



P R E S S   K I T

Media inquiries?  
[media@plantwithpurpose.org](mailto:media@plantwithpurpose.org)



## **Plant With Purpose Plants 40 Millionth Tree, Set to Double Efforts by 2025 Milestone Makes Vital Environmental Impact and Helps Alleviate Poverty Worldwide**

SAN DIEGO, May 12, 2021 -- [Plant With Purpose](#), a leading Christian environmental organization, recently achieved the milestone of planting its 40 millionth tree. The U.S.-based group strives to reverse environmental degradation, the root cause of rural poverty around the world, particularly calling Christians to environmental stewardship and compassion.

Tree planting is one of Plant With Purpose's primary interventions and has been an integral part of its efforts for 35 years. The organization works with more than one-quarter million people across Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia.

"The trees we plant are part of a holistic community transformation," said Corey Chin, Manager of Monitoring and Evaluation for Plant With Purpose. "Every time someone gives \$1 to plant a tree, they're supporting not just a one-time action but an entire cycle of hope and sustainability for a community."

Plant With Purpose's tree planting programs promote holistic community transformation including environmental restoration, increased food security, self-sufficiency, economic development and spiritual growth. The trees are directly planted by the hands of the community members involved with the programs. In addition to tree planting, Plant With Purpose offers regenerative agriculture training and economic development opportunities through community savings groups.



The act of planting trees assists in reversing climate change and environmental degradation. Trees sequester carbon and have a cooling effect on the land on which they are planted. In addition, trees reduce erosion, increase water retention and enhance the water cycle, which supports more consistent rain. The combination of benefits that trees and forests provide enhances food security in countries that struggle widely with hunger.

“Unlike other organizations that plant trees, the work we do is community-driven and locally-led,” said Scott Sabin, Chief Executive Officer of Plant With Purpose. “Plant With Purpose provides resources to educate local farmers but leaves the decisions of where and what to plant up to them. We want to develop a self-sustaining cycle through equipping local communities to take ownership of their own initiatives.”

With ambitious goals, Plant With Purpose is on track to plant another 40 million trees by 2025 and also plans to expand operations to two additional countries. Planting a tree requires a donation of just \$1, but the organization offers opportunities for recurring gifts and establishing fundraisers.

To learn more about Plant With Purpose, visit <https://plantwithpurpose.org/>.

### **About Plant With Purpose**

Plant With Purpose is a leading Christian environmental organization. Founded in 1984, Plant With Purpose operates at the nexus of poverty alleviation, environmental restoration and spiritual renewal. Through years of holistic, community-led innovation, Plant With Purpose provides local leadership in global communities to equip families to reverse the structural and environmental root causes of rural poverty. This model transforms entire watersheds by integrating reforestation, regenerative agriculture, savings group activities, and environmental restoration. Plant With Purpose has planted more than 40 million trees globally and will double that number by 2030. For more information, visit [plantwithpurpose.org](https://plantwithpurpose.org).

# Backgrounder



Plant With Purpose is the nation's leading Christian environmental organization that strives to make a positive impact on the planet and alleviate poverty while specifically emphasizing the critical role Christians can have on the environmental crisis facing our world today.

Founded in 1984, and operating for the past 30 years under the leadership of Scott Sabin, chief executive officer, Plant With Purpose recognizes that while poverty and environmental issues make up two of the biggest physical threats in our world, the roots of these issues are, in fact, spiritual. Plant With Purpose's programs equip farming families around the globe to increase farm yields, heal damaged ecosystems, improve nutrition, and increase household savings and opportunities. Focusing on reversing deforestation, sustainable agriculture, economic empowerment and spiritual renewal, the integrated approach takes steps to solve both environmental degradation and rural poverty. The organization has currently established work in eight countries: Burundi, Dominican Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Mexico, Tanzania, and Thailand, with its global headquarters in the U.S. (San Diego, California).

Offering church, corporate and individual partnership opportunities, Plant With Purpose connects people to environmental and kingdom stewardship. Half of the world's tropical forests have already been cleared and at this rate, it is anticipated there will be no more rainforests in less than a century. Plant With Purpose is working to reverse this.

