

ONE VOICE

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

CHRIST AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS: HOW FAITH CAN EASE ECO-ANXIETY

It was a sunny day across much of the UK, as thousands of children and many adults took to the streets on Friday 20 September. But it wasn't the sun that brought us out, it was the Earth.

Our beautiful world needs shouting about. It's God's creation, but we haven't treated it with the respect it deserves.

A UN report last year gave governments just 12 years to act before we run out of time to prevent dangerous levels of global heating.

Before then we need to reduce current emissions of carbon dioxide by at least 50 per cent. It's the only way to avert the worst effects of climate change, such as droughts, famine, and flooding.

Hoping for better

The Telegraph recently reported that an increasing number of children are being treated for 'eco-anxiety'.

Where do we find our hope? What can we say to those who are anxious about the future? Jesus said 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.' (John 14:1)

Even without diving into the context of when, where and why Jesus said this, they remain encouraging words. Our hope is in Jesus, and in his restoring love.

We can participate in Christ's restoration story by caring for our neighbours and for creation, offering a vision of a kingdom come by acting through love.

Stronger together

Further hope can be taken from our identity not just as individuals, but as the church. It's not just about 'what can I do?', but 'what can we do together?'

For some, a sense of anxiety comes from feeling like every lifestyle decision we make has an impact. We can feel isolated and guilty if we use a tumble-drier or need to drive to work.

But if we focus on what we can do 'together', we can replace some of our climate anxiety with a sense of purpose. Many churches have switched to renewable energy suppliers. And if we lobby our politicians as a collective, they are far more likely to take action.

Everyone deserves to live free from the fear of climate change. A world with cleaner air, less waste and less relentless consumerism is possible – if we join together in faith, hope and love.

PLEASE PRAY

Dear God,

Help us to hold on to hope, even in the midst of a crisis. Help us to hold on to peace, even when it seems impossible. And help us to hold on to love, taking action on behalf of our neighbours and your whole creation.

In Jesus' name, amen.

A NOTE FROM...

'The climate crisis can seem overwhelming when we approach it as individuals. But God, in love, invites us to partner with him in his great project to renew the world. When we unite as the church in prayer and action, extraordinary things can happen. We have reason to hope and reason to act.' **Kiran Rai, Campaigns Team**

WHAT ALBERT DID FOR LOVE

Albert was so in love, he agreed to come to his beloved's church every week. The experience transformed him – so, in return, he transformed the church.

As paid-up romantics will tell you: when you meet 'the one', you just know. And Albert thought he had met the love of his life.

Fatama worshipped at a local church in Lunsar, Sierra Leone, and that intrigued him.

'I saw her regularly attending and was really impressed by her commitment,' remembers Albert.

'I wasn't even a churchgoer, and wouldn't really call myself a Christian,' he says.

In for a penny

However, love will find a way. 'One day, I had the courage to approach her and tell her that I was interested in pursuing a relationship. She said, "Well, if you are interested in me, you will have to start coming to this church."'

So, as good as his word, Albert started attending Good News Baptist Church every Sunday morning with her. However, just as importantly, he started attending a brand new meeting that took place every Wednesday night.

The church had embarked upon something called Church and Community Transformation (CCT).

CCT is a process that helps participants discover their God-given gifts and resources. It encourages them to put those gifts to work – transforming their lives and the lives of the community. Tearfund and its partner organisations are promoting it across the world.

At the heart of the course is a series of Bible studies. For Albert, these were a revelation:

'I knew about a lot of things, but I didn't know how to put that knowledge to good use. My eyes were opened to see that if you don't use these skills, you will be accountable to God.'

Decorating hero

Albert confided in Fatama, who he was now getting to know. 'I told her that I have many gifts, one of which was interior design. She suggested that I go and meet the pastor, which I did. I told him that because of CCT I wanted to put my talents to use for God.'

This was music to the pastor's ears. The church was in desperate need of renovation and redecoration. They also needed an extension to the church and the pastor's home next door desperately needed attention.

