hand, his undergarment in the other.'¹³⁰

Christians have often been adept at harnessing the power of protest and political theatre in our own times. For example, Christians have helped force issues such as developing world debt relief onto the political agenda, have been at the forefront of 'shareholder activism' (including taking action against a payday lender), have used boycotts to protest against companies, and have used worship as a form of protest or silent witness against injustice.

4. Use our power as a voter, a citizen and a consumer

In Chapter 2, we said that one of the key determinants of a movement's success is clear and actionable demands that can be used to bring influence to bear on the ballot box. So we think that, if individuals are to bring about the transformational change that is the aspiration of this report, they need to work towards having a clear, succinct list of policy asks that they can use to gauge political parties and present to politicians as the price of their support at election time.

“Christians have often been adept at harnessing the power of protest”

For that to happen, we need to mobilise, first by having conversations in churches, kitchens, cafes, schools and workplaces all over the country. As we set out earlier, we hope these five lifestyle changes and the ten examples of transformational policy ideas presented in this report (see page 37) will help to stimulate those conversations – but the bottom line is that any movement for a restorative economy will need to decide its own priorities collectively.

Politicians often assume, on the basis of polls, focus groups and so on, that most of us vote on the grounds of narrow economic self-interest. But if a sufficient critical mass of people are vocal and visible in demonstrating that this isn't the case, and that there *is* real demand for a restorative economy that lives within environmental limits, allows everyone to meet their basic needs and keeps inequality within limits, then change *will* follow.

At the same time, there's much that we can achieve through the power we exert when we make decisions about what to buy and how to invest. Many companies are increasingly focused on reputational issues. Given their own power as purchasers, they themselves are increasingly able to drive change throughout supply chains – if they perceive that there is strong demand for it from their consumers. So buying ethically does matter – from Fairtrade-approved items such as coffee or chocolate, to environmentally certified goods such as Marine Stewardship Council-approved fish or Forest Stewardship Council-accredited wood and timber.

Socially responsible investment, meanwhile, is also becoming increasingly significant. In the United States, for example, total assets in 'socially screened' portfolios were worth \$5.67 trillion at the start of 2014 – a 76 per cent increase since 2012. One in six dollars under professional management in the US is now involved in socially responsible investing.¹³¹

We think that there's particular potential for Christians to build on this by leading the charge on pushing our pension fund managers to pull out of fossil fuel investments.

You can start by writing to your pension fund manager and asking how much of your pension is invested in coal, oil and other fossil fuels, and how much is invested in renewables, as this information is not always publicly available.

5. Live restoratively and prioritise relationships

Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, we must each do all we can to restore the broken relationships we see around us. In his book, *Walking with the poor*, experienced development practitioner Bryant Myers talks about the deepest form of poverty being not lack of money, but a distorted sense of identity – about how people living in poverty come to see themselves.¹³² This often results from the daily grind of material poverty, but is not solved through giving money. It requires *relationship*.

This form of poverty is not limited to poor countries: it is also found right on our doorsteps. But the reality is that many of our day-to-day interactions with those who need help do more to reinforce broken identities than restore them. Instead, we need to see these interactions as opportunities to affirm the dignity of someone who is made in the image of God, and is thus worthy of the same level of respect, dignity and love.

Truly transformational development should restore the identities of both giver and receiver. As Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche Communities – a global federation of homes, programmes and support networks involving people who have learning disabilities – asserts, 'The strong need the weak',¹³³ as much as vice versa. For example, many of the so-called 'weak'¹³⁴ have much to teach the 'strong' about vulnerability, love and 'finding strength in weakness'.

Some of us have spare time, and we can use this to huge restorative effect by volunteering – as foster parents, as mentors for young people, as friends for lonely older people, as advisers at Citizens' Advice Bureaux, as helpers for newly arrived refugees, or in thousands of other ways in which we can become the 'living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) that God wants us to be.

“If a sufficient critical mass of people demonstrate that there is real demand for a restorative economy, then change will follow”

Ten transformative policy ideas for a restorative economy

Finally, and with the concepts set out in the last section very much in mind, we'd like to set out ten big, transformative policy ideas of the kind that we think could help to bring about a restorative economy in line with jubilee principles. Our biggest hope in writing this report is that this long-awaited conversation begins in earnest and that we start to see what we're capable of when we work together and dream big. We are less concerned about which of our ideas a restorative economy movement might adopt.

