

World Vision President to Retire After 20 Years at the Helm

Rich Stearns, World Vision US's longest serving president, announced to staff today his intention to retire, initiating an orderly leadership transition process which will take place over the course of 2018. The board of directors has begun a national search to select a new leader. Stearns has committed to continue until the new leader is appointed and up to speed.

"For the past 20 years, it has been both a privilege and an honor to serve alongside tens of thousands of dedicated World Vision staff in 100 countries around the world," Stearns said. "Their passionate commitment to stand in the gap for the world's poorest children has inspired me every single day."

Dr. Joan Singleton, Chair of the World Vision US board, said: "Rich is an exceptional leader, and replacing him will be the most important undertaking of this board. We are committed to diligently seeking God's will in selecting the individual whom God has prepared to lead World Vision U.S. in this next season. We are confident that just as God called Rich 20 years ago, he has also prepared a new leader for such a time as this. We are grateful for Rich's commitment to continue to lead World Vision U.S. until the new president has settled."

The board has retained the services of Carter-Baldwin, an executive search firm that specializes in Christian ministries. Carter-Baldwin is embarking immediately on a search process which will consider both internal and external candidates.

This announcement comes at an important time in the organization's 67-year history. Under Stearns' leadership, the organization just completed a year marked by its strongest

growth in a decade for funds raised to help children and families in need. World Vision and its two million supporters, child sponsors and partners appear to be on track to achieve their bold vision of helping 30 million children by 2022. "Achieving this goal will be 'job one' for the next president of World Vision U.S.," says Stearns.

Stearns joined World Vision U.S. as its fifth president in 1998 after a successful 23-year corporate career. Through such previous roles as CEO of both Parker Brothers Games and Lenox, the fine china and crystal company, Stearns came prepared to lead the organization into a season of dramatic growth and improved operational efficiencies. During his presidency, the organization's annual revenues grew to over \$1 billion as it expanded its work to serve even more children.

Among Stearns' greatest contributions are his urgent calling to the church in America to respond to the global AIDS pandemic in the early 2000s and the widespread influence of his first book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, winner of the Evangelical Publisher's Association Book of the Year award in 2010. In recent years, Stearns has boldly called the church to engage in the global refugee crisis and to follow Jesus into the most difficult places in the world to alleviate human suffering and care for the world's most vulnerable children.

"I am as excited as ever about World Vision's future," Stearns said. "And with the leadership of our Board, senior team, faithful staff and our army of supporters, we will continue to pursue our inspiring mission—to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the kingdom of God."

Rich and his wife, Reneé, have been supporters of, and passionate advocates for, the work of World Vision for more than 30 years. "We will always be a part of the World Vision family," said Stearns.