

World Vision Destroys One of the Greatest Legacies in Christian Ministry

In its 64 years, World Vision has been exactly that—a kingdom view on a globe in need. On Monday the organization walked away from one of the greatest legacies in Christian ministry, trading a vision to reach the world for the world's vision of marriage.

In an announcement that continues to shock and dismay the ministry's supporters, President Richard Stearns closed the chapter on six decades of an incredible witness, driving a deep and irreparable stake into the heart of Christian outreach.

The billion-dollar organization, which has served more than 100 million people, will, in its words, “no longer require its 1,100 employees to restrict their sexual activity to marriage between one man and one woman.” Stearns, who made the decision public on Monday, claims this radical theological departure was not the result of a lawsuit or outside lobbying. Rather, he argues, it is a “very narrow policy change”—a description orthodox Christians would challenge.

To soften the blow, World Vision explained that it will still demand from its staff abstinence before marriage and fidelity within. “This is not an endorsement of same-sex marriage,” Stearns said in defense of the new policy. “We have decided we are not going to get into that debate. Nor is this a rejection of traditional marriage, which we affirm and support. We're not caving to some kind of pressure. We're not on some slippery slope. ... This is not us compromising.”

Stearns is deceived. This isn't neutrality—it's open rebellion. If we're going to follow Christ, we need to follow

Him in every aspect, including the biblical design for the family. And while there are several areas of Scripture that are open to interpretation, this isn't one of them.

"Children," writes the Gospel Coalition's Trevin Wax, "are the ones who suffer when organizations like World Vision, under the guise of neutrality, adopt policies that enshrine a false definition of marriage in the very statement that says no position will be taken. Children are the ones who suffer when President Obama (rightly) mourns the rampant fatherlessness in the African-American community, while simultaneously campaigning for marriage laws that would make fathers totally unnecessary. Children are the ones who suffer *and die* when 'sexual freedom' means the right of a mother to take the life of her unborn child. Sex is our god. Children are our sacrifice."

In the faith community, leaders are still struggling to find the words for World Vision's very public divorce from biblical truth. Franklin Graham, who joined me on my radio show yesterday, was absolutely taken aback.

"World Vision maintains that their decision is based on unifying the church—which I find offensive, as if supporting sin and sinful behavior can unite the church," he said.

I'm grateful for the pastors who have remained true to Scripture, but let's be honest: It's the pastors and pulpits that have paved the way for this heresy with their silence. And ultimately their silence leads not to the straight and narrow but to the wide and broad gate of destruction. By choosing this path, World Vision has merged with the culture its supporters entrusted them to minister to.

Our family has supported the work of World Vision, with one of my daughters actually participating in one of the group's "30 Hour Famines" this past weekend. But we cannot and will not support an organization that exalts the approval of the world

over the authority of the Word. In the end, when Christians desire the praise of man over the glory of God, they earn neither. The church should continue to support Christian aid and humanitarianism, but only through organizations that remain true to the Word of God.

Tony Perkins *is president of Family Research Council.*