While we recognise that shifting to a restorative economy has to be a worldwide undertaking, our main focus here is on what we can do in the UK – whether in how we organise our own economy, or in how we address our global impacts (for both good and ill), or in ways that the UK can lead internationally.

We believe that markets and the private sector are crucial parts of the solution. Already, many companies are discovering the huge economic potential of shifting to 'eco-efficient' ways of doing business, or of tailoring products to poor consumers (or indeed involving them as small producers in global supply chains).

Our main focus here, though, is on where we need to change *how* markets work. In some cases, this is about changing incentives, or making sure prices tell the truth about environmental impacts, so as to enlist markets' formidable power in solving today's global problems. In other cases – financing healthcare and education provision for the poorest people, for instance – it's about recognising that government has a key role to play. In every case, though, there's an underlying belief that partnership between the public and private sectors needs to be a guiding principle, with each recognising the indispensable role of the other.

The ideas set out below are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a first attempt to begin mapping out some of the major shifts that governments need to make as we work towards a restorative economy. Some are very ambitious, and some are new, but many build on existing best practice from around the world. Many require further detailed analysis. And as with any policy ideas, we recognise that there would be unintended consequences to work through. But we think all of them can help to address what we think is an unmet demand for big ideas, and we think all of them are worthy of careful consideration.

Before we look at them in detail, here are our ten ideas in outline:

- 1. Create a circular economy** – through powerful incentives for resource efficiency and ensuring that nothing goes to landfill and that instead everything is reused over and over again, in keeping with God's design principles in nature.
- 2. Double food production and halve resource intensity with a 21st-century Green Revolution** – above all in Africa, where crop yields are far lower than the rest of the world – by making the sustainable increase of agricultural productivity a top priority in Britain's international aid programme.
- 3. Accelerate the shift to a 'zero-carbon' economy** – in particular by banning coal-fired power generation by the early 2020s, ending fossil fuel subsidies including the reduced rate of VAT for electricity and gas, and introducing mandatory carbon stress-testing for pension funds and institutional investors.
- 4. Agree a carbon jubilee** by defining a safe global emissions budget that keeps the world to 1.5°C of warming. This budget should be shared between countries in proportion to their populations, on a per capita basis – recognising that the sky belongs to God, not us, and that this would create a major new source of development finance – from trade, not aid.
- 5. Allow poor people everywhere to meet their basic needs by introducing a global social protection floor**, including healthcare, education, nutrition and basic income security. In the case of the poorest or most fragile countries, the funding for this will need to be raised internationally.
- 6. Make the UK a world leader in ensuring markets work for poor people around the world.** While retaining the UK's commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of national income on aid, buttress this with a stronger focus on helping developing countries create environments in which the private sector can flourish.
- 7. Go much further in tackling international tax avoidance** – increasing developing countries' capacity to finance their own development from their own tax revenue, and doing much more to help them recover stolen assets from abroad.
- 8. Adopt a jubilee stance on inequality**, by implementing measures that give modern-day expression to the principles behind the jubilee reset of land ownership. For example, this could be through stronger and fairer taxation of property (via a land value tax) and of wealth transfers (via replacing traditional inheritance tax with a wealth receipts tax).
- 9. Ensure that the financial sector contributes to shared prosperity – and doesn't jeopardise it.** In particular, we need to reduce the capacity for unsustainable levels of debt (or leverage) to build up, for example by radically raising reserve requirements for banks, or creating a new maximum leverage target for the financial system as a whole.
- 10. Rebalance the tax system in line with jubilee principles**, by shifting more of the burden of taxation onto activities we want to *discourage* (such as carbon emissions, pollution, waste or the excessive concentration of wealth), and away from those activities we want to encourage (such as work).

We now look at each of these ten ideas in a little more detail.

1. Create a circular economy

Every time we throw something away, we're in effect also throwing away the energy, materials and water used in its manufacture (not to mention the pollution involved).

But if these products, or their components, are reused and remanufactured, then that's no longer the case. For example, by reusing steel from ships being decommissioned, each new container ship commissioned by shipping company Maersk saves 60,000 tonnes of steel – together with all the energy, water and pollution involved in mining iron ore and then smelting it.¹³⁵ A circular economy would unlock huge improvements in 'eco-efficiency' and help shift us to a zero-waste model, as well as reducing pollution.

