

# ONE VOICE

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

## **SHOW THE LOVE**

**"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.' (Mark 12:30-31)**

We are part of a global community and we face challenging global issues – one of the most pressing is climate change. We hear a lot about it although we don't always see it in our own lives. But the people Tearfund is working with in many countries around the world are having their lives turned upside down by it.

Billie Anderson is part of Tearfund's Campaigns team, encouraging and equipping Christians to connect with issues like climate change as an expression of our love for those in poverty. Here she shares how we and our supporters are doing this.

**Love.** It's central to what we're called to as Christians. And so, as people celebrate Valentine's Day this week, we're also taking part in **#ShowTheLove** – The Climate Coalition's annual celebration of all we love that is affected by climate change.

Our response to the call to **love our global neighbours** takes many shapes, but last week it saw us sewing some green hearts for our MPs, including Vince Cable, the Teddington MP, to remind them that climate change is affecting people living in poverty now.

In Saffron Walden, Essex, Jean Mead involved the young people of her church in making green hearts to give out. Saffron Walden Community Church is a Connected Church, partnering with Sagoal in Nepal, so in their service on Sunday they spent time thinking about how climate change affects people in Nepal.

The sermon was on the Good Samaritan – putting faith into action – and so they included a slot celebrating Tearfund's 50th birthday with our short jubilee film. Jean (pictured with a birthday balloon for Tearfund) says, "I also made a green heart, with sparkly felt, and sent it in a card to my MP. I will be interested to see how she responds. I'm delighted that our young people are getting involved."

Look out for MPs and others wearing green hearts this week. By drawing attention to the people and places affected by climate change, together we can encourage decision makers to shift to clean energy and tackle climate change now. And if you haven't already done so, [please sign our petition to the World Bank](#) on clean energy access for people living in poverty.

Let's also pray for our MPs, for those affected by climate change and for those working with them to find solutions.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for MPs and decision makers to be impacted positively this week by the #ShowTheLove campaign. Pray for wisdom as they consider the broader issues and impact of climate change.
- Pray for Tearfund staff and partners who are working with those affected by climate change. Partners like World Relief who are helping Aaden and his village restore their environment in drought-stricken Somaliland.
- Pray for Christians around the world who are finding ways to live differently and reduce their carbon emissions, such as the young people in Nigeria who set up the Jos Green Centre to increase recycling and influence their local government.

**A NOTE FROM...**

'Climate change is not just about the future, it is about the here and now, impacting some of the world's poorest people. I see it every day here in Bangladesh, among those we work with. Thank you for praying into this crucial issue.' **Jacob Sarker, Country Representative for Bangladesh**

**FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: BURKINA FASO**

*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 Burkina Faso.*

**Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa that has been plagued by military coups and recurring droughts. Almost half the population live in extreme poverty and around 80 per cent are engaged in subsistence farming.**

Tearfund has been working with the most vulnerable in Burkina Faso since the 1970s. Much of the work is focused on improving people's ability to feed their families and to earn enough to break the devastating effects of poverty.

**The lure of gold**

Moussa Ouedraogo is a farmer in the village of Bidi-Mossi in the north of Burkina Faso. Poor rainfall and land degradation meant that the family's harvests were not enough – within a couple of months of harvest there was nothing left and months to go to the next harvest.

'Some men and women were going to work on the traditional gold sites in spite of all the risks,' says Moussa. The methods used in this mining activity are detrimental to both the health of those working on the sites and the environment. But there is also a high social cost to individuals and families.

'This is how I deserted my family, abandoning my wife and children to spend my time on these sites. I was taking drugs, and other narcotics (alcohol, tablets, etc.) in order to keep up. As a result, I had become violent; I beat my wife and kids the few times I went back to the village.'

### **Finding true wealth**

Tearfund partner CREDO has identified and worked with 300 vulnerable families in Bidi-Mossi, including Moussa's.

A range of support ensures that families learn good farming practices, livestock farming and vegetable production, enabling them to farm all year round. Other training helps them to diversify their income sources and tap into other resources. Access to wells, livestock, seeds and equipment also help families secure their futures.

'Today my life has changed,' declares Moussa. 'I work with my family in our field and we do gardening; I was able to save and buy two sheep to raise. CREDO opened my eyes and helped me to find a normal life. I now have hope and will work to ensure a future for our children who are a great wealth.'

