

ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

NO-ONE GETS LEFT BEHIND

Finding out ISIS were approaching their village in Iraq, Tarfa and her husband Hamed* had little choice but to flee. Along with many others, they left their home and livelihoods behind, desperate to escape.

After walking for some time, Tarfa experienced every parent's worst nightmare. In the panic, her son had gone missing and no-one knew where he was.

'Without thinking I decided to go back and search for him,' says Tarfa. 'I was told that it was dangerous to go back and that ISIS would come to kill me, but I insisted.'

What courage that must have taken. A love so powerful, even in the face of fear and danger. It's a love we know well. To leave the others behind and to go back, searching to find the one (Matthew 18:12).

Relief

Finally, Tarfa found her son asleep in some straw. He had become tired of walking and had stopped to sleep. Her son was safe – alive and unhurt. Tarfa was so relieved.

'I grabbed his hand and we walked together until we joined our family. Many families lost their children – I am so thankful to still have mine,' she says.

Conflict has caused widespread suffering across Iraq. More than 3.4 million people have been uprooted from their homes and communities.

Many displaced families suffer extreme hardship and debt as they struggle to afford essential items. Tarfa and her family are living in a camp. They are grateful that they are able to be together as a family, but times are hard.

Recovery

Our local teams are at work in Tarfa's camp, committed to helping meet people's physical and emotional needs.

'Tearfund's assistance is very important for us – the hygiene kits contain soap and washing powder, which is very important for a healthy life,' says Hamed. 'We can wash our tent, mats [and] our clothes.'

As well as providing clean water and hygiene kits, Tearfund is helping communities to recover and move on from the conflict.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray that God will keep families like Hamed and Tarfa's safe and together.
- Lift up everyone who has been displaced by the conflict in Iraq. Pray God's comfort and protection over them.
- Pray for lasting peace for Iraq.

**Names changed to protect identity.*

A NOTE FROM...

'Reading Tarfa's story I couldn't help but be struck by her immense courage – staring fear in the face, motivated by love, she was able to find her son and keep her family together. It's the gentle reminder I needed that love wins out. I hope whatever fear you're facing, you'll know this truth too.' **Rachael Adams, Brand and Communications Team**

WHAT ON EARTH IS POVERTY?

It may sound like an odd question to ask. However, you might be surprised by our answer at Tearfund – it's been hiding in plain sight in the pages of the Bible...

Imagine for a moment that you need to go to the GP. You have an uncomfortable, painful condition and it's beginning to trouble you.

Your doctor says, 'I know exactly what's wrong' without examining you or asking any questions. He or she immediately writes you a prescription. You're not convinced they've made a correct diagnosis. As a result, you're not sure the prescribed medication is going to work.

Asking the right questions

What has this short 'thought experiment' got to do with poverty? Simply, if you make a hasty diagnosis about what poverty is, you're likely to offer a highly imperfect cure or even leave things in a worse state than when you started.

People can be incredibly generous if they think they can help make the world a better place. The question is, how can we do that effectively?

In the past, charities and governments have tried to end poverty around the world and nothing seemed to change – people, nations, stayed poor. So, as you can see, 'what is poverty?' is an important question to consider before you try to help set it right...

Magic money trees

If you asked people for a definition of poverty, I suspect most of them would talk about money – not enough of it, to be more precise.

The World Bank defines people in poverty as those living on less than \$1.90 (around £1.50) a day. It's a useful benchmark, but really, it's an incomplete picture – so much else needs to be addressed.

Charities and governments have often been accused of simply throwing aid at people in poverty. Cash Assistance makes a huge difference in the lives of individuals and communities, but it can't solve poverty alone. To address the root problems, we need to go deeper.

Other measures of poverty such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and The Happiness Index look past income alone. They also allow for things like health, education and access to key resources and services. This seems like a much more rounded definition.

However, Tearfund's understanding of poverty goes further still – deep into the pages of scripture. We believe poverty has its roots in broken relationships. It's a broad, biblical understanding, and it helps us think more clearly about a truly biblical response.

In the beginning...

The Bible tells the story of creation – God calls it good as he creates it. Human beings, God and the natural world were all created in harmony with each other.

That harmony was broken by the Fall (Genesis 3) and our turn from God. People usually think of the Fall as creating a broken relationship between humans and God. However, as Genesis describes it, the result of our turn from God has meant multiple broken relationships: between ourselves and God certainly, but also our relationship with ourselves, with our fellow humans and with the whole of creation.

The symptoms

All over the world we see poverty springing from these four types of relationships being broken and dysfunctional. Take, for example, our relationship with God's creation: it's easy to see the cost of our treatment of the natural world – overconsumption, famine, flooding and extreme temperatures that destroy crops for the poorest.

