

Winter 2022

TearTimes

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Behold, I make all things new



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Ireland

There have been seismic shifts across the world in recent months. We are continuing to deal with the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic and the future seems very uncertain. Conflicts inside national borders and across countries are creating substantial humanitarian emergencies with millions of displaced people fleeing in search of refuge.



Many of the people we serve in east Africa and Lebanon/Syria are struggling with drought, crop failures, conflict and chronic inflation. Even though technology enables us real-time access to global events, social commentators point to evidence of increasing polarisation which indicates that more information does not necessarily lead to deeper understanding. Though many in our society may have grown cynical and more insular, we, as Christians, have an opportunity to bring a message of hope, restoration, and change.

The theme of this Tear Times is taken from Revelation 21:5 in which Jesus, resurrected and enthroned, declares “Behold, I am making all things new.” We believe in the promises of God that there will come a day when all things will be made new. At the same time, we know that we, as Christians, are already new creations (1 Corinthians 5:17) and we earnestly pray for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). So, from this perspective, we pray for all that is broken in this world to be made new.

Thank you for your continued prayer, support, and participation with us in the work of God’s Kingdom.

Sean Copeland
Tearfund Ireland CEO

Tearfund Ireland

We are bringing hope and demonstrating love to the most vulnerable and marginalised people – through the local church.

Get in touch with us!

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📷 Cover photo: Ethiopian Self-Help Group member, Aynate. Credit: Gavine Leane.

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Give a man a fish

Written by Sean Copeland

“So, what does Tearfund do?” I get this question – or a form of it – quite a bit. Tearfund Ireland is a small organisation and, though we’re known among churches, those outside the Christian community are not as aware of us. Recently, I attended a seminar with leaders from the corporate sector and, before the session began, a few of us introduced ourselves. That’s when I was asked this question.

In the days before this event, the staff of Tearfund Ireland and I had been discussing different ways we could explain who we are and what we do in a way that helps people more easily understand the various aspects of our work. So, sparked with a moment of divine creativity, I shared with my fellow seminar participants a version of the fish analogy to explain what we do.

You're more than likely familiar with the analogy, 'Give someone a fish, they're fed for a day. Teach someone how to fish, they're fed for a lifetime.'

Reminding my new friends of this analogy, I explained the three pillars of Tearfund Ireland:

- Humanitarian Relief
- Sustainable Development
- Biblical Justice.

1. When we give relief in response to a disaster, we're giving someone a fish.
2. When we undertake the longer-term work of Sustainable Development, we're helping someone learn how to fish (notice I did not say 'we teach' someone how to fish).
3. We engage in the work of Justice by helping remove the barriers which prevent someone from being able to fish.

Following that short description, the business leaders in the room responded with excitement, saying things like, 'I've never understood the difference between relief and development, but that explanation makes it very clear.'

These three pillars are distinct but inter-related and, for Tearfund Ireland to fulfil our mission, we need each to function. In an emergency or disaster, people have an

urgent need for something tangible. Giving someone a tent, food parcel or hygiene kit is a compassionate, practical response to need. But if all our activity were to be based on aid distribution, we would not be providing long-term solutions.

I've never understood the difference between relief and development, but that explanation makes it very clear.

Sustainable development is the more intentional work of helping people overcome the challenges in their own context, helping them build resilience and become less reliant on external aid. This requires longer-term commitment, substantial investment, and meaningful relationships with local partners.

In our engagement with local partners, we learn about the obstacles they face in trying to bring about change in their country or region. In any given culture, a worldview is often prevalent which prevents those who are vulnerable and marginalised from creating change on their own. Quite often, people need someone else to speak up – to advocate – with them or on their behalf. This is the work of justice.

A distinctive of Tearfund Ireland is our belief that the Church has a unique role to play in all three aspects of this work. Psalm 89:4 says that justice and righteousness are the foundation of God's throne. This is an important truth. As the Church engages in compassionate aid, long-term efforts to facilitate holistic transformation, and speaking out against systemic injustice, we bear witness to the character of God and demonstrate the nature of his reign.

The impact of broken relationships

Written by Amanda Prather

Photo: A congregation worshipping in Sodo, Ethiopia. Credit: Tearfund Canada.

