

# One Voice

Your weekly  
prayer resource

tearfund

## The church in Burkina Faso that's putting God's word into action

**In Burkina Faso, another devastating drought has taken hold. These extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe due to the climate crisis. And they are putting everyone at risk. But the church has the teaching to help turn the tide.**

Pastor Traore lives with his wife and three children in a town in the west of Burkina Faso. He's been leading a church for 11 years and is noticing the difference that the climate crisis is making on his community. Rivers are drying up. There are fewer plants and animals. Once fertile land is becoming unfarmable. And it's leaving desperate hunger in its wake.

### Caring for creation together

Through the support of our local partner, CREDO, Pastor Traore is running Bible studies in his church to help his congregation understand God's purpose for creation – and for themselves.

'As creator, when God created, he put everything in place before placing man in the garden,' explains Pastor Traore. 'And he even ordered man to cultivate the garden. What does cultivating mean? Maintain it. So, if we have forgotten that... we are going to do the opposite of what God asks of us.'

'We have to be the ones to protect the environment... Even if the world ends tomorrow, I want to plant a tree today.'

### Getting the message out

And it's not just the church that is benefitting from the message. 'If we just come to church and leave without trying to impact the community... really it doesn't make sense,' Pastor Traore says. 'Really, I feel that there is hope... courage is being born in hearts.'

Pastor Traore is working with CREDO to identify people within the community that are most at risk due to the drought. They are being put forward for training to help teach them new farming techniques that will increase their harvest – even in these challenging conditions.

This harvest time, let us come together and pray for those who are struggling.

## Pray with us

- Pray for people who are experiencing trauma and stress in the aftermath. Pray for peace, comfort and renewed strength and hope.
- Thank God for how he continues to work through the church in Haiti. Pray for even more answers to prayer – of people being reached with provision, especially in rural, hard to reach areas.
- Pray for long-term solutions to help people get back on their feet and reach their God-given potential.

## A note from...

'Every day we see the reality of the climate crisis. Lives and whole communities are at risk - but the church can make a real difference. We are incredibly grateful for your prayers, which we know are powerful and effective.'

**Slanwa Gaston, Country Director for Burkina Faso and Niger**

## Pray for the world



This October, Tearfund is running Emerging Influencers – a seven-week leadership programme for 17-23-year-olds. Thank God for the young people who will go on this course – for their hearts for justice and love for Jesus. Pray for its success, and that this new group of leaders will inspire a whole generation to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.



The number of coronavirus cases in Ethiopia is increasing. Although the vaccine is available, uptake is low due to misinformation, suspicion and conflict in the country. Tearfund is running programmes to counter this misinformation. Pray for success with this, and that more people will get vaccinated in Ethiopia.



Violence and armed conflict continue to increase in Myanmar. Pray for God's protection on families who are caught in the violence. Pray that Myanmar Christians will be strong in their faith and to continue to be salt and light in their communities. And pray for decision-makers to have a clear vision to resolve the current crisis in a way that leads to sustained peace.

# A warm cup of welcome: how coffee can bring people together

**There's nothing quite like sitting down and savouring a warm cup of coffee (or tea, of course!). But it's even better when you're sitting down with friends – or even strangers. Hospitality is a vital part of our spiritual lives, so how can we brew up more of it?**

First, there is the bright sound of laughter. Joy fills the air like warm sunshine. A group of women are sat in a circle on the ground, their colourful dresses making a statement of life. They share stories, catch up on what's been going on. Then, the smell of fresh coffee brings further smiles.

We are in an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony. It is a revered tradition in the country, and part of the fabric of everyday life for millions of people. It's also central to self-help groups – a Tearfund initiative that is changing lives.

## Care, love and support

Self-help groups bring together 15 to 20 people from some of the most vulnerable communities. Through learning new skills, discussing community issues and saving together to invest in small businesses, the group members are empowered to overcome poverty and flourish.