And so this is how Albert took on the church renovation project. Rather than hiring builders and decorators, he called upon members of the church. In particular he set about motivating the young people, who until then had played very little role in the life of the church.

'I came to this church with one pair of trousers and one shirt, now I have many. I made myself available to learn and God has blessed us. I started to get the youths in the church and community involved. The people that ran the Bible studies did such a good job of encouraging me, that I was able to empower the young people.'

The youth even had a say in plans for the redesigned church, which is now complete.

Yes they can!

Albert proudly shows off the renovated and extended church. However, it's not just the building that has changed.

'CCT has transformed the whole church', he says. 'There were talented singers who had never used their gift to praise God. Now they're leading our praise and worship. And young people are actively involved – they know they've got something to contribute now.'

As for Fatama, who set him off on this journey of transformation: the couple are now happily married.

'I came to this church with one pair of trousers and one shirt, now I have many. We have two children and a plot of land, all because of CCT. I made myself available to learn and God has blessed us.'

PLEASE PRAY

Praise you God, for the incredible gifts and abilities that you have placed inside each one of us. And thank you for each member of Good News Baptist Church that has discovered this glorious truth. Help me to grasp this for myself and put your gifts to use, for your praise and glory. Amen.

RULING THE ROOST

It all began with a simple prayer in a women's fellowship. Now Annette and her team are tackling the blight of prostitution and the sexual exploitation of children in Uganda.

Justin knew he had a good business idea. Not only would it bring him a solid income, it was also something he'd enjoy doing. But to get any business off the ground, you need money. And that, he didn't have.

Justin lives in Mali, where poverty is widespread. Years of prolonged internal conflict has also left its mark. There aren't many opportunities for young people to find work, which is why new solutions are needed to help them earn an income for themselves.

Faith as small as a mustard seed

Knowing there's a high demand for chickens where he lives, but not enough businesses to fulfil that demand, Justin decided to take a leap of faith and champion his idea. He didn't have the funds to start his business, but he did have the loving encouragement of his father. Together, they built a hen house. But what's a poultry farm without chicks?

Searching for a solution

That's when Justin came across one of Tearfund's local partners, Jeunesse En Mission (JEM). JEM empowers young people in Mali to set up their own businesses. They provide training sessions on entrepreneurship as well as loans and technical support to help people turn their dreams into reality.

Justin received a loan through JEM, which enabled him to buy around 100 chicks. 'Before getting in contact with JEM, I was doubtful about how I would be able to buy the chicks... When I received the loan from JEM I knew that all was not lost, and I was hopeful that I would succeed with my business plan,' he shares.

Inspiring a new generation

'In this enterprise, I want to be an example, a role model for the youth of the church and the community... To do this I will always be open to learn and find new ways to increase the number of chickens I have, and grow my business,' says Justin.

Justin's determination to be a role model in his community could help inspire other young people to follow in his footsteps and find a way out of poverty.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for Justin's business, that it will continue to grow and be an inspiration to the community around him.
- Lift up the life-changing work of JEM and the challenging environment they work in. Ask God for wisdom for their team as they seek to help those who will benefit most from their investment and support.
- Pray for peace, protection and security for the citizens and communities in Mali. Pray for the young people in particular, that God will provide what they need, so their dreams become a reality.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Please pray for our teams in South Sudan, who are facing challenges of flooding, mud and destroyed roads as they reach out to vulnerable communities. The rains have been particularly heavy this year across parts of the country, and many people – including our staff – are suffering with malaria and typhoid. Please pray for strength and good health.



Praise God that 12 million Yemenis were provided with food parcels last month – a record number. However, the situation in Yemen remains bleak, with humanitarian organisations struggling to reach areas in desperate need. Talks were held at the UN this week to try and end the crisis; please pray that these will bear fruit, and continue to pray for the people of Yemen.



It's been one year since a massive earthquake devastated Indonesia. The disaster killed over 4,000 people, and left tens of thousands more homeless. The recovery process, in which Tearfund is involved, will take many years. Please pray for all those who were affected by the earthquake, and pray for God's blessing over the work to rebuild their lives.