If we want to ensure that products are designed for the long run instead of planned obsolescence, so they are easy to repair, reuse and recycle, and never end up in landfill, then we need a circular economy. Other countries have made impressive progress already: since 2000, Japan has achieved this through a law requiring manufacturers to run disassembly plants, thanks to which 98 per cent of metals are now recovered.¹³⁶

In practice, **circular economy legislation in the UK could aim to do six things:**

- It could encourage circular business models by **eliminating regulatory obstacles** – for example, at present re-manufactured products can face different tariffs and cannot be sold on the same terms as 'brand new' products.¹³⁷
- It could **increase manufacturers' responsibilities** – for instance by improving design standards to make products more durable and easy to repair, or wherever possible making manufacturers responsible for collecting and disassembling their products at the end of their life.
- It could **prohibit the sale of natural resources such as food or timber if they don't meet sustainability standards** – for example, through making mandatory existing sustainability standards such as Forest or Marine Stewardship Council accreditation.
- It could **phase out emissions of toxic and long-lived pollutants, such as synthetic organic pollutants**, heavy metal compounds and radioactive materials – recognising that these substances can have potentially irreversible effects on living organisms and the physical environment.¹³⁸
- It could **impose far tighter controls on waste** – for instance, with the aim of ending landfill by 2030. Scotland already has zero-waste regulations under which businesses must separate out metal, glass, plastic and paper, *none* of which can go to landfill or incineration.¹³⁹

- And it could **stop food from going to landfill**. Britain wastes about 15 million tonnes of food a year – and, while individual households can stop food from being wasted in the first place, circular economy legislation could ensure that none goes to landfill. Scotland's zero-waste regulations require that food businesses in urban areas that produce more than 50kg (5kg from 2016) of food waste a week must have it collected separately, so that it can be used to produce (for example) biogas for renewable energy, rather than rotting in landfill and producing methane, one of the most powerful greenhouse gases.

2. Double food production and halve resource intensity with a 21st-century Green Revolution

During the 20th century, the Green Revolution in agriculture led to breath-taking increases in crop yields, allowing global food production to keep pace with a rapidly expanding population. **Now, though, we face two new 21st-century challenges:**

- **Expand food production to feed a world of 11 billion people.** While access to food is just as important as how much is produced (see proposal number 6 below), we do still need to produce much more food. Since land is finite (and increasingly in demand from other quarters, such as changing diets, growing cities and the need to keep more land aside for biodiversity), we need to increase productivity per hectare.
- **Make food production far more resource efficient and climate resilient.** For all the Green Revolution's success in raising food production, it was hugely wasteful in its use of resources such as water (with up to three quarters of water used in irrigation typically wasted), fertiliser (over-use of which has led to huge new 'dead zones' of algal blooms in rivers and on coasts) and energy. And increasingly agriculture will also need to cope with the rising threat of climate change.

And these twin challenges are especially pressing in one continent in particular: Africa. Africa largely missed out on the first Green Revolution, which focused much more on Asia and Latin America. As a result, agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa remains far lower than in the rest of the world, with cereal yields per hectare only about a third of the global average.¹⁴⁰

While most of our headline policy ideas are about areas other than aid, this is an exception. Sub-Saharan Africa remains highly reliant on aid. For that situation to change, it needs to grow productive sectors of the economy – above all agriculture. Private sector investment and partnerships are an important part of the picture, but there are still critical areas where public finance has a crucial role to play, such as research and development, or rolling out new technologies to rural areas through agricultural extension services.

The UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) has said that the Department for International Development (DFID) should 'focus strongly on environmentally sustainable intensification of agriculture'. We agree with the need to focus on raising productivity while reducing resource intensity – and we worry that DFID does not concur.¹⁴¹ Its total funding for agriculture in 2013–2014 amounted to just two per cent of its total budget.¹⁴² And within that, its programme on sustainable intensification of agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is worth just £8 million over five years¹⁴³ – in a total budget of almost £7 billion. And while other donors spend more on agriculture, the tendency to overlook sustainability is unfortunately all too common.

We think Britain has the potential to become a world leader on making a 21st-century Green Revolution a reality – while also encouraging African countries to lead as well. DFID could allocate, for example, ten per cent of its budget to agriculture, with *environmentally sustainable* productivity improvements and the needs of the poorest farmers as its top priorities. In the process, it could use the principle of matched funding to create incentives for developing countries themselves to spend more on agriculture, by allocating aid in line with how much of their public sector budgets governments themselves allocate to agriculture. (Under the 2003 Maputo Declaration, African countries committed to allocating at least ten per cent of public sector spending to agriculture – but, ten years later, only 13 countries had done so.)