Or consider our relationship with ourselves: at Tearfund, we believe everyone has been made in God's likeness with infinite dignity and worth. When men and women don't recognise this, they can often feel powerless to rise out of the terrible poverty they face.

Often, when our partner organisations work with people to help them change their lives, they start with a series of Bible studies. Through the passages, they can communicate to the community their true worth and the amazing God-given resources they already have, locally as well as within themselves. That understanding releases people to become incredible change-makers – God has created them and they are good and able.

Part of the solution

The great news is that, through Jesus Christ, God is now at work to restore all of these severed relationships – not just our personal relationships with God, but with ourselves, each other and our natural environment.

As Jesus says: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)
At Tearfund, we believe that we're called to join in with this work – along with Christians everywhere. And we will keep on working as 'restorers' until Jesus finally returns and completes this work.

PLEASE PRAY

Dwell, briefly on each of the four types of broken relationship and ask God to show you where you need help and healing:

- Your relationship with God.
- Damaged or broken relationships with others.
- How you view and treat yourself.
- Your relationship with God's created world.

Finally, consider that, as a child of God, you have been asked to join in with the work of healing broken relationships. Ask God how he wants to use you in this work.

WALKING IN ANOTHER'S SHOES

By Tearfund's Lucy Dunne

The glorious, warm Zambian sun beats down on the leafy green trees as David Temfwe, director of the Jubilee Centre, welcomes us and smiles warmly. We're standing in the grounds of the Jubilee Centre's offices in Ndola, a far cry from the small house where the charity began nearly twenty years ago.

Founded in 2000 by David's father in his family home, the Jubilee Centre may have grown in size, but their vision has always been big. With a passion to equip the local church to address poverty, they work to raise up and support leaders to work out God's justice in local communities. As we chat, David shares how working with Tearfund volunteers has been a key part of this mission.

One church

'For us, the global church means different cultures interacting, growing, challenging and empowering each other. It would be very easy for us to simply ask Tearfund to send money or donations to support our programmes. However, hosting Tearfund volunteers is so important in our vision to be part of God's global church, and can go even further than donations.

'Many people living in impoverished areas of Ndola are used to being overlooked. They never get any attention from people in government. So when volunteers give up their time and money to work in the poorest parts of the community, it reflects Jesus' heart.

'Jesus went into the darkest places and wanted to spend time with those who were seen as the lowest people. When volunteers do the same it reminds people how much value they have in the sight of God, but importantly it also reminds them that they have something to give.

'When teams leave they are able to explain how much they have learnt from Zambian culture; from the people, the worship and the way we look at God, community and love. In Zambia we are often consuming content from the western world. But when volunteers share all they've learnt from us, we are reminded that we have something to show other people.'

Changing together

Talking to David is a reminder that through sharing experiences and taking the time to understand others, people are changed. But the impact isn't just local. David explains the changes he also sees in the volunteers themselves.

'When teams come and experience life here, it's very rare that they aren't impacted and changed. Some people even describe it as being 'wrecked' because their lives are never the same again. Often they've seen the effect of poverty on television or in the news reports, but when you walk with people who are barefoot – not because they like the feel of the sand on their feet, but because they don't have the money to buy shoes.

'For us it's an opportunity to grow people's mindsets and help them understand what poverty looks like. When volunteers return home, they have a different outlook on people and situations.

At the Jubilee Centre we are really passionate about getting boots on the ground, and having people actually go through what we're going through. We want them to feel the reality of the situation for those living in poverty, because that's what solidifies what Christ did on the cross. Jesus wanted to bring cultures, nations and peoples together under one banner. When we understand each other's joys and challenges we are united. That's what really transforms the church.

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

Thank you that we are part of one global church. Would you strengthen your church, and replace any division with unity and love.

Bless the work of Jubilee Centre, and all our partners around the world as they work through the local church to tackle poverty. Thank you for the opportunity to volunteer and spend time learning from and supporting our brothers and sisters around the world.

Amen

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Trading in foreign currency has been made illegal in Zimbabwe. Living costs are rocketing, and supplies of fuel and power are plummeting. Pray for people who could be pushed deeper into poverty as a result of this, for stability, and for our partners doing all they can to help communities in most need.



Please continue to pray for people struggling due to the ongoing economic and political crisis in Venezuela, and for those trying to cross into other countries. Pray especially for the areas bordering Peru and Ecuador, where thousands of people are arriving every day.



Due to its sensitive nature, this prayer point is not available to print. To read it, please see the digital version of the One Voice email.