

# ONE VOICE

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

## **UNSTOPPABLE LOVE**

**God's love is relentless. He is 'an ever-present help in trouble' (Psalm 46:1) – and it's his love that motivates us to go where the need is greatest. With your prayers, we will keep striving to make a difference for vulnerable people around the world, whatever circumstances they face.**

It's hard to imagine suddenly losing one of your parents and your home. But this is what happened to young Sandip\*, from a small village in western Nepal. In August 2014 the unthinkable happened: catastrophic flooding destroyed 3,000 homes, including Sandip's. And the flood took something even more precious from him – his father.

Torrential rains caused rivers to burst their banks, sweeping away homes and livelihoods with little warning. As Sandip's family ran to escape the waters, his father, Madhav, fell and hit his head. As their home had collapsed, the family took refuge in a temporary shelter.

In the ten days they were stranded there, Madhav's health deteriorated. They had lost everything and had no money to take him to hospital. After ten more days, he died. Sandip was only seven years old.

### **Unshakeable hope**

Shock and grief encompassed the whole family. Yet, despite this tragedy, there was still hope. God, in his relentless love, was not about to let go of this young boy or his family.

Sandip's mum, Pratima\*, is determined for him to still receive an education. Despite the pain of losing her husband, she knew she had to keep going, and found work cutting meat in a butcher's shop. It's not enough to cover her children's needs, but thankfully our local partner could help through the local church.

Pastor Rajaram, who leads the church, took the family under his wing and treated them as members of his own. Empowered by the training he received from Tearfund, he also began an after-school tuition class. Tearfund's partner were able to provide stationery and other school materials. Even after his world crumbled around him, Sandip was able to cling on to the hope of a brighter future.

### **Building futures**

'Sandip goes to the tuition,' Pratima, tells us. 'It has helped a lot to improve his study. He is willing to do extra study. He recently passed his grade.' Sandip loves his schoolwork. When he grows up, he wants to be a doctor and help people like those affected by the floods.

Working alongside and equipped by Tearfund's partner in the area, church members gave up their time and resources to build a new house for the family. This was a huge comfort to Sandip's family.

Nepal faces a lengthy recovery. In addition to the floods of 2014, the country was devastated by two powerful earthquakes in 2015, and experienced more flooding last October. Our staff and partners are working hard to build houses, restore water supplies and sanitation. Please continue to pray for this vital work.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

- Lift up Sandip and his family. Pray that God will continue to be close to them in their grief, and pray that Sandip's dream of being a doctor will come true.
- Ask God to empower the most vulnerable people with the resources and encouragement they need to build for the future.
- Pray for people like Pastor Rajaram, who are leading churches at the forefront of the fight against poverty. Pray for God's strength and provision.

#### **A NOTE FROM...**

'The camera crews may move on, another news story may take centre stage, but God's love isn't going anywhere – and neither are we. Please pray today to strengthen our work to rebuild lives around the world.'

**Douwe Dijkstra, Country Director for Nepal**

*Thank you for your prayers. If you feel moved to give to our spring appeal to help people like Sandip, please visit [www.tearfund.org/potential](http://www.tearfund.org/potential)*

## **FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: GUATEMALA**

*To mark 50 years of Tearfund, we're sharing about 50 countries where we've worked, celebrating God's provision and power to transform, and praying for each of these nations. This week we're in Guatemala.*

The cradle of Mayan civilisation, Guatemala's great natural beauty and strong indigenous culture have often been overshadowed by civil war. It is also highly vulnerable to natural disasters: there are a number of active volcanoes in Guatemala, and frequent earthquakes.

Social inequality is widespread, particularly in rural and indigenous communities. These groups tend to have a lower level of education, unequal access to land and assets, and fewer life opportunities in general.

Like many of its neighbours, Guatemala experiences frequent and senseless violence, and suffers from organised crime and street gangs. On average, 101 murders are reported every week. Sadly, life expectancy is among the lowest in Latin America: half the population is younger than 19, and more than half of children under five are chronically malnourished.

Tearfund first worked in Guatemala in 1976, responding to an earthquake that killed around 23,000 people. Today we're helping churches to support people to transform every area of their lives – seeking healing in their relationship with God, with themselves, with each other and with the environment.

### **'I was very angry'**

Two people who have seen this healing in their lives are Juan Pablo and his wife Gabriela\*. Juan is a health worker who lives in a rural indigenous community. He got more than he bargained for when he attended some Tearfund-supported training...