### **A bold target**

Tearfund aims to reduce the physical and spiritual poverty of 250,000 people in Burkina Faso by 2022. Our partners work with communities like Moussa's to provide sufficient access to food, as well as addressing issues around nutrition, literacy and hygiene.

Tearfund knows that reaching its target in this nation requires the mobilisation of the church to impact its community. They have seen an awakening in the churches through their church and community mobilisation work and rural churches are being empowered to act in their communities.

'We dream of flourishing communities who have access to quality water, health services, and diversified and profitable livelihoods, and a church fully engaged in community development,' says Programme Co-ordinator, Ines Bonkougou. Join us in praying for Burkina Faso.

- Praise God for every family that has benefitted from the work of CREDO and other Tearfund Partners. Pray that these families will continue to build on the foundations they now have and pray for our local partners as they continue the work.
- Pray for the education system in Burkina Faso. While levels of primary education have increased there are many challenges, such as children leaving school to work in the gold fields, a lack of teachers, overcrowded classes and low levels of enrolment in rural areas.
- Pray for the nation's authorities as they face issues such as social strikes, growing insecurity in the north and the threat of a food crisis this year. Pray for courage and the wisdom of God to lead well.

## **SEVEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER FASTING THIS LENT**

**Maybe you're already in the habit of fasting. But across much of Western Christianity, fasting in the spiritual sense seems to have fallen out of fashion. We might make a simple sacrifice for Lent – giving up chocolate, for example – but are we really conscious of the full power and meaning of fasting?**

Fasting is abstaining from something we see as important in order to seek intimacy with God; it is a way to dethrone the idols in our life and seek a new perspective. Here are seven reasons why you should consider fasting this Lent:

### **1) As an antidote to materialism**

Lent is the opposite of indulgence. We're living through the most materially abundant time in human history, but do we really need all the things we own? Giving up some of these things for a season can recalibrate our mindset so that God and people, not things, come first.

### **2) To tune in to God's voice...**

It's a cluttered world out there. We're drowning in information and noise, yet we're starved of wisdom and the still, small voice of calm. Fasting filters out the chaos-buzz of modern life and helps us tune back in to the quieter, gentler rhythms of heaven.

### **3) ...and to put your trust in him**

When we give up something that we think we need, we put our trust in God, believing that he is the one who takes care of our needs. Once all of the other distractions fall away, what is truly important in your life? And how much are you willing to sacrifice for your faith?

### **4) To remind us how fortunate we are**

When fasting, we might experience hunger for a brief amount of time, knowing that we can easily switch back to a feast; yet, for nearly a billion people around the world, hunger is a daily, seemingly inescapable reality. Through fasting, we learn to value properly the richness that God has given us, not wasting what we have, but enjoying it with thankful hearts.

### **5) To follow Christ's example**

The season of Lent symbolises the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. Fasting was a crucial part of preparing for his ministry. Later, when Jesus spoke about fasting, he said, 'when you fast', not *if* you fast. While he doesn't command us to do it, he assumes that we will.

### **6) To grieve for a broken world...**

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. In ancient times, ashes were used to symbolise grief or repentance. Much of the world is on its knees – more than 10 per cent of people live in extreme poverty. Our fasting can be an expression of grief, a declaration that we won't ignore the brokenness around us.

### **7) ...and to pray for its restoration**

Fasting gives an urgency and a sharpness to prayer. When Jesus' disciples were faced with an especially stubborn demon, Jesus declared that some demons can only be expelled through prayer and fasting. Fasting clearly has immense power, and it would be a waste to not tap into this power while we pray for a better world.

If you can't abstain from food for any reason, there are plenty of other ways to fast. For example, you could join Tearfund's Ruth Valerio (<https://ruthvalerio.net/>) for a plastic-free Lent. However you choose to spend Lent this year, we're incredibly grateful for your prayers. Thank you.

## PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



The UN estimates 13.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria. Please continue to pray for those caught up in the conflict and the recent escalation of violence across northwestern Syria and Eastern Ghouta. Please pray for peace and the safety of all in the region. (Please do not share this prayer point online.)



Northeast Brazil has experienced drought for the last seven years which has left a trail of crop failures, loss of livestock, and water shortages in the region's cities. Please pray for rain and for our partners in Brazil as they seek a sustainable solution to this problem.



Violence has recently broken out in the north-eastern Ituri Province of Democratic Republic of Congo. Many women and children have been killed and villages burned, causing thousands to flee their homes. Please pray for those affected and that the situation will not escalate further.