3. Accelerate the shift to a 'zero-carbon' economy

In some ways, the UK is a global leader on climate change – above all in the cross-party consensus in favour of the 2008 Climate Change Act. The Act sets a legally binding, long-term target of reducing Britain's emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050; and it also requires the government to set legally binding carbon budgets that keep it in line with this long-term goal*. The Act also created an independent Committee on Climate Change (CCC), which both advises the government on emissions targets and reports to parliament (and publicly) on progress made towards them.

But even though we have the right overall framework in place, we still have a great deal to do to deliver what we've promised. While the UK is on track to outperform the CCC's first two carbon budgets at present, this is mainly due to the

impact of the recession – and the underlying rate of emissions reductions due to low-carbon measures specifically was less than one per cent in 2011.¹⁴⁴ Meeting future carbon budgets, by contrast, will require emissions reductions of at least three per cent a year.

In practice, three policy commitments that would make a huge difference would be to:

- **Phase out all coal-fired power stations by the early 2020s, in line with the CCC's advice.**** Coal is by far the most polluting of the fossil fuels, producing twice as much CO₂ per unit of thermal output as natural gas.¹⁴⁵ Yet, in the UK we still use it to generate more than a third of our electricity.¹⁴⁶ This fuel has no place in any sustainable energy future – as UK political parties are already starting to recognise.¹⁴⁷
- **Tax electricity and gas use at the full 20 per cent rate of VAT instead of the current reduced rate of five per cent,** as part of the rebalancing of tax called for earlier in this report (and see also page 43 below). This would create a powerful new incentive for consumers to adopt energy efficiency measures – and while we recognise the need for help for poorer people, we think this is better done through targeted support to people who really need it, rather than an economy-wide tax break.
- **Introduce 'carbon stress' testing of pension funds, insurers and other large institutional investors,** to test how resilient their business models are to a fall in the value of fossil fuel assets. Recent research from the University of London suggests that a third of oil reserves, half of gas reserves and 80 per cent of current coal reserves must remain in the ground if the world is to limit global average warming to 2°C, let alone 1.5°C.¹⁴⁸ And by one estimate, investors stand to lose \$28 trillion of gross revenues over the next two decades if the world limits warming to 2°C.¹⁴⁹

The Bank of England is already conducting an investigation into un-burnable carbon and the implications for asset prices.¹⁵⁰ We could build on this positive start by extending it to mandatory stress-testing on all institutional investors, to send a clear signal that investing in further fossil fuel extraction is a bad investment with no future.

“In some ways, the UK is a global leader on climate change”

*Meeting the 80 per cent reduction is based on a target of 2°C global temperature rise.

**Coal power stations with carbon capture and storage technology could, of course, remain.

4. Agree a carbon jubilee

We've already emitted more than two thirds of the total amount of carbon that we can put into the atmosphere without exceeding 2°C – let alone the 1.5°C we *should* be aiming for. Researchers at Oxford University have calculated that, if we're serious about limiting global average warming to two degrees, then we can't put more than 750 billion tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere in total (even then, there's still a 25 per cent risk of overshooting).¹⁵¹ We've already emitted more than 500 billion tonnes since the mid-18th century – leaving us just 250 billion tonnes to play with, which on current emissions rates could be used up within the next 20 years.¹⁵² And given that the science suggests that even a two-degree rise in temperatures will have very damaging consequences, we think that 1.5°C should be the target.¹⁵³

If we're to keep within these remaining 250 billion tonnes, then the UN climate process needs to define a global emissions budget at the Paris summit in 2015 – one based on what's necessary, not just on what governments think they can manage. The world has so far failed to do this, for the reasons set out in Chapter 2. At the 2009 Copenhagen summit, we took a step backwards, with governments doing away with quantified, binding targets altogether and moving instead to a purely voluntary approach. This needs to be corrected: time is running out.

In practice, governments would make a good start if they created a new, independent, global body to advise on the right level for a global emissions budget and to monitor countries' performance against their shares of it. This would in effect replicate at global level the system that we already have at national level in the UK in the shape of the 2008 Climate Change Act (see page 39).¹⁵⁴

The big question then: how to share this budget out between 195 countries? As we set out in Chapter 3 and again here, we think that creation – including the atmosphere – is part of a common inheritance that belongs to everyone equally, and ultimately to God. So we believe the only fair way to allocate 'shares of the sky' is on the basis of an equal per capita distribution – with countries' allocations in proportion to their population. In the same way, jubilees aimed to reset land ownership to God's equal per capita tribal distribution when the 12 tribes of Israel entered the Promised Land.

