

ONE VOICE

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

SECOND HONEYMOON

The first few months and years of marriage can feel like hard work, it's often said. Once the festivities have died down you have to learn to work as a team and accommodate each other's wishes and foibles. It was no different for Samuel and Marie* from Makeni in Sierra Leone. Thankfully, they had a helping hand...

The newlyweds rented a small, single room in the village. However, it was clear all was not well in their world; they were soon being described as argumentative by their neighbours. It was a tough time for the couple. They struggled to make ends meet and their relationship became more and more strained.

'Life was tough and we had a poor relationship,' says Samuel. 'We never used to plan together.'

The pair regularly attended the local church, and it was there that they received help to turn things around. Tearfund and local partner organisation, NEHADO, helped to launch the process known as Church and Community Transformation (CCT) in their church. As part of this, the church ran a series of participatory Bible studies that enable churches to unlock their God-given power and potential.

Who do you think you are?

The people who take part are encouraged to discover their true identity – created in God's image – and how they therefore have the potential to change their and their community's lives. It was a game-changer for the couple.

They had been told before that the Bible contained good news, but they had never realised the full extent of that good news.

As the couple continued, their relationship flourished and so did their motivation to build a better future. They started a business selling kitchen utensils and other household items, before moving onto property development. The pair already have plans to expand this work.

'We feel blessed and grateful to God for all these blessings, and to our pastor for opening our eyes and understanding,' says Marie. 'We believe that these teachings truly made the difference in our lives.'

Please pray

Father God, we thank you for the work you are doing through NEHADO that leads to churches and communities being transformed. Thank you for the joy you have brought into the relationship of this couple. We pray that more and more people will be blessed in their lives and their marriages as they take part in CCT around the world. Amen.

**Names changed to protect identities.*

A NOTE FROM...

'What's true in the UK is also true in Sierra Leone. Marriage is a partnership, and to flourish it needs not just the married couple but also God at the centre. I know this from my own experience with my wife, Sara. So I can absolutely relate to Samuel and Marie's story.'

Peter Shaw, *Tear Times* editor

FINDING SHELTER IN YEMEN'S GRAVEYARDS

Farah* is a mother of 12 children and has 14 grandchildren. She lives in a graveyard. It's the safest place.

Two years ago, fighting erupted near her village in south west Yemen. Some of Farah's neighbours were killed or injured. 'We did not hesitate to leave our homes that same night,' she recounts. 'In those moments, we did not think about anything but our safety. I can't see very well and I can't walk for long distances, but the fighting forced us to leave.'

'As we left our house, the sounds of airstrikes, shelling and buzzing surrounded us from all directions. The bullets were chasing us and the warplanes were throwing missiles as we fled.'

Fleeing on foot

Farah wasn't able to take any of her things with her, she just hoped to find somewhere safe: 'We spent the whole night walking on foot, in the morning we found ourselves in an area we had not known before, so we decided to stay here until someone could come to help us.'

They found themselves in a place where no one stopped them from setting up shelter – a graveyard. But with no possessions or materials to build that shelter, it was a challenge to start again in the bleak outdoors.

'It was the worst day in my life when I left my house,' recounts Farah. 'I have not seen anything good since that ominous night. I hope to return to my house as soon as possible.'

The worst crisis

After four years of conflict, Yemen has been pushed to the brink of famine. It has been labelled the world's worst humanitarian crisis. According to the UN, 80 per cent of Yemenis need some form of humanitarian assistance and two-thirds of all districts in the country are in a 'pre-famine' state. In reality, this means children, women and men are on the brink of starvation.

In addition, a huge cholera outbreak has killed thousands and infected many more. With the conflict causing such insecurity, access to medical services has proved difficult for many people.

'The needs have intensified in Yemen. Millions of people are hungrier, sicker and more vulnerable than a year ago,' says Karen Swartz Soerensen, Tearfund's Country Director for Yemen. 'More than ever, a humanitarian response is becoming the only lifeline for millions of Yemenis. Together with our partners, we are committed to doing all we can to relieve the suffering.'

Tearfund is reaching out to people like Farah through our partner organisations. We have been providing families with safe water, sanitation and hygiene materials to reduce the risk of illness and disease. Our partners are also ensuring families receive water filters, chlorine tablets, oral rehydration salts and cholera treatment.

Seeds and tools have also been distributed to help families plant vegetable gardens, and emergency food packages are being distributed to vulnerable families.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Ask God to comfort Farah and women like her who have been through such trauma and upheaval. Pray for their protection, provision and healing.
- As the Yemen conflict enters its fifth year, pray for a peaceful resolution, which will be crucial in averting famine and easing the suffering of the Yemeni people.
- Thank God for the courage and commitment of Tearfund partners bringing relief and hope to people like Farah.

** Name changed to protect identity*

THE COURAGE TO TACKLE EBOLA IN THE DRC

In recent weeks, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported a marked increase in the number of Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tearfund and our partner organisations are there, working in challenging circumstances to try and curb the spread of the disease.

The current outbreak is primarily in the North Kivu and Ituri Provinces, in the east of the country. As of 31 March, 1069 people have contracted the virus and 665 have died.

The outbreak is a major concern as it is centred in the two cities of Beni and Butembo, which are major trading hubs for the region. Some humanitarian groups having pulled out of the area after attacks on health facilities. Tearfund and our partners continue to work there and we are committed to serving the population.

High-risk work

Working alongside faith leaders we are sharing information with local communities on how to prevent Ebola spreading. This involves producing Ebola prevention songs in local languages for broadcast on the radio and for use by choirs; talks and announcements in church services; and door-to-door sharing. Tearfund is also helping 50 health centres to set up triage units, isolation units, latrines and basic water supplies.

Dr Kakule from Beni told Tearfund staff that the Baturana Medical Center had been attacked and destroyed in 2018. This meant fewer people came for treatment. But, after Tearfund helped them restore the centre, more patients than ever are making use of the facilities. This is helping in the fight against Ebola.

Constant threats

Tackling Ebola here doesn't come without risks. Some members of the local community are sceptical and can be hostile to those working to stop the spread of the disease. Meanwhile, a number of armed groups remain active in the area and pose a threat to the population, as well as those working there.

When asked what keeps them going in this challenging context, Aaron Wolcott from Tearfund's team in the DRC says, 'We and our partners are honoured to serve our neighbours here with the love of Jesus. No one wants Ebola to keep on spreading. That is motivation for everyone to stop the virus.'

PLEASE PRAY:

- Ask God to bring comfort and healing to those who've lost loved ones.
- Pray that people will take heed of the information they are being given to stop the virus spreading any further.
- Pray for God to protect the Tearfund team and our partners – that they would be kept safe and healthy. And pray for their families who worry about their loved ones as they work close to the virus.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Pray for the upcoming general and presidential elections in Indonesia on 17 April. It's the first time that the country has had both elections on the same day. Ask for a peaceful process, and for compassionate leaders to be elected.



Join us in praying for the World Bank as they meet this week. Tearfund staff will be attending the meeting to hand in our *Light up the darkness* petition, which calls for greater investment in local, renewable energy.



Weeks of torrential rain has caused flooding in north Syria. Pray for all who are affected, especially people living in temporary shelter – displaced from their homes by conflict – who urgently need shelter, food and health care. Ask that help would reach people in greatest need, as flooded roads are restricting access.