

# The Steward Leader in God's Creation

## LEVEL FOUR TRANSFORMATION



We must consider God's creation in four aspects if we are to continue our commitment to transformation as godly stewards: our time, our skills, our resources and the created world in which we live.

***"The **LORD** God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).***

Everything we possess in this world has come from the simple combination of the human being created in God's image and the Garden, which was created for the human, and the human for it. Those ingredients are the foundation for everything that exists in all of God's creation: a man, a woman and a garden. All of our advanced technology, our science, our music and literature, our civilization and global economy everything grew out of the formula of man, woman and nature. Sometimes we make things too complicated. God says to Adam and Eve, "You love me, and I love you. Cherish each other. Tend the garden."

***Leading in freedom.***

It really is that simple for the steward leader. God has not changed, nor have his simple commands. After the redemption of all things in Christ, God still says to us, "I love you and you love me. Love one another. Care for my creation." Is there anything in all the gospel that is not included in this simple statement? All four levels of relationship are here. Evangelism and world missions are here. Caring for the poor and working for justice are here. Creation care and stewardship of our money are

here.

One of the great strengths of the steward leader is the ability to see complicated issues in clear and simple ways. Is there any issue today that could not be solved if we helped our people and our organizations love God more, love themselves more, love each other more and love God's creation more? Really, think about it. Is there?

On this fourth level we have an opportunity, like no other, to model for our people the freedom and absolute obedience of the steward leader. When you can truly be free from the lure of materialism and wealth, and the power and prestige they bring, you can lead others to freedom and joy. When you can stand in a peaceful relationship to time, neither serving it as a taskmaster nor wasting it as a sluggard, but enjoying it and investing yourself in it freely, you can free your people to accomplish incredible things for the kingdom. When you can stand in a free relationship to money as its steward, when God is the sole lord of your possessions and they hold no sway over you, you can set your people free!

### ***Battling for creation.***

On this fourth level, like none of the others, steward leaders are in the battle of their lives. This is the enemy's territory. The Christian church has turned this area of life over to him. With very few exceptions, we have refused to deal squarely with the issues of money, possessions, time and environmental care. To our shame and disadvantage we have labeled these "things of this world" and have therefore shifted our attention to what we say are more "spiritual" issues. [This is a perfect example of the Sacred/Secular divide] Of course, the enemy loves this. We have provided him perfect protection to ruin lives, distort truth, ravish God's beautiful creation and shackle God's people with backbreaking burdens all dressed up to look like material blessings.

The steward leader at this fourth level stands as a warrior in the battle for the heart and allegiance of God's people, starting with his own. Nowhere is the armor of God more vital than here. Nowhere will the steward leader experience the frontal attack of the enemy more than here. Plan for it, prepare for it and pray over it. We must be

prepared for this battle personally, or we will never be able to lead our people to victory in their own battles.

Living as bearers of the image of God in the midst of God's good creation, we have a mandate to have dominion, rule over and subdue this creation according to God's vision for a redeemed world. For the steward leader, these words must be defined by the God who has created and redeemed this world and who calls us to be caretakers of it. We are called to love what God loves, and that includes his creation. This does not amount to a god of creation. We are not required to embrace pantheism or panentheism in order to say that we love God's creation.

[- **Pantheism** = God and the universe are the same. - **Panentheism** = The universe is part of God, but God is greater than the universe. A more detailed explanation is at the end.]

These false expectations are cooked up by those who are afraid that if we love God's creation too much, we will divert our attention away from more "important" work like doing evangelism and supporting pro-life and pro-family issues. What they are missing is the interconnectedness (and how else would a triune God create us?) of these issues. What could be more pro-life than caring for the very creation that supports all life? What could be more pro-family than helping mothers and fathers be stewards of their time and financial resources, and passing those lessons and values on to their children? What could be more supportive of our evangelism throughout the world than to be able to connect the 78 percent of people who make their living from the earth to the God who created the earth through responsible creation care **combined with the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

Steward leaders advancing on this fourth level will likely be shot at from both sides. We will battle with the enemy from without, trying to live free and

uncontrolled in a world where money, possessions and power are all that matter. And we will battle an enemy from within when those from our own ranks question our evangelical commitment because we have the boldness to love what God loves and to care for the creation, which was our original mandate, vocation, calling and joy. We will have to remind some of our colleagues that, according to Scripture, God's original intent was to hang out in a garden with a bunch of naked vegetarians.

The steward leader will cultivate a heart that hears only the one voice calling us to one-kingdom living and will not be persuaded by all the voices screaming at us the gospel of wealth, consumerism and consumption. Nor will the steward leader be swayed by controlling voices within our own group that can only see a world that is passing away instead of a creation that ***"itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).***

To fight this good and worthy fight the steward leader is given the gift of nurture. The temptation is to forsake our role as nurturing stewards and to retake control... In two weeks, The Gift Of Nurture.

- [Is there any issue today that could not be solved if we helped our people and our organizations love God more, love themselves more, love each other more and love God's creation more? Really, think about it. Is there?](#) Do you agree with this statement?
- [When you can truly be free from the lure of materialism and wealth, and the power and prestige they bring, you can lead others to freedom and joy.](#) What challenges could there be to this in Africa?
- [We have provided him perfect protection to ruin lives, distort truth, ravish God's beautiful creation and shackle God's people with backbreaking burdens all dressed up to look like material blessings.](#) How has the church provided protection to the enemy?
- [combined with the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ?](#) Doing good things for people is not the Great Commission.

- [The steward leader will cultivate a heart that hears only the one voice calling us to one-kingdom living and will not be persuaded by all the voices screaming at us the gospel of wealth, consumerism and consumption.](#) What are some practical ways to do this and teach others to do this as well?

### Pantheism

- Belief that God is the universe — everything that exists is divine.
- There's no separation between God and nature, people, stars, or anything else.
- Example: Saying “the tree is God” or “the universe is God.”
- Often found in some forms of Hinduism, Taoism, and certain New Age philosophies.

### Panentheism

- Belief that the universe is within God, but God is more than the universe.
- God interpenetrates all things but also transcends them.
- Example: “The tree is in God, but God is more than the tree.”
- Found in some Christian mysticism, process theology, and strands of Eastern thought.

### Think of it like this:

- Pantheism = God and the universe are the same.
- Panentheism = The universe is part of God, but God is greater than the universe.