This would give us the global solution to climate change that we've always needed. Developing countries now account for 59 per cent of global emissions, a rise of more than ten per cent in less than a decade; there's no way we can solve climate change without them being part of the solution.¹⁵⁵ But at the same time, developing countries need to be able to participate in a way that's fair and that enables their economies to develop (as extending access to energy in these countries is a development priority).

And emissions trading would reduce the costs for everyone – while also creating a valuable new source of development finance for poorer countries, who emit less and would therefore have more emissions permits to sell. True, there would be costs for high-emitting countries (including both developed and emerging economies). But this is part of what's involved in *any* scenario for stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations at a safe level – and enabling global emissions trading would greatly reduce the costs of meeting their targets.¹⁵⁶

5. Protect the basic needs of poor people everywhere with a global social protection floor

We believe passionately that *everyone* in the world should have their basic needs met, regardless of where they live.

So we support the idea of a social protection floor in every country, that guarantees everyone **basic income security**, including enough for an adequate and nutritious diet and safe housing; **access to essential healthcare**, including maternity care; **the best start in life for children**, ensuring nutrition, education, care and other essentials; and **access to essential infrastructure**, including energy and clean water and sanitation.

As we noted earlier, **we start from the assumption that markets are best placed to make this happen. The best form of social protection is a job.** In developing countries, *90 per cent of jobs* are created by the private sector. So the first step towards meeting everyone's basic needs is for governments to work with markets to create a context in which business can flourish (something we discuss in more detail in the next policy idea, below).

But there will always be some unemployment, or cases where markets don't provide living wages – and in these instances, we think there's a clear case for government intervention or public funding. Clearly, the level of the protection floor would vary from country to country based on differences in the cost of living – and so would the delivery mechanism. There are all kinds of different ways of ensuring a basic level of income – from conditional cash transfers, employment guarantee schemes and in-kind transfers such as school feeding programmes in developing countries, through to minimum wages, tax credits for low-paid workers and unemployment benefits in many developed countries.

In the case of the poorest and most fragile countries, a significant proportion of this funding needs to be raised internationally – at least to start with. For example, rich countries could create a new global fund to finance the start-up costs of cash transfer schemes, which the evidence shows are some of the most effective approaches in reducing poverty. Contributions from this global fund could then match resources raised by the country itself to finance the scheme over a fixed period of time – creating a powerful incentive for developing countries to introduce the robust tax systems required to fund such a safety net over the long term.¹⁵⁷

6. Make the UK a world leader on ensuring markets work for poor people around the world

While aid remains crucial for development, especially in least developed countries, it is markets that have the most power to drive really transformative change.

We can already see this in where global flows of finance for development come from: total aid is worth about \$130 billion, but foreign direct investment (FDI) to developing countries is worth more than \$500 billion, remittances from overseas workers \$325 billion, and portfolio equity investment another \$130 billion.¹⁵⁸ But least developed countries have seen far fewer of the benefits of FDI and remittances, and so remain more reliant on philanthropy and aid.

So we think some of the biggest potential in the UK's development agenda is in supporting private sector development and inclusive growth – in areas such as helping broker private sector investment, building capacity for tax collection, catalysing change in key policy areas such as extractives transparency, using public finances to improve market outcomes, or helping to develop new growth models that include more emphasis on small businesses, social enterprise, social protection, redistribution and inclusion.¹⁵⁹

The Department for International Development has already started to do more to support areas of work such as this – but it could go much further. Its capacity to succeed in these areas will depend as much on its having the right skills as on the size of its budget – above all in areas such as brokering private sector partnerships, understanding how to support and promote enabling environments for private sector-led growth, tackling market failures and helping developing countries to secure project finance and negotiate complex deals.¹⁶⁰

7. Go much further in tackling international tax avoidance

The UK is already leading a major global agenda on tackling international tax avoidance – which is key to enabling developing countries to finance their own development.

