

ONE VOICE

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

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Prayer is the most powerful tool we have; it underpins everything we do at Tearfund. Our mission to end extreme poverty is a spiritual battle as much as anything else, and your prayers could turn the tide.

Pete Greig – Tearfund ambassador, founder of the 24-7 Prayer movement and Senior Pastor at Emmaus Road, Guildford – shares a thought on prayer...

Dr Raymond Edman was close to death in Ecuador. His friends were outside digging his grave. At 2.00am, he sat bolt upright and asked his astonished wife for his clothes.

Many years later, Dr Edman was testifying to this miraculous healing at a church in Boston. An older lady enquired when it had taken place and he told her the exact time and date.

Immediately, she began flicking through a dog-eared journal. 'There it is!' she exclaimed, pointing at a scribbled note on that date with evident delight. 'God said to me, "Get up and pray – the devil's trying to kill Raymond Edman in Ecuador!"'

I'm so grateful for the way Tearfund helps us to pray about matters of life and death. But it can be hard to keep praying for an end to extreme poverty. Unlike that lady in Boston, we may not meet the people that we pray for, or see the answers in our lifetime.

The apostle Paul reminds us that our prayers are powerful nevertheless, because, '...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' (Ephesians 6:12)

Let's allow the example of that faithful intercessor in Boston to inspire the way we pray today.

PLEASE PRAY:

- As you read the prayer points or stories later in this email, pause to listen for the whisper of the Holy Spirit. You may be given a particular name or circumstance. Dare to pray for that specific thing just as that lady did that night.

- You could write one of the prayer points (later in this email) down on a post-it note and stick it somewhere you'll be reminded to keep praying – maybe on the bathroom mirror as you clean your teeth, or by the kettle as you make a cup of tea?
- If you can, **please join in this Sunday 27 May** as churches and individuals around the world pray the prayer below, written by Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. If you can't join in on Sunday, please pray it now.

A spoken prayer for Tearfund's 50th anniversary

Gracious and generous God, you became poor so that we might be enriched by your love, and you gave the world's wealth and resources as a common inheritance of all human beings.

We pray you would strengthen your church to be a beacon of hospitality for the poor.
We pray that, seeing the light of Christ's love, the nations and peoples of the world may fight not to kill, but to outdo one another in care for the poor, and in actions of gracious generosity.

Through him who for our sakes did not grasp the wealth of heaven, but instead gave all to live for us as a slave, and die for us in pain, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen

A NOTE FROM...

'Sometimes, we will never know if our prayers are answered in the way we would like, but isn't it so inspiring to hear stories like the one above? Whatever the outcome, I'm so grateful that, as it says in 1 John 5:14, he always hears.' **Martha Cooper, Churches Team**

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: IRAQ

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 Iraq.

Iraq is a diverse nation in the heart of the Middle East, with a population of 37 million. Tearfund began working in Iraq following the First Gulf War in 1991. Throughout both Gulf wars, Tearfund was engaged in supporting local partners in the region of Kurdistan.

Since the start of the current conflict in summer 2014, Tearfund has been responding to the physical and psychological needs of those whose lives have been devastated. An estimated 8.7 million people are in need.

Around 1.5 million people are internally displaced in Iraq. Many are living in tents and unfinished buildings in extreme temperatures – very hot in the summer months and freezing in the winter. Many people, like Marteen and Vanteen*, have experienced unthinkable trauma.

Stolen dreams

Marteen and Vanteen have five children; the oldest being seven and the youngest one month old. Before 2014, they had a house, and Marteen was a driver, and, as he puts it, 'making a living from working a real job'.

Marteen and Vanteen had hopes, dreams and happiness, which they describe as being stolen from them:

'One day, we heard on the television news that ISIS had entered Iraq and we were afraid. In June 2014, they entered the city of Mosul; and were killing innocent people. We had relatives inside the city who fled to join us; but two months later, they [ISIS] entered the district of Sinjar. We received news that our village would be taken and so we left.

'We fled to Erbil, but after three months we had no money left and had no choice but to move into a camp. We lived in this camp for three years. In 2017, we were able to move back to our village together with around 50 other families. We lived in a relative's house as our house was destroyed. At that time there was no electricity and water, no health services, and there was no help. It was hard to stay there.'

Voices

Tearfund came to the couple's village to build latrines and improve access to safe drinking water. We were also able to distribute cash for the most vulnerable members of the community – including Marteen and his family.

'We were able to open a small shop selling groceries with this money, and we can earn a monthly income while we rebuild,' Marteen tells us. 'We thank you very much and hope that our voices will reach all the world and all the donors. We wish all the donors success with their wonderful work.'

Tearfund works with other international agencies and local government to identify and support the most vulnerable. This close cooperation allows us to respond effectively to the large-scale humanitarian need.