To date, the organization has planted over 40 million trees around the world and has had an important role in halting deforestation. While the earth loses forest cover, the opposite is true in places where Plant With Purpose works. Trees are essential in the prevention of soil erosion and heal barren hillsides where the land can once again be productive for farmers. Additionally, tree can restore soil by bringing buried nutrients to the surface and returning organic materials into the ground.



## **Annah Amani, Programs Officer, Africa**

Annah K. Amani (B.S., California State University, Northridge; M.P.H., University of California, Los Angeles; Ph.D., Clemson University) is the Programs Officer, Africa at Plant With Purpose. In her early childhood, Annah was a child refugee from Uganda to Los Angeles, California, during which she was aided by many people and non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International. The refugee experience sparked an interest in Annah for doing work that “aided” others in the global community.

Today, Dr. Amani is committed to doing progressive work in the fields of health, education, social justice and community development. Through her M.P.H. studies at U.C.L.A, she served as the team manager in the development of programs to prevent maternal mortality in rural Kenya. She went on to serve as the regional program coordinator for Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (now known as Unbound Uganda), an education-focused rural development child sponsorship organization.

Dr. Amani’s research sought to represent the voice of rural women in Uganda on the vital matter of birthplace choice. After completion of her Ph.D., Annah taught global health and other undergraduate/graduate public health courses as an adjunct lecturer for the Department of Public Health Sciences at Clemson University in South Carolina. She also worked as the Dean of the Digital School of Open Distance and e-learning at Kampala International University.

Currently, as the Programs Officer, Africa for Plant With Purpose, Annah serves as a key link between the San Diego office and both partners and programs in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burundi, and Democratic Republic of Congo, responsible for ensuring excellent communication in both directions so that priorities are clear and a genuine partnership flourishes. She relationally works with and alongside the RPM and local teams in a spirit of interdependent partnership while ensuring performance and accountability.

# Biographies



## **Philippe Lazaro, Communications Manager/Storyteller**

Philippe Lazaro is a San Diego native who returned home to work for Plant With Purpose in April 2017. As the Marketing Specialist, Lazaro connects supporters and advocates to Plant With Purpose by sharing stories of transformation. Utilizing both his international and organizational interests, he also collaborates with the development team to execute Plant With Purpose's marketing campaigns and public relations efforts.

Lazaro completed a dual-Masters program in International Studies and Nonprofit Management at the University of Oregon and holds a B.A. from the University of California Santa Barbara. Previously, he spent time in South Africa, caring for orphans and vulnerable children in Johannesburg, and before that worked in the American Heartland, serving as a regional representative for Liberty in North Korea.



## **Lynne Marian, Marketing & Communications Director**

Lynne Marian leads the Plant With Purpose marketing team and brings decades of experience in both Christian and global relief and development organizations. She is passionate about sharing the stories of our international partners and helping individuals, organizations and churches fulfill their vision to impact the global issues of poverty and the environment.

She previously worked as a consultant with organizations including World Vision, World Concern, Our Daily Bread and Outreach, Inc., where she was the founding editor/publisher of Outreach Magazine. She also previously served as a consultant at Brand Sherpa and as President of Stained Glass Communications. Lynne is also a life and executive coach.



**Bob Morikawa, Vice President, Innovation Lab**

Hailing from Toronto, Ontario, Bob Morikawa serves as the Director of International Programs for Plant With Purpose. Morikawa works remotely from Canada and works with field partners to facilitate the innovation of new Plant With Purpose programs and promote technical innovation amongst field staff and farmers.

Morikawa joined the Plant With Purpose team in 1997 with a Master of Science in Forest Genetics from Michigan State and a Bachelor of Crop Science from the University of Guelph. Morikawa has worked in agriculture and biological sciences at the university, private sector, as well as nonprofit levels. He has personally planted thousands of trees and enjoys traveling to field programs to work with our partners, the land and farmers. Morikawa frequently buys green coffee from Plant With Purpose farmers and roasts it at home. As he says, "It's more economical, more fun, and really, the best coffee ever."