Back in 2000, developing countries raised \$1.5 trillion in tax, but by 2011 this had increased to \$7 trillion.¹⁶¹ So we're seeing a major success story unfold, and it's one that least developed countries will increasingly be able to benefit from too if we do more to help them to build up their tax administration capacity: according to the OECD, each dollar of aid spent on this area can generate up to \$350 in additional tax revenue.¹⁶²

But this makes it all the more important that developing countries get the tax they're entitled to – rather than it being lost to tax avoidance strategies. Recent years have seen major progress, with Britain playing a leading role at the 2013 G8 summit. But there's still a great deal to do, for instance in ensuring automatic exchange of tax information between *all* countries (including the poorest ones, who need tax revenue more than anyone). There are other pressing priorities too: to ensure much greater transparency over who really owns companies; to ensure that global companies report on their tax payments publicly, on a standard country-by-country basis, to stop them from exploiting loopholes between one tax jurisdiction and another; and (especially important for poor countries) to ensure much faster progress on the recovery of stolen assets.

More broadly, we think it's worth exploring the idea of a unitary tax. At present, global companies are free to assign their profits to subsidiaries in tax havens such as Bermuda even if their real operations – their workforces, physical assets and sales – are on the other side of the world. A unitary tax, by contrast, would work on the basis of a company's *global* profits, taxing them in the countries where the company's real operations are and in proportion to the actual economic substance of those operations.¹⁶³

8. Adopt a jubilee stance on inequality

As set out earlier, **jubilees were intended in part to prevent wealth from becoming concentrated in the hands of a few**, through periodic resets of land ownership back to their initial, egalitarian distribution. They also ensured that each generation was able to provide for themselves, since in the agrarian context of the day, access to land guaranteed a basic level of equality of opportunity, much in the way that access to a high-quality education does today.

At the same time, jubilees were founded on the principle that **creation belongs to a special category of wealth: it's part of a common inheritance that belongs to everyone – and ultimately to God.** Income from this kind of wealth is gained solely by owning it, rather than being earned or created: in economic terms, it is a 'rent', in the sense that it increases the recipient's wealth without creating new wealth in the process.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the level of this rent depends not on what the owner does, but in large part on the extent of the government-provided infrastructure nearby, such as roads or schools.¹⁶⁵

So we believe that **the jubilee system provides a strong moral case for using some of the income from land for the benefit of society as a whole, and for preventing wealth from becoming increasingly concentrated over time.**

“The first step towards meeting everyone's basic needs is for governments to work with markets to create a context in which business can flourish”

At a personal level, we can reflect this system through radical generosity, as we made clear in the lifestyles section of this chapter. For example, philanthropist Warren Buffett – who has committed to giving away 99 per cent of his fortune¹⁶⁶ – once remarked, 'I want to give my kids just enough so that they would feel that they could do anything, but not so much that they would feel like doing nothing.'¹⁶⁷

At a societal level, a modern-day interpretation of jubilee principles would use tax policy to combine a check on the excessive concentration of wealth (particularly with regard to natural assets such as land) with the promotion of basic opportunities for all – for example, **by employing taxes on land/property and on wealth transfers to fund services such as education and healthcare.** The use of appropriately calibrated taxes is less radical than the full redistribution of land/wealth that occurred in the jubilee, and is also more meaningful in a post-agrarian society.

The UK has a long way to go before we could claim to be leading by example in this area. Our current tax on residential property (Council Tax) is based on the value of homes in 1991,¹⁶⁸ overlooking the extent to which house values have surged since then, particularly for more expensive homes. Meanwhile MPs,¹⁶⁹ the Confederation of British Industry¹⁷⁰ and the British Chamber of Commerce¹⁷¹ have all called for a fundamental overhaul of our current tax on business property (known as business rates). And the design of our current inheritance tax system has been criticised from all sides because it favours the 'healthy, wealthy and well-advised',¹⁷² in the sense that if you are well off, plan ahead and don't die suddenly, you can easily avoid paying the full amount of inheritance tax due.

There are a number of viable options for reform, but two approaches – highlighted by the respected Mirrlees Review of taxation commissioned by the Institute for Fiscal Studies – warrant particular attention:

- **A land value tax.** At present, business rates in the UK apply to the rental value of commercial property – in effect, taxing buildings rather than the land underneath them. The problem with this approach is that it creates perverse incentives, which can (for example) skew our economy away from industries that use expensive buildings – such as manufacturing.¹⁷³

The Mirrlees Review therefore calls instead for a land value tax, arguing that 'this is such a powerful idea, and one that has been so comprehensively ignored by governments, that the case for a thorough official effort to design a workable system seems to us to be overwhelming.'¹⁷⁴ Denmark, Japan and many other countries already operate successful land value taxes¹⁷⁵ and ultimately we think it would be worth investigating the potential for a land value tax to replace Council Tax on residential property as well as business rates.