During the Coffee Ceremony, everything is done together, because these women know that together is where the power is. Roasting and grinding the beans, heating the water, brewing the coffee and then pouring the steaming, fragrant drink into the cups. It is all a ritualised act of community and hospitality.

'Offering someone a cup of coffee is how we manifest the spirit of welcoming and love,' says Nigatwa, a self-help group member in Adama, a large town in central Ethiopia. 'We care, love, and support each other; it is the glue to our social life. When we sit for coffee, we feel rested and relaxed.'

## Strangers and angels

This spirit of welcoming and love could not be more important. Especially these days, with the coronavirus pandemic causing so many people to feel the pain of isolation.

Hospitality and welcome are key themes in the Bible. We see this in verses such as Hebrews 13:2 – 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.'

It is also evident throughout Jesus' life. He was always being invited (or inviting himself) into strangers' homes. One of his most famous parables, the Good Samaritan, has hospitality at its heart, with the stranger caring for the injured man's needs.

## A culture of welcome

With churches in the UK beginning to open their doors again, we can once again display this vital characteristic of Christian life.

There is nothing quite like being welcomed into a space with a beaming smile, warm words and an offer of something to eat or drink. In a world where so many have felt isolated – a world that can, at times, feel unwelcoming – churches can offer a love and acceptance that can truly change lives.

And it doesn't just need to be in church. It is currently harvest season – a time when we give thanks for what we have and consider what we can share it with others. How can we all offer the gift of hospitality to others, now and in the future?

## Pray with us

Gather together with a group of family, friends, colleagues, or fellow church-goers. If you're not able to meet in person, this can also be done online. At your gathering, make a hot drink together. Say a short prayer before you begin, thanking God for the good things you've been given. Take your time making the drink, being present to each part of the process. Notice the sounds and the smells. Once you have poured the drink into the cups, say a further blessing over them, praising God for the power of community, and asking for more the love and welcome of Christ to fill the church.

# What harvest tells us about justice

**Harvest is a time of thanksgiving – a time to give glory to God for the good things we've been given. But the Bible also teaches that harvest is an opportunity to create a more equal world.**

What comes to mind when you think of harvest? Perhaps it is traditional harvest festivals, where food is brought before the altar and we sing of 'all things bright and beautiful'. Perhaps it is gratitude for all the things that God has given us. Or maybe it makes you think of the disconnection in the modern world between people and the land.

But does it ever make you think of justice and equality?

## Divine provision

In the Bible, we find that harvest and justice are closely linked. Specific provision is made in God's law to ensure that harvest time is used to create a fairer, more equal society:

'When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow... When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.'

‘When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow’ (Deuteronomy 24:19-22).

### Sharing blessings

In Leviticus, similar instructions are given to leave a portion of the harvest for people living in poverty (Leviticus 19:9-10 and Leviticus 23:22).

The message is clear. We are blessed for a reason – to share that blessing with others. Abundance is an opportunity to create a fairer society, one in which the marginalised and oppressed are provided for. God’s kingdom is one where no one has to go without – where all are provided for equally. Our job as the church is to help build this kingdom here and now.

### Pray with us

Creator God,  
We thank you for the gift that is creation –  
For the beauty of the earth and how  
you have created us to care for it.  
We are sorry for the ways we have neglected this,  
Help us to work together to repair the world.  
*Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayers.*

Generous God,  
We thank you for the gift of food –  
For how it brings us together and nourishes us.  
We pray for those without, whose harvests and  
store cupboards are empty,  
Help us work together to share the world’s resources  
so that everyone can be fed.  
*Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayers.*

Sustaining God,  
We thank you for the gift of those who farm  
and prepare our food –  
For their labour, their innovation and their care.  
We pray that everyone will be able to work with dignity,  
that there will be no more poverty,  
Help us work together to call for just and fair systems  
of pay and working conditions.  
*Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayers.*  
Amen.

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