

**Title:** Environmental Sustainability...Is It Enough?

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**Abstract:**

Paul Brand, a medical missionary to India, once stated, “The world will die from lack of soil and pure water long before it will die from lack of antibiotics or surgical skill and knowledge.” Many who daily serve the needs of the poor throughout the world fully realize the stark reality of this statement. Humanity is in the midst of a global environmental crisis. Mounting scientific evidence strongly confirms that the uncontrolled exploitation and consumption of our natural resources has pushed the world to the brink of ecological collapse. The environmental crisis which has escalated over the last 50 years due to explosive population growth and activities has put such a strain on the planet’s ecosystems that nearly two-thirds of the services provided by nature are found to be in decline worldwide, and their ability to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted. Essentially, the inheritance of our children (Proverbs 13:22) has been nearly spent. The world is looking frantically for a “Big Solution”.

Yet, even in this season of global uncertainty, the Body of Christ has an unprecedented opportunity to bring a Biblical understanding and fresh perspective on how to best secure the future of the planet. As Francis Schaeffer once said, “Biblical Christianity has a real answer to the ecological crisis.” However, even with this truth, a significant paradigm shift is required in order to realize that today’s ecological and human issues “cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them (A. Einstein).”

Over the last decade or so, one of the “Big Solutions” has been the concept of *sustainability*. This term, once obscure, now permeates the marketing industry that influences our governments, corporations and nonprofits. In principle, the current practice of sustainability focuses predominantly on *minimizing* damage to the environment and human health while using resources more *efficiently*. It attempts to meet the present needs of humans without endangering the welfare of future generations by reducing environmental degradation caused by excessive resource use. However, to date, the sustainability movement has been remarkably ineffective. The principle reason for this rests in the distorted, humanistic worldview that has dominated our thinking, causing us to become disconnected from our place in Creation and role as its stewards.

As an act of worship and respect to our Creator, we should live in an environmentally sustainable manner. However, based on His desires for his children, God wants and expects more from His people. In order to glorify Christ and begin to reconcile all of Creation back unto Him, we need to shift our mental model to the way God sees His Creation.

Christ shed his blood on the cross for the restoration of His entire Creation (Colossians 1:15-20). All Creation eagerly awaits the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8:19). Creation is waiting for us – not merely to sustain it, but to begin the *regenerative* process and work before the Lord’s return.

**Regenerate**, a word that literally means “new birth” is used in various spiritual aspects throughout the Bible. It also means to revive, bring into existence again, to form, construct, or create anew in a better form or condition, to revitalize and give new life or energy to. A God-centered worldview calls for a

**Regenerative approach** to reverse the current trends and fulfill our Biblical mandate to care for all of God's Creation. Only in this way can His children truly have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10) with hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11) and be able to leave an inheritance to our children (Proverbs 13:22). The intent of this presentation is to further elaborate on the **Regenerative approach** and how these principals can find practical application within our respective organizations.