- **Replacing inheritance tax with a 'wealth receipts tax'.** As mentioned above, the UK's present inheritance tax tends to favour the very wealthy and is widely viewed as unfair. A wealth receipts tax would avoid these problems. It would switch the focus from the donor to the recipient and, instead of being levied at death, it would apply to the cumulative amount of wealth that an individual is given over the course of their lifetime above a given threshold.¹⁷⁶

This would be fairer and promote equality of opportunity. It means that those who receive only one inheritance during their life would be taxed much less than those who receive large sums over and over again, and it would also create a new incentive for donors to spread their wealth more widely – potentially helping to realise a more equitable distribution of inherited wealth. A similar system has been in place in Ireland since 1976.¹⁷⁷

9. Ensure that the financial sector contributes to shared prosperity – and doesn't jeopardise it

For us, the bottom line is that a well-governed financial system should contribute consistently to shared prosperity. As long as the activities of financial institutions are able to create catastrophic system-wide risks, this goal remains far off. The financial crisis and its aftermath acted as a sort of jubilee in reverse, greatly amplifying pre-existing inequalities, as poorer people were hit hardest by the economic downturn, unemployment and austerity measures, while wealthy asset owners have been the key beneficiaries of quantitative easing and its effect on asset prices.

The fact that investors know banks will be bailed out when they fail gives these institutions the equivalent of a huge public subsidy. The Bank of England's Andrew Haldane quantified the 'too big to fail' implicit subsidy at more than £50 billion a year in 2008 (and in 2012 it was still estimated to be as high as £38 billion). It also tends to make banks less risk-averse or, as Andrew Haldane puts it, 'The history of banking is that risk expands to exhaust available resources.'¹⁷⁸

At its core, the financial crisis and its aftermath was a story about private risks becoming public debts. The high-risk and often opaque activities of many financial institutions threatened the entire financial system when they started to unwind amid a market panic.¹⁷⁹ Although governments stepped in to avert financial catastrophe, the inevitable recession (and the cost of government bail-outs) triggered a wave of austerity measures in countries all over the world, a process still unfolding here in the UK.

The aftermath of the financial crisis has been a classic case of the urgent crowding out the essential. Whatever the rights and wrongs of governments' response to the financial crisis, the essential thing is to prevent it from happening again. And while some limited progress has been made, system-wide risks remain – for example, as the Bank of England and the IMF both underlined in 2014, the problem of banks that are 'too big to fail'.

At a fundamental level, the way money is created in our economy creates inherent risks of economic instability. At present, only a tiny fraction of money is held in actual physical currency; instead, 97 per cent of money is held as deposits with banks. And while physical money is minted by the Bank of England, most bank deposits are in fact created by the commercial banks themselves (and the extent of this money creation is only indirectly influenced by government policy and regulation). As the Bank of England itself explains, 'When a bank makes a loan to one of its customers it simply credits the customer's account with a higher deposit balance. At that instant, new money is created.' The IMF has highlighted the economic rents that accrue as a result of the right to create money.¹⁸⁰

The problem with this system is that there is no guarantee banks will be prudent in how they create money, especially because they know that they will be bailed out. On the contrary – as the subprime-mortgage crisis vividly showed – without more appropriate regulation we remain stuck in a credit cycle that tends towards economic boom and bust. As Citigroup CEO Chuck Prince memorably put it a year before the financial crisis, 'When the music stops, in terms of liquidity, things will be complicated. But as long as the music is playing, you've got to get up and dance. We're still dancing.'¹⁸¹

So we believe it's essential to reignite the debate about the structure and core principles of our financial system. This debate started after the financial crisis, but has since lost momentum. We think that there is a strong case for much tighter regulation of the financial sector and for taking a hard look at the implications of the framework within which money is created in our economy. Would it be worth considering, for example, requiring banks to keep a high level of reserves against deposits (setting a level of, for example, 50 per cent – half what has been suggested by the *Financial Times*' Martin Wolf and IMF researchers)?¹⁸² Another idea, would be to charge the Bank of England with setting and policing a maximum leverage level for the financial system as a whole.¹⁸³

These reforms would need to be carefully managed over time but, as HSBC has put it, while 'shrinking leverage constrains loan growth, which stunts economic growth', the fact remains that 'we have to address leverage: it nearly destroyed the old financial system'.¹⁸⁴

10. Rebalance the tax system in line with jubilee principles

Tax is one of the biggest levers available to government for influencing behaviour and reducing inequality. But right now, it doesn't always encourage the most desirable outcomes.