**Christi Huizenga-Renaud, Vice President Marketing & Development**

First joining the team as Program Officer for East Africa, Christi Huizenga-Renaud shifted gears after five years, in 2015 to lead and scale up Plant With Purpose's development and marketing efforts. She is responsible for collaboratively setting and executing strategy to ensure Plant With Purpose's fundraising and marketing initiatives are best in class, continuously improving, and communicating impact.

Huizenga-Renaud earned an M.B.A. in International Business from Thunderbird School of Global Management and a B.A. in Business Communications from Calvin College. She has a diverse background in international development, marketing, fundraising, sustainability and community development. Renaud moved to San Diego to begin her career with Plant With Purpose in 2010, having formerly worked for International Justice Mission and the Millennium Village Project, among other organizations. She has lived and worked in Africa, India and Central America.

# Biographies



## **Scott Sabin, Chief Executive Officer**

Since 1995, Scott Sabin has served as the Executive Director, now CEO of Plant With Purpose, the nation's leading Christian environmental organization that empowers the poor in rural areas around the world where poverty is caused by deforestation. Over the past 25 years, the organization has grown from a single program in one country to include a staff of hundreds of foresters, agronomists, pastors and facilitators who have empowered farmers in hundreds of communities to plant over 40 million trees and dramatically reduce poverty in their communities.

As a reforestation advocate, Sabin recognizes its importance as a key component of sustainable community development around the world. Before working for Plant With Purpose, he served for seven years in the Navy. He holds a B.S. in Political Science from Oregon State University and an M.A. in International Relations from the University of San Diego. He and his wife Nancy, a nurse practitioner, live in San Diego and have two children, Amanda and Danny.

## **Doug Satre, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships**

As the Director of Strategic Partnerships, Doug Satre works with churches, corporate partners, individuals, and foundations to build awareness and financial support of Plant With Purpose's mission to transform the lives of the rural poor. He actively contributes through writing and speaking to communicate Plant With Purpose's work to a wide audience. Satre also leads church and community partners on Vision Trips, where he enjoys connecting U.S. partners to international community partners.

After graduating from the University of California Santa Barbara with a degree in history, Satre earned his Master of Divinity at Fuller Seminary. He and his wife Kathryn lived abroad for five years where he pastored the American Protestant Church in Bonn, Germany. In his current role, Satre combines ministry experience with fundraising experience to connect with others who share a passion for the mission of Plant With Purpose.



# Biographies



## **Corbyn Small, Development Director**

Corbyn Small serves as Plant With Purpose's fundraising and outreach arm in Denver. As Regional Representative, he focuses on building partnerships throughout Colorado and surrounding states.

Small joined Plant With Purpose following graduation from Point Loma Nazarene University in 2009. After working for two years as outreach coordinator, Small moved to Denver and successfully pioneered Plant With Purpose's first regional representative position. In this role, he acts as a bridge between foundations and donors and the work of Plant With Purpose along the Front Range in Colorado and other major western cities. He educates partners about our programs and builds awareness and financial support for these programs. Small also leads Vision Trips to our international communities, connecting U.S. supporters to partnering farmers.

Small remains a central part of the San Diego office through frequent visits and Skype calls. He loves meeting people in unique coffee shops, virtually joining meetings, sharing the Plant With Purpose story, and exploring the great outdoors with his wife Caroline.

## **Milmer Martinez Vergara, Regional Partnership Manager**

Milmer Martinez Vergara joined Plant With Purpose in 2007 as the Program Officer to Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Vergara acts as the liaison to Plant With Purpose's programs in Latin America, working with local leadership to plan activities, monitor and evaluate our performance and develop local capacity to facilitate a high-impact transformational development process.

