

ONE VOICE

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

THE VILLAGE THAT WAS SAVED BY GRAVITY

By Jason Wain

It was a gruelling walk for Priscilla to the nearest water source. So they brought the water to her.

Priscilla stands proudly beside the village tap as she poses for a photo. It has brought clean water to her village in Uganda for the first time.

Delivering water to a remote mountainous region like hers isn't easy. The secret is a gravity flow scheme – installed by Tearfund's local church partner the Ugandan Diocese of Kigezi.

Put simply: the team find a source of water so high up that it will consistently travel downwards to the communities who need it. Gravity directs the water to reservoirs and, in turn, to the taps.

Finding the flow

It took the team a year to construct, using over 14 miles of pipe. However, this system has been built to last. And it brings clean water to over six thousand people.

It's certainly great news for Priscilla. Previously, she'd had to make a long walk to the nearest streams to get water – sometimes late at night, often carrying an infant on her back.

She sometimes had to go without food due to the lack of water to prepare it. 'Life was a bit hard,' she says.

Not only that, but the water was often contaminated. 'We had diseases in the community,' she says, 'especially the young children.'

Fresh water, fresh start

All this has changed now, and not just because of the new water source. 'They trained us in basic hygiene too,' says Priscilla. 'We now know what to do to prevent these diseases.'

And the benefits don't stop there for the villagers. They have found new ways to make a living: 'People make bricks with the water and sell them. They can also grow vegetables, tend cattle and sell fresh milk.'

'I've got time to make money and grow food,' says Priscilla. 'Life is so much easier now.'

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray that we wouldn't take safe, running water for granted, but live with gratitude for what we have.
- Lift up Priscilla and her village in Uganda. Pray that God will bless them as they continue to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Pray for a world in which no one has to go without safe water.

Jason Wain visited Uganda on a two week placement with Tearfund Go. Discover the perfect placement for you at tearfund.org/go

A NOTE FROM...

'Water is the stuff of life, yet hundreds of millions of people around the world don't have easy access to this basic necessity. We will never stop working to change that. Thank you for your prayers, which are as much a part of our work as laying down a pipe.'

Iain McDonald, Global Volunteering Team

WE'RE BURNING DOWN CREATION: WILL THE CHURCH SPEAK OUT?

What's going on?

Fires are destroying huge areas of the Amazon rainforest – one of the most important environments on Earth.

They have largely been caused by loggers and farmers clearing the forest for agriculture. It has been a problem for many years; however, recently the laws to regulate this practice have not been enforced, allowing the problem to spiral out of control.

This year's fires are the most widespread on record, and the Brazilian government has been heavily criticised by the international community.

Why is it important?

The Amazon is the largest rainforest on the planet. Home to 34 million people, it also contains thousands of plant and animal species that are found nowhere else. The fires have devastated this natural wonder, and have forced vulnerable indigenous communities from their homes.

By burning the rainforest, we're burning the Earth's lungs.

The rainforest is a huge store of carbon. When it is burned, this is released into the atmosphere, contributing to global heating. Furthermore, the destruction of the rainforest reduces the Earth's ability to reabsorb that carbon, since trees and plants turn carbon dioxide into oxygen. By burning the rainforest, we're burning the Earth's lungs.

Is this really an issue the church should care about?

Yes.

These fires are another wake-up call that a climate emergency is wreaking havoc with our world. When we harm nature, we harm ourselves; when we damage creation, we insult its creator.

The church must not be silent on this.

Christians, with our biblical mandate to steward creation and care for the most vulnerable, should be first in line to defend creation and speak out against the climate crisis, which affects the poorest communities most.

What can we do?

The Amazon fires are the latest in a long line of injustices against God's creation. They are part of a systemic problem in which governments and companies put economic greed above caring for people and for nature.

To tackle problems like the Amazon fires, we must address the wider climate crisis and the systems and attitudes that are causing it. Here are a few things that you can do:

Pray: As with everything, we start with prayer. We have included a prayer at the bottom of this article for you to use on your own, in your Bible study group or at church.

Speak up: Does your church discuss environmental and justice issues? If not, could you be an advocate for them? Visit tearfund.org/action to find out more about how your church could connect with these issues.

Campaign: Write to your MP – or even meet them in person – and let them know that the climate emergency and caring for the environment should be a top priority. You can contact campaigns@tearfund.org for more information on how to do this.