Poverty is complex and exists in many forms. Most people tend to think of poverty in material or economic terms. But there is spiritual poverty, emotional poverty and social poverty to name a few. All these forms of poverty are present in the multiple difficulties facing the world.

At Tearfund Ireland, we see it all the time:

- We see it in places devastated by disasters.
- We see it where people are being displaced from their homes (because of conflict, drought, or crop failures).
- We see it when parents are forced to send children away to fend for themselves.
- We see it in the disease and poor living conditions in which millions of people attempt to survive.
- We see it in the ravages of climate challenges.
- We see it in the inequality and inequity of our world.
- We see it in communities experiencing extreme poverty.

All forms of poverty stem from broken relationships.

Broken relationships between ourselves and God certainly, but also our relationship with self, with our fellow humans and with the whole of creation. We know that God didn't intend this brokenness. His desire is for reconciliation, restoration, and the nature of His kingdom to be demonstrated throughout the earth.

At Tearfund Ireland, we believe all people have been created in the image of God and, because of that, all people have dignity and value. Further, we believe, all people are uniquely gifted and able to bring a creative expression to the challenges they face. With this understanding, we aim to facilitate opportunities for people to become incredible change-makers and lift themselves out of poverty for good. Recognising that the source of poverty is

broken relationships, we aim for holistic transformation of individuals and entire communities by demonstrating the goodness, love, and justice of God.

That's why we do what we do. We know that God's desire is not for people to remain in poverty. He came to make all things new. Our vision is for flourishing communities, free from poverty and injustice. We believe this is what God wants for all His children and we're working alongside the Church towards the restoration of relationships and holistic transformation of all people.

Programmes



Our Ukraine response

Photo: Ukrainian refugees flee from their homes for safety. Credit: Integra/Jana Čavajská.

Here is the story of a dog named Rocky. Rocky used to live in Ukraine. She made it to safety when her owner, Katarina* grabbed her one day and took her on a crammed train to the border. After a lengthy and arduous journey across the border, Rocky and Katarina now live with a host family in Slovakia, who have a 12-year-old daughter called Kasia* – and a dog! Every day, Rocky goes on a walk with Katrina, Kasia, and Kasia's dog. The daily walks are helping them all become friends. Kasia has been learning English, but, until these daily walks, has never

had the courage to practice out loud. But now, Kasia converses with Katarina and then shares what she learns with her parents so they can support Rocky and Katarina in the best way possible.

Since the end of February, the conflict in Ukraine has continued and millions have fled their homes. Over six million have left for a bordering country and seven million are internally displaced. Our prayers are with all those who are facing an uncertain future – removed from their homes, their families, their livelihoods, their everyday normality.



Photo: Rocky the dog fled Ukraine with his owner, Katarina. Credit: Integra Slovakia.

Throughout the Ukraine conflict, we have partnered with Integra in Slovakia to provide food, shelter and essentials for those most vulnerable in Ukraine. A large container, filled with an average of 26 metric tons of non-perishable food items and essentials, was delivered to Ukraine in May and distributed to 6,000 people. Additionally, our local partner has been providing overnight accommodation to Ukrainian refugees as well as medicine and medical supplies, a cash-transfer programme, and trauma counselling.

None of this would have been possible without you. We are deeply grateful for your compassionate generosity that will help some of those most vulnerable.

Please pray

As we know from our experience in supporting Syrian refugees, the impact of this conflict will be life-altering. We are praying for peace – that ‘the peace of God, which surpasses all understandings’ (Philippians 4:7) will guard the hearts and minds of all those impacted by this conflict. We ask that you continue pray with us for the people of Ukraine as well as others around the world who are facing challenges that most of us in Ireland cannot comprehend.

Names have been changed to protect people's safety.



Photo: A man from Somaliland carrying buckets to collect water. Credit: Tearfund Germany.

Horn of Africa

Can you imagine if the entire country of Ireland was facing drought conditions, leading to little access to food and water? And can you imagine if it wasn't just the size of Ireland but five times its size? When drought occurs, most people must leave their homes in search of food and water—limiting their access to health services, making women and children more vulnerable, and causing children to miss school.