While much of the current work addresses urgent needs, we are also supporting activities that will have a significant longer-term impact for the people of Iraq, including peace building initiatives and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for peace across the country.
- Ask God to bring comfort and hope among those who have been displaced and have lost their homes, businesses, communities and families.
- Pray for physical and emotional healing for those affected by the conflict.

**Names changed to protect identities*

If you'd like to know more please visit our Iraq page at www.tearfund.org/iraq And if you've missed any other articles in this series you can find them at www.tearfund.org/pray

GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE A VISION TO END POVERTY IN PAKISTAN

Tearfund's News Editor, Andrew Horton, interviewed Adeel Rehmat, Executive Director of the Pak Mission Society.

When an earthquake shook the Shangla area of Pakistan in 2015 it left 279 people dead, 1,820 injured, and 100,000 homes destroyed.

As part of a global response, the then fledgling Christian organisation Pak Mission Society (PMS) became a partner of Tearfund.

Adeel tells us what it's like for a Christian-based charity working in a Muslim nation, and why he's so encouraged by a new generation of believers.

How did it all begin for the Pak Mission Society?

I think PMS is on a journey of faith. We were established before the earthquake in 2015, but at the time we were at a very early stage in our work, with no funding, no experience, and no exposure. After the quake, we really started to build the organisation.

When the earthquake happened it gave us the opportunity to work in areas where we hadn't been allowed to work before. Some national and international partners helped us to step into those areas, and we continue to work there today.

Tell us about the impact PMS has in Pakistan?

PMS wants to engage young Christians – to equip and train them for mission work, to reach unreached areas in Pakistan. Church and youth engagement is the heartbeat of PMS.

We are involved in health projects, education, disaster response, and circular economy initiatives (economic and production models which emphasise repurposing and recycling).

At first we were afraid, as Christians, to engage with the majority of communities. Now we are encouraged to work alongside them. There is an acceptance – by government and by the communities. We're walking with God and he's opening the doors for us. We just need to follow him.

Does being a Christian organisation, operating in a majority-Muslim country, raise any particular challenges?

About 80 to 90 per cent of our work is with Muslim communities, because we feel called to serve there. We want to go into those areas which are unreached, and where no one else is working.

Generally speaking, we're not discriminated against for being Christians, in fact we are well received. Yes, there were some fears in the beginning that maybe we were there to convert people, or that we were distributing Christian literature. We are very clear that we are here to just share God's love – regardless of race, colour or religion.

How important is it for PMS to have a distinctively Christian approach?

I think there are many secular organisations doing better work than us. So why are we doing this? I think God has called us to do things differently, to have a different impact. So I strongly believe that God wants us to be in these areas. God has called us to reach these people with his love.

Why are young people so important to the future of your work?

I think today in Pakistan there are many young people who are educated, who are qualified; they want to do something, they are passionate and they want to live and work differently. That's why I strongly believe that we need to help them move forward, in the same way that I was helped.

When I was starting out, I had no project management experience, financial management experience or community development experience. I relied on people to mentor and counsel me and it helped me to get to where I am today.

Young people have a thirst and a vision to do something, and we need to give them an opportunity.

Tell me about the communities that you work with, alongside Tearfund. What are the main needs they have?

According to a recent UNICEF report, Pakistan is the country with the second highest infant mortality rate in the world – it's very high.

Many people we work with lack basic facilities; many don't have enough food for three meals a day; many people don't have water; and many don't have the opportunity of an education.


There is also a need to empower women in Pakistan. It is a key issue. And there is big need to build the capacity of the churches and to develop more Christian leaders. Perhaps there is a need to share the experiences of other churches around the world. We need a new roadmap for how we can help churches engage with their communities.


Tearfund is one of those partners in Pakistan who want to see and implement things differently in terms of church engagement, youth engagement, and a circular economy. I'd like to build and strengthen our partnership with Tearfund.


PRAYER FOCUS:

- Please pray for the communities PMS is reaching and those who it would like to reach.
- Thank God for Adeel and his staff at PMS. Pray they will continue to be encouraged and strengthened in their work.
- Pray particularly for the young Christians in Pakistan, that their true potential can be nurtured, enabling them to do great things.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 A cholera outbreak in Adamawa, north-east Nigeria, has killed 12 people and infected more than 130 others. Please pray for communities in this war-torn region, that this outbreak will be swiftly contained.

 Please pray for people in the Sindh and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan, who are currently facing extremely high temperatures and water shortages due to the effects of climate change. Pray that God will be with those who are suffering, and that these conditions will ease quickly.

 Please continue to pray for the people of Burundi, where a new constitution has just been voted in. Pray for peace and stability, and for our partners doing all they can to help the many families there lacking food.