Act: Small actions can add up to make a big difference. You can reduce your carbon footprint by choosing to holiday in the UK or take the train to Europe rather than flying. You can also switch to renewable energy in your home and take steps to reduce food waste.

What we eat has an impact on creation. The fires in the Amazon have in part been started to clear the area for intensive agriculture and rear livestock. As the global population eats more and more meat and dairy, more forests will have to be destroyed. We can help by eating more plant-based meals as a healthy and environmentally-friendly alternative.

PLEASE PRAY

Creator God,

We lift up voices of anguish over what's happening to the Amazon. Lord, please stop the fires – both in the Amazon and anywhere else that forests are being recklessly destroyed.

We pray that you will open the eyes of governments, companies and individuals to the importance of safeguarding creation.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

MR MOTIVATED

Costa says he was never a fan of hard work. Then he discovered the joy of teamwork, and now he's unstoppable...

When Costa heard his name announced at church one Sunday he didn't know what to expect.

The pastor at his church in Huambo province, Angola, told him that he had been selected to join a Church and Community Transformation project supported by Tearfund.

The project aimed to inspire and equip local people to determine their own future with their own resources, and ultimately to work their own way out of poverty. If Costa had fully understood this at the time, he might not have been so keen to join the group. He was, in his own words, lazy, and didn't enjoy work.

'I used to ask my father for things, and when he refused I would complain a lot,' says Costa. 'I just followed others to church and imitated them. I had no desire or time to read the Bible and no time to help other people'.

Unburying his talents

Costa had joined the project thinking he was going to be given resources. But from the beginning, the course leader taught Costa that the project doesn't give you material resources. Instead, it encourages you to open your mind and discover your own God-given strengths and resources.

The group began with Bible studies and moved onto team-building activities. They had to light a fire together and work out how to cross a river. It's similar to the sort of thing you might do on a work team-building day in the UK – for Costa, these activities were a revelation.

It was during the project's practical sessions that Costa began to understand the importance of working together. 'It's not good to work alone. It's better to work in a team and share ideas,' he says.

'Something has changed,' says Costa. 'I feel I must help my neighbour. If I have spare things I feel the need to share them with those in need.' Today, whenever Costa is asked to do a job far from his house, he is ready to serve.

The Bible studies were eye opening too. Costa used to think that the sermons he heard at church were about things that didn't exist. But later, whenever he followed the message in the sermons, he found there was a desire within him to put the teaching into practice.

Hands of kindness

'Before, he [Costa] was not brave enough to admit to others that the life he was living was wrong and they should avoid living the same kind of life,' says Costa's wife, Miquilina. 'Since he joined the project, however, he has been serving in the way he always should have done, with the goodwill to help others — even those who live far away.'

Costa says his relationship with his family has changed a lot since joining the project. 'In the beginning, as with all couples, married life starts well. But after a certain time, the good relationship becomes sour,' he says.

After following Bible studies that addressed issues facing married couples, Costa recognised that it is his duty to help his wife look after their children, and their relationship has sweetened again.

Together they hope that one day their life won't be dependent on Costa's current job. He drives a motorbike taxi – it's dangerous work and he hopes that he will find a government job or work for a private company.

Costa's pastor will certainly be able to provide him with a glowing reference now: 'Costa is one of the most reliable people at church and is always willing to help out,' he says.

PLEASE PRAY

- Remember Costa and his family – they are desperate for him to find a new job and have asked for your prayers.
- Pray for all the men and women who are spreading this biblical message of empowerment across Africa – that thousands more will find the inner resources to escape poverty.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 MPs return to Parliament on 3 September after the summer recess. Please join with us in praying for wisdom, integrity and unity as politicians determine the future direction of the UK. We pray that the Lord would place a desire for justice and compassion for people living in poverty at the heart of British politics.

 Please pray for the Renew Our World campaign, of which Tearfund is a founding member. The campaign aims to shape a world that reflects God's love for creation. In Brazil, our staff are facing enormous difficulties, with churches split along political lines. Please pray for unity and wisdom as we try to address environmental issues in that country.

 It's been two years since violence in Myanmar forced the Rohingya people to flee to Bangladesh. Thank you for praying with us during this time. Please continue to cry out to God for a peaceful, permanent resolution to the crisis. And pray in particular for the Rohingya children – that despite everything they can have a bright future.