Born and raised in Colombia, Vergara earned an undergraduate degree in biology and a graduate degree in Dolphin Behavior and Molecular Ecology. He has a background in conservation biology and has been published in marine conservation peer-reviewed journals. Utilizing his expertise in science, Vergara incorporated conservation biology into Plant With Purpose's transformational development model as a method to restore and protect natural ecosystems and consequently create resilient rural communities.

His fluency in Spanish, English and French is pivotal in maintaining strong relationships with Plant With Purpose field offices and in-county community partners.



# Biographies



## **Josh Kyallo, Vice President of International Programs**

Josh Kyallo joined the Plant With Purpose team as Vice President of International Programs in 2021. With over 28 years of leadership experience in international program development and humanitarian response – developing and directing nonprofits in Africa, East Asia, Europe, and the U.S. – Josh possesses a deep understanding of the multidimensional nature of poverty and commitment to the nuance required to create a world free from it.

Born in Kenya, Josh has lived and worked in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Somalia, and USA and has designed and led programs impacting 55+ countries around the world. In 2020, Josh launched Community Rising Africa Network (CRANE) to encourage and promote self-reliance by connecting African innovators with resources and partnerships. He served as founder and managing director of this organization that creates sustainable solutions for health, education, poverty alleviation, and development challenges affecting millions of vulnerable populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa. He has served as high school and university teacher of Literature and Swahili, project manager, program manager, deputy country program director, country director six times, regional director twice, director of global strategic partnerships twice, and executive leader twice for over 10 nonprofits, including Save the Children, CARE International, AMREF Health Africa, Agency for Cooperation & Development, Partners for Development, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, U-TOUCH Inc, Firelight Foundation, HealthRight, and Text to Change Mobile.

Josh is a servant leader at heart with a wide and far reach, extending his coaching, communication, and experience in management and leadership across cultural, language, and physical boundaries. His fluency in English and Swahili are a huge asset in developing and maintaining relationships with international programs and partners. He has a track record of securing and managing funds from all the leading bilateral and multilateral donors, 40+ foundations, and private donors in diverse development and humanitarian contexts.

Currently, Josh lives in San Diego, CA where he enjoys spending time with family and serving in the community. He is a fitness freak who has played competitive soccer and run charity marathons around the globe. He also enjoys hitting the gym regularly, has been involved in stage theater acting and directing, and is passionate about literature and creative arts.

# Statement



## Plant With Purpose Joins World Religious Leaders in Call to Care for Creation Ahead of COP26

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 15, 2021 – Following a [joint statement](#) by Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), [Plant With Purpose](#), a leading Christian environmental organization in the United States issued the following statement:

“Plant With Purpose firmly believes Christ calls us to care for the Earth and for our neighbors, especially those who are the most vulnerable. We are also called to unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Last week Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and Catholics -- three major branches of the Church -- came together urging Christians to ‘listen to the cry of the Earth’ and take action to better care for both the planet and our neighbors in need. Plant With Purpose joins these leaders in the call for Christians around the world to come together honoring our common love of Jesus and our common call to care for our planet and our neighbors.”

### **About Plant With Purpose**

Plant With Purpose is a leading Christian environmental organization. Founded in 1984, Plant With Purpose operates at the nexus of poverty alleviation, environmental restoration and spiritual renewal. Through years of holistic, community-led innovation, Plant With Purpose provides local leadership in global communities to equip families to reverse the structural and environmental root causes of rural poverty. This model transforms entire watersheds by integrating reforestation, regenerative agriculture, savings group activities, and environmental restoration. Plant With Purpose has planted more than 40 million trees globally and will double that number by 2030. For more information or to donate, visit [plantwithpurpose.org](http://plantwithpurpose.org).