That scenario seems impossible for us here in rain-soaked Ireland. But it's a deep and challenging reality for the easternmost region of Africa, an area larger than Germany, France, Spain and Italy combined. With the absence of several rainy seasons, there are now more than 20 million people facing the worst drought in 40 years. And it's predicted that next year's rains will fail to appear too. As clean water dries up and food becomes scarce, diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea increase, and livestock are dying. On top of this, the dire situation is further exacerbated by locust invasions, extreme climate challenges, conflicts and rising fuel and food costs.

An emergency response

Tearfund Ireland, in partnership with Tearfund Germany, were able provide vulnerable communities in Somaliland with access to water, hygiene and sanitation. Since the local partners started working with 750 vulnerable households across four communities, no disease outbreaks or livestock deaths have been reported despite the severity of the droughts. So far, the communities working with local partners have been able to avert famine.

Father-of-four Omar, aged 29, experienced first-hand the hardship of life without water. 'The situation is very hard for us,' he says. 'Without enough water, life is difficult. The only thing we could think about was getting the amount of water we needed to cook food. There wasn't enough for any other purposes. We did not clean our clothes and our personal hygiene was challenged.'

Since our partner's water distribution began, his family has received 45 litres each day. He says, 'We appreciate the water supplied by Tearfund. We no longer have trouble getting water. We can drink clean water, cook food, wash our clothes and focus on hygiene and sanitation.'



Photo: Eight church teams battled it out on the pitch at the 2022 Tearfund Ireland 5 a Side Church Blitz. Credit: Amanda Prather, Tearfund Ireland.

In-person fundraising has returned!

We've have had the privilege of having some wonderful events this year.

During November 2021, we held our first online auction, Bid for Good – a great opportunity for supporters to purchase items for themselves or buy Christmas gifts for loved ones while raising funds for Tearfund Ireland. And in January, we had another pop-up quiz night online.

Then, in March, we had our first in-person event since 2019! Our 2022 Coffee Morning was held in our Dublin office on Foley Street. We were delighted to welcome a number of you for a cuppa, a pasty and a chat with staff and fellow supporters.

Throughout the summer, we had some activities for our sports lovers:

Pedal Against Poverty had cyclists throughout Ireland cycling the same distance as it would take to cover parts of Ethiopia, Cambodia or Lebanon where we have partner projects running.

Our *Five a Side Church Blitz* took place in August and saw church teams battling it out on the pitch to see who walked away with the trophy and bragging rights!

Stay tuned to our website and social media for upcoming events! If you are interested in being a Coffee Morning host for March 2023, please contact us on enquiries@tearfund.ie



Photo: Abbey Presbyterian Church brings home the gold at the 2022 Tearfund Ireland 5 a Side Church Blitz. Credit: Amanda Prather, Tearfund Ireland.



Photo: Elias, a man from Ethiopia, who began using Conservation Agriculture last year, displaying his healthy crops. Credit: Sophie Moreno, Tearfund Ireland.

And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'

Revelation 21:5 (ESV)

Prayer

All around the world, we see the effects of broken relationships. In the countries where we work, we see it manifested in poverty and injustice. Our hearts and prayers are for restoration that embodies every aspect of a person's life.

Please join us in prayer:

- For the Tearfund Ireland staff and board members as we develop and implement our strategy to mobilise churches in Ireland and abroad to bring transformative change. Please pray that we can create awareness of global citizenship, and please pray for our local partners as they work within communities to effect long-lasting change.
- For those impacted by changing weather patterns, experiencing failed harvests, decreased food security and increased drought. Pray that weather patterns allow food to grow strongly and consistently, and please pray that new methods of farming (Conservation Agriculture) will be widely implemented in areas reliant on agriculture.
- For peace where there are current conflicts. Please pray that God moves through the efforts of all those involved in resolving conflicts. Pray that lasting restoration occurs. Pray that those impacted by conflicts will receive the support and resources they need in order to overcome their trauma.
- For broken relationships to be restored. Pray for God's healing hand to remove emotional, physical, psychological, and political barriers that stand in the way of complete restoration. Please pray that our partners' programmes will continue to enable people to develop and broaden their skills, resources, and relationships.

Your giving makes a world of difference

Monthly giving

Our vision is to see communities flourish – free from poverty and justice. Your support is instrumental in this becoming a reality. To help more communities flourish, would you prayerfully consider investing in the work of Tearfund Ireland on a monthly basis? Your monthly support would effect holistic transformation.

You