- **We levy heavy taxes on positive activities, such as work or private sector activity.** Taxes on work and companies account for nearly *half* of UK tax receipts (with income tax accounting for 26 per cent of the total, National Insurance 17 per cent, and Corporation Tax six per cent).¹⁸⁵
- **By contrast, activities that harm creation – such as pollution, waste or energy consumption – are taxed far less.** In total just five per cent of taxes come from fuel duties, air passenger duty, landfill tax and the climate change levy on energy-intensive companies.¹⁸⁶
- **And less than one per cent comes from taxes on inherited wealth** – despite the fact that transfers of wealth through inheritance allow concentrations of wealth to build up from one generation to another, one of the key outcomes that jubilees were designed to prevent.¹⁸⁷

We think we need a far-reaching rebalancing of the tax system, rather than piecemeal reforms in Budgets and Autumn Statements. We recognise that such a shift has the potential to be regressive towards poorer people if done badly – but we think that this can be managed through targeted assistance and is not a rationale for keeping the existing system, given its inconsistencies. Academic studies – and past experience in the UK, Germany and elsewhere – show that, if the UK rebalanced the tax burden away from work and towards things that damage the environment, this could increase employment while reducing environmental damage.¹⁸⁸

The case for a phased but rapid rebalancing of the tax system has yet to make it on to the political agenda – despite pioneering academic work on environmental tax reform,¹⁸⁹ and despite the Institute for Fiscal Studies' observation that 'it is a very long time since a thorough review of the system of wealth transfer taxation was carried out [in the UK]... It is surely time to devote some serious resources to [elements of this]'.¹⁹⁰

We think a first step towards rectifying this would be to create a Royal Commission or a review along similar lines to the Stern Review on the economics of climate change to look at shifting the burden of tax away from work and towards consumption, pollution and wealth, with a fixed timeframe of perhaps one year. This would create political space for discussion of these issues, particularly at a time when the UK's budget deficit remains a serious cause for concern, and allow for exploration of how reforms could be undertaken as part of a wider international shift.

CONCLUSION

In 2050, when we – or our children – look back on the kind of world that we shaped over our lifetimes and bequeathed to those who will follow us, what will we see?

For all the extraordinary progress that humanity has made over the last few centuries, we now face a pivotal question about where to go from here. Our species, and the creation we inhabit, stand at a crossroads.

At Tearfund we are beginning to see the consequences of pursuing our present path for those we work with – and for our own children. This road ultimately leads to the collapse of planet earth's life support systems, with countries and communities fragmenting rather than coming together. Unless we change course, we will undo all that we at Tearfund, our supporters, our partners and, above all, poor people across the world have worked so hard to achieve.

But there is an alternative. Another, narrower path leads to a point where poverty is eliminated, where catastrophic climate change is averted and where all human beings – indeed, all of the species with which we share this world – have the chance to flourish.

The choice to change direction cannot, *at present*, be made for us by our elected leaders. There is simply too much momentum carrying us along our present path for that. Instead, the decision must be made by each of us individually, and by all of us collectively.

In this report, we have tried to sketch out what is at stake, how we can change our future, a theological basis for thinking about our extraordinary moment in history, and a concrete programme for a restorative economy: one governed by the jubilee principles of *šalom* (unity and wholeness of creation), *hesed* (steadfast love) and wisdom.

But we recognise that these ideas will only ever be implemented if ordinary people demand them. A group of people prepared to organise their lives around jubilee values in the hope that others will follow, just as generations of activists – anti-slavery, civil rights, suffragettes – have done before us. We have the fight of our lives on our hands, but it is a fight that can be won if we are prepared to stay true to what we know to be right, and to be both patient and ready.

So this is our invitation to you. All of us face the temptation to avoid these issues and escape into the distractions that the modern world offers. Instead, we urge you to take these issues to heart – to debate them around the dinner table, in church, at work, over coffee. We think these are the defining issues of our time and should guide how we live, how we vote, what we buy, how we act and how we pray.

Where we go next is up to all of us: we hope you'll join us on this journey.

Join the movement at tearfund.org/campaigns



Photo: Chris Boyd/Tearfund

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Unless otherwise stated, all Bible references are NIV

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Tearfund is a member of the Green Economy Coalition



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100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE
T 020 8977 9144 E enquiries@tearfund.org
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