



The Biblical Basis for the Mission of ECHO

The mission of ECHO is to empower the undernourished with sustainable hunger solutions. As followers of Jesus Christ, our mission takes place at the convergence of nine biblical themes.

1. **God's love for the world** - The most famous verse in the Bible is a verse about the world: "For God so loved the world..." John 3:16.
 - o From the opening pages of the Bible - when God called Abram to become God's means of blessing and redemption to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1) - to the closing chapters of Revelation which describe a "great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" worshipping God in heaven (Rev 7:9,10), God's love for people all over the world is clear. ECHO shares God's love for people worldwide. Our focus is intentionally beyond ourselves and our nation, to the poor and hungry worldwide.
2. **Stewardship of God's Creation** - The first great commission given to humanity is to steward God's creation.
 - o "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." (Psalm 24:1) "The heavens belong to the Lord, but he has given the earth to all humanity." (Psalm 115:16) The earth is God's property, but it is our responsibility to tend and care for it as stewards of God's creation. (Genesis 2:8,15)
 - o "Care for the creation has nothing to do with *deification* of nature (Rom 1:23). On the other hand, it entirely rejects *exploitation* of the earth. Rather, it focuses on *cooperation with God* in conserving and nurturing His creation." (John Stott, *The Radical Disciple*, pg. 51, 53)
3. **Creation Proclaims the Beauty and Glory of God** - All of creation is a witness to God's greatness. Creation was intentionally designed to illustrate spiritual truth.
 - o "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1. See also Psalm 104; Isaiah 40:21-26; Romans 1:20)
 - o Creation was intentionally designed to reveal spiritual truth. For example, Jesus created branches to bear fruit when they are connected to the trunk. He did this to visually remind us that 'He is the vine; we are the branches. If we remain connected to him, we will bear much fruit. For apart from Christ, we can do nothing.' (John 15:5) The principles that lead to the restoration of soil and the growth of plants are intentionally placed in creation to teach us what we need to restore our soul and to thrive in our relationship with God.
4. **God Provides for His Creation** - God designed the earth to provide for the people he created. ECHO's mission supports God's plan of provision - helping people steward the earth's resources so the earth's produce can provide for the people God created.
 - o "You [God] send rain on the mountains from your heavenly home, and you fill the earth with the fruit of your labor. You cause grass to grow for the livestock and plants for people to use. You allow them to produce food from the earth - wine to make them glad, olive oil to soothe their skin, and bread to give them strength. The trees of the Lord are well cared for - the cedars of Lebanon that he planted." (Psalm 104: 13-16. See also Gen 1:29-31)
5. **Compassionate Care for the Poor and Hungry** is a consistent theme in scripture.
 - o "Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help... Feed the hungry and help those in trouble." (Isaiah 58:7-11). "...Open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor..." (Deut 15:10 ESV).

- After Peter, James and John understood Paul's outreach to the Gentiles, "their only suggestion was that [Paul and Barnabas] keep on helping the poor, which, Paul writes, 'I have always been eager to do.'" (Galatians 2:9-10) "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:17-18)
- We have access to a wealth of agricultural knowledge and ideas. These resources have been entrusted to us so that we will share them with others. We've been blessed to be a blessing. (Gen 12:1; Ps 67:1; 1 Peter 2:9)

6. **The Holistic Breadth of the Gospel**

- When sin entered the world, our relationship with God, with others and with God's creation was broken. Christ's work on the cross brings restoration in all these relationships.
- "God was pleased to have all of His fullness dwell in Jesus, and through Jesus 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 1:15-20. See also 2 Corinthians 5:11-21)
- Creation shares in the effect of humanity's sin and is redeemed and restored along with us. "Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering." (Romans 8: 19-23. See also Isaiah 65: 17-25, 2 Peter 3:5-14; Revelation 21)

7. **Holistic Witness** - Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our words and deeds witness to the beauty, kindness, and power of God as displayed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- The Apostle Paul describes the interplay of word, deed and Spirit in, "bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and the by the way I worked among them ("by word and deed"). They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way I have fully presented the Good News of Christ..." (Romans 15:18,19)
- "In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:8-17)
- The Apostle Paul instructed Titus to "teach the truth" and do "good works of every kind". (Titus 2:7,8).
- "Our witness depends on our living lives so that the Holy Spirit may evoke questions to which our faith is the answer." (Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p.21)

8. **Equipping the Saints**

- Leaders "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12) ECHO's work is an equipping role. We equip the saints to do the work of improving the lives of the poor in the name of Christ. Training is a multiplication process as described in 2 Tim 2:2.

9. **Humble Partnership in the Gospel**

- ECHO works with the Global Church to equip the church to reduce hunger and improve the lives of the poor. We follow the admonition of Paul to "strive side by side for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 1:27. See also 2 Corinthians 1: 9, 21, 24)
- "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." (Philippians 2:2-4)

"Honoring God by empowering the undernourished with sustainable hunger solutions"