'One day, at a meeting with community leaders and [Tearfund partner] Asociacion Vida, I heard about a project to start promoting health near my community,' Juan shares. 'I could tell that this was an opportunity not to be missed.

'My dream has always been to reduce the amount of disease in my community – because disease causes more poverty.'

But something came up at the training that he wasn't expecting. 'The society in which I live is a macho society,' Juan explains. 'I lived that way. I would even physically mistreat my wife. I remember very well the first day of training: early that morning, my wife did not have breakfast ready, so I was very angry. I hit her and left, not caring much about her pain.'

### **Radical change**

Once Juan attended the training, however, there was a dramatic shift in his perspective. 'I learned how to diagnose and treat the most common physical illnesses, but, more importantly, in each class we talked about the values of the Kingdom of God,' he says. 'We spoke about justice and injustice, even in the family. I felt a great pain in my heart for being unfair, for beating my wife.

'When I got home, she was still afraid. She thought I was still angry, but she did not know that the word of God had radically changed my life. I praise God, because from that day I never hurt my wife again. Furthermore, I now value her as the Bible tells me to value her.

'From the first day of training my life changed. I realised that although I still want to be rid of illnesses in my community, it must begin in my house with my wife and my children.'

### **PLEASE PRAY:**

- Please pray for peace in Guatemala and that rates of violence will rapidly decrease.
- Pray that local churches will be well-equipped to tackle the problems within their communities.
- Praise God for the change in Juan's life. Pray that his family will continue to grow in their relationship with God, and that his vision for a disease-free community will come to pass.
- Please pray for greater equality in Guatemala, and that indigenous people will no longer be marginalised.

## **FROM THE KINGDOM OF COMFORT, TO THIS KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

**A reflection by Tim Jupp – founder of the Big Church Day Out, former *Delirious* band-member, and friend of Tearfund.**

For 17 years, I had the privilege of travelling the world with the band, *Delirious*. Playing music created amazing opportunities to go where few others, even the preachers, could go. During that season of my life, we visited some of the most poverty-stricken areas of the world, way outside my comfort zone, where profound memories were created that I still reflect on today.

Many of the projects I've seen helping people survive in these places are connected to the local church or church networks, some of them in partnership with Tearfund. And through these experiences, I learnt to love the church in its many wonderful shapes and sizes.

This is no less true of Tearfund. While there are many organisations that reach out to those in great need, one of the things that has always attracted me to Tearfund is its love and commitment to the church, whether that be local or global. It's a reminder too that, with all the challenges we are faced with when working towards an end to extreme poverty, our hope rests and remains because we have the church to be the body of Jesus to help build God's kingdom here on earth.

Being a musician, today I'm suggesting that our prayer comes from the words of a song. It's a *Delirious* song, written shortly after one of our many trips where we were hugely challenged by the poverty we encountered.

### **Let's pray.**

Save me, save me  
From the kingdom of comfort where I am king  
From my unhealthy lust of material things

I built myself a happy home  
In my palace on my own  
My castle falling in the sand  
Pull me out, grab my hand  
I just forgot where I came from

Save me, save me  
From the kingdom of comfort where I am king  
From my unhealthy lust of material things

I rob myself of innocence  
With the poison of indifference  
I buy my stuff at any cost

A couple of clicks and I pay the price  
 Coz what I gain is someone else's loss  
 Save me, save me  
 From the kingdom of comfort where I am king  
 From my unhealthy lust of material things

Save me, save me  
 From the kingdom of comfort where I am king  
 To this kingdom of heaven where you are king

*Are you going to the Big Church Day Out? If you are, we'll see you there. If not, there's still time to book at [www.bigchurchdayout.com](http://www.bigchurchdayout.com)*

## PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

✓ Pray for the people of Burundi, where political instability is contributing to a worsening crisis. A referendum is due to take place on 17 May, to decide whether the constitution can be changed, allowing the current president to stand for another term. Please pray for peace and stability.

✓ The fighting in South Sudan has continued into its fifth year. The third round of peace talks, initially scheduled for the end of April, have been postponed. Please pray for warring parties to find ways to end hostilities. Pray also for the church and other organisations promoting peace.

✓ Protests against new taxes in Nicaragua last week were repressed by the government, resulting in violence and looting. Please pray for peace to return, and lift up churches there as they seek ways to respond to this moment of crisis. Please also pray for protection over our partners and the communities they work with.

*\*Names changed to protect identities*