# Statements Regarding Climate Change



- Glaciers cover 10% of all land and store about 70% of the world's freshwater. Based on recent surveys, around 99% of glaciers are in retreat.
- Local devastation from increased glacial runoff results in soil erosion and farmland infertility.
- When temperatures rise and ice melts, increased water flows from the ice caps into seas and oceans, resulting in rising waters and warmer oceans. This creates a threat to marine life and triggers the risk of ecological disasters for coastal populations.
- Half of the world's tropical forests have already been cleared and at the rate we're going, in less than one century there will be no more rainforests.
- Deforestation is one of the world's most urgent and ongoing threats.
- Forests provide oxygen while absorbing carbon dioxide; they also provide nutrients and stability to the soil to help the growth of other plants and are key to the water cycle.
- In an analysis conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands, out of 181 countries, The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) ranked as the 12th most vulnerable country to climate change and the 5th least prepared. The DRC will be subject to increasing temperatures and inconsistent rain. However, socioeconomic threats are even higher. "Food security will be affected due to crop losses and failures, increased livestock mortality, negative impacts on fisheries, and damage to infrastructure," it summarizes.
- 2018 saw a 20% spike in wheat prices in the U.S. and European markets that connected to heatwaves and drought. Climate change is predicted to cause lower crop yields, disrupting the food supply chain in Africa and Central America.
- Half of the Great Barrier Reef is dying after 93% of the reef was devastated by coral bleaching in 2016.  
NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York reported 2020 as the warmest year yet with the global average temperature 1.84 degrees Fahrenheit (1.02 degrees Celsius) warmer than the baseline 1951-1980 mean.

# Christians and the Environment



God created a world designed for perfect relationships. These relationships include the ones between people and God, people and each other, as well as people and creation. The problems our planet faces—poverty, pollution, inequality, climate change—are the results of broken relationships.

Plant With Purpose believes that as Christians, we have a responsibility to speak into important conversations of our time surrounding the environment, and even to lead, in the name of Jesus. Being silent can be interpreted as us not caring about something so important to the world we hope to impact for Christ. After all, the wonder of nature is, in itself, a testimony of our Creator.

Research shows that many Christians in the U.S. say there is no evidence for climate change and also that the climate is not affected by human behaviors; however, some Christians in other countries are not skeptical, because they are living and seeing it daily. Plant With Purpose aims to change this belief by informing and educating, primarily through creation care, spiritual care and poverty alleviation.

The environment is a leading contributor to poverty around the world. In the majority of countries with a high poverty rate, the population heavily relies on agriculture for a living. The typical estimate is 70% support their family from agricultural practices but in extreme poverty-stricken countries, it is up to 80% or 90%. Following the responsibility to take care of the poor and love our neighbors, as Christians we must step into the role of acting in favor of the environment.

# Suggested Interview Questions



- How did Plant With Purpose start?
- What is the mission of Plant With Purpose?
- In which countries does Plant With Purpose work?
- How do you communicate with the people in the countries you have programs in?
- Why should Christians care about the environment?
- What are the major effects of climate change?
- What does Plant with a Purpose do to equip farming families around the world?
- How does the environment impact poverty? Could you give us some specific examples?
- Could you share some stories of people or communities impacted by Plant With Purpose?
- How could someone become a purpose partner with Plant With Purpose?
- How has COVID-19 affected the poverty rate and what are some challenges you have seen that have followed the pandemic?
- What distinguishes Plant With Purpose from other serviced-based humanitarian organizations? How are the approaches different?
- When I donate to plant a tree, will I know where my tree is planted and the impact it will have on a community?
- What if I want to give more than one tree?
- What tree species are Plant With Purpose farmers planting?



**Paul Penley Ph.D. Managing Director, Research Division at  
Excellence in Giving**

“Plant With Purpose has the strategy and results to literally bring people out of rural poverty. Very few ministries have such a well-documented impact.

“The watershed methodology has a spillover effect in communities where neighbors who aren’t even directly involved in the programs see a significant reduction in key poverty indicators simply because of the larger impact on the environment and the way neighbors share what they are learning.

“This is the bottom line for us, Plant With Purpose’s intervention erases the need for school scholarships, food handouts, free clinics and child sponsorship because now the family can take care of their own needs through increased income partially spent on education, healthcare and more nutritious foods and partially saved for the next emergency or small business opportunity.”

“Plant With Purpose is getting it right. They are ready to handle significant investment in their watershed programs today.”