

TRANSFORMATION

REFLECT

Meet Richard, a man whose life has been turned around by the local church in Uganda. Without it, he says, he'd be dead. 'I used to drink. I didn't care if my wife and children were without food. When I was drunk, I would beat my wife.'

Richard heard about the work of Tearfund partner Pentecostal Assemblies of God and visited the church.

'They were teaching about cornerstones,' he recalls, 'saying that the cornerstone keeps the house straight. Inside I knew I wanted my life to be straight. On Sunday I went to church and was prayed for.'

Coming to Christ has changed everything for Richard. 'When I gave my life to Jesus, my relationship with my wife improved. We started working together.'

Tearfund-sponsored church training is teaching them about planting the right crops in the right seasons and identifying resources they already have. 'I'm planning to buy two oxen when I have sold enough crops,' Richard explains.

However, the family lives in a grass-mud house which leaks and makes them prone to malaria. And, the erratic climate is affecting their harvests, preventing them from replacing the children's torn clothes with new ones. The church has already stepped in to help once – and we are doing it again. Will you join in as we show the love of Jesus through sustained support?

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PRAY

- * Praise God for the transformation in Richard's life.
- * Ask God to empower and inspire local churches the world over to continue to reach the unreached, to offer love and support to the outcast and turn back to embrace the forgotten.

Thank you, Father,

You never forget us and never abandon us. We ask that through the work of Tearfund's partner in Uganda, many, many more families will be able to share in the good news that Richard has experienced.

Thank you that we are not limited to the role of spectator: instead you have a role for each of us to play. Show us what you would have each of us do.
In your name we pray.
Amen

Kieran Dodds/Tearfund



FOUD HERE

LET US PRAY

GLOBAL POVERTY PRAYER FOCUS, LENT 2012

WEEK 1: 22-28 FEBRUARY

JUSTICE, MERCY, HUMILITY

REFLECT

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8

Somehow, we all do it from time to time: we get confused about what our priorities should be. It happens with the little things – like choosing sugary snacks instead of spinach or sprouts – and it happens with the bigger ones too. We can easily allow our priorities to become confused.

Our worship, whether in song or action, in church or beyond it, cannot be without the three essentials of justice, mercy and humility.

PRAY

- * Thank God for verses such as Micah 6:8 through which he speaks so loudly.
- * Ask God to show you how your life matches up to Micah's words.

Father God,

Give us wisdom to see ourselves as you see us. Give us courage to change. Give us the strength to keep going. And, Lord, by your grace, may we grow closer to you through prayer and action – listening and responding as you guide us.
In your name we pray.
Amen

WEEK 2: 29 FEBRUARY-6 MARCH

FOOD

REFLECT

Meet Nari, a mother of four who knows what it means to put her trust in God.

Will Baxter/Tearfund



Nari lives in Soriya, a village in Cambodia. 'Before we got help with growing vegetables, I could not separate the good days from the bad,' she says. 'We were so poor, and worked so hard for little money.'

Vibol Keo of Cambodian Hope Organisation (CHO) says, 'Before we started supporting this family, there was not enough food to eat and the children were very thin. Now they have enough food and even have money to save, and the children are healthy.'

With support from Tearfund, CHO has been the answers to Nari's prayers – by helping her to know how and when to plant the right crops.

PRAY

- * Thank God for the abundance that surrounds us.
- * Praise him for his provision and care for us.
- * Pray for those living on less than £1 a day, who suffer because of high food prices and who cannot afford to buy food for their families.

Father God,

We know that too many people are hungry, too many are thirsty. Too many people struggle to have enough food to eat and we know that this cannot be right. Father, open our eyes to the ways in which we can help.
In your name we pray.
Amen

WEEK THREE: 7–13 MARCH

WATER

REFLECT

Meet Rev Reuben and his team in the Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme at work in rural south-west Uganda. They help build water storage tanks which, when full, mean that the young and the vulnerable do not have to walk to distant open water sources. That means more time for school and less time at risk of being attacked or abused. They also offer hygiene and sanitation training. Little by little, whole communities are being transformed.



Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

PRAY

- * Thank God for what comes out of your tap, for good toilets and for all the tools we have that keep us clean, hygienic and healthy.
- * Praise God for the work of partners such as the Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme.
- * Pray for those who do not have clean water to drink.

Father God,

We thank you for all the resources we have to keep us clean, healthy and safe. Help us to be both grateful and compassionate at the same time. Move us into action. Keep us from isolating ourselves: give us a desire to get our hands dirty – to make a difference in the lives of others. In your name we pray. Amen

WEEK FOUR: 14–20 MARCH

HIV

REFLECT

Meet Chen Da*. She was tricked into sex slavery. She managed to escape her captors but she did not escape from her past and its dangers completely. She became infected with HIV, which was passed on to her baby. Today, she works to feed and clothe her family, and Tearfund partner CHO provides support and helps her travel to the treatment centre.

The latest estimates suggest that nearly 33 million people across the globe are living with HIV. Governments and other institutions are hard pressed to cope with the scale of the crisis.

Yet, as Chen Da* knows, the church has a key role to play – both locally and globally – in providing services to affected communities and influencing government decisions.

At Tearfund we support those affected, promote access to testing and treatment, and tackle the stigma often associated with the disease. Already, our work is keeping thousands of mothers, fathers and children alive, and in their families.

*This name has been changed to protect the person's identity.

PRAY

- * Spend time prayerfully considering what life is like for those whose families have been torn apart by HIV.
- * Ask God for mercy.

Father God,

We remember the partners, the children, the communities and the countries over which HIV has cast a devastating shadow. We know that in you there is hope, and our prayer is that each person affected by HIV will know your comfort and healing. Give us compassion and wisdom to know how to pray and how to act. In the healing name of Jesus we pray. Amen

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WEEK FIVE: 21–27 MARCH

VULNERABLE WOMEN

REFLECT

Grace was in her late 30s when she became a widow, with eight children to look after. 'When my husband died of malaria, life became very hard,' she explains. 'We would go without food.'

Yet, something changed: Tearfund's church partner PAG came to her. 'What makes me weep is when problems arrive together,' she says. 'Sometimes, one of my children will be sick and need medicine. Another will be sent home from school because they don't have the right uniform or books. When I feel so bad, church members encourage and pray and also give me material assistance, particularly to help the children.'



Kieran Dods/Tearfund

'Through the church, I learnt about the seasonal calendar – that I can plant crops at certain seasons for a good year-round harvest,' Grace explains. 'I came back and planted three gardens. Before this, I was just worried all the time because I didn't know where to start.'

PRAY

- * Pray for Grace and her children – for strength, for food, for hope.
- * Thank God for your own journey – the one that has brought you to a place of faith. Thank God for the way that he weaves in pain with joy, mixes hard times with good ones and never ever lets go.

Lord of all the earth,

Thank you for your creation. We ask your forgiveness for the times when we have not looked after the earth. We pray for those who are hungry and whose futures are uncertain. With senses alive to you we pray. Amen

WEEK SIX: 28 MARCH–3 APRIL

CHURCH IN ACTION

Meet Pastor Madan, a man committed to serving the people of Shivnagar, and the many other communities made up of former slaves that surround his church in Nepal. Having escaped bonded labour, the villagers suffer discrimination and neglect, yet Pastor Madan stands alongside them.



Ralph Hodgson/Tearfund

'We love them,' Madan explains. 'That's why we are offering more than proclamation of the gospel. Our intention is not to convert people. Our intention is to love them.' Nevertheless, through that love, Madan has seen more than 16 families come to faith and join the church.

Trained in community development as well as theology, Madan has a vision to help the community to help themselves – so they learn to rely on their own resources. He knows that's the only way they will be truly set free.

PRAY

- Thank God for the freedom we have, that we so often take for granted
- Ask him for help to avoid getting caught up in the mechanics of life
- Ask God to continue to bless the work of Pastor Madan and his church

Father God,

Will you loose the chains that bind the families of Shivnagar? Will you provide them with more resources and greater hope?

And will you help us, too, Father? In many ways, we are yet to lose our chains: we forget how much freedom and potential we have to effect change. Please open our eyes to the needs around us, open our hearts to your Spirit and open our hands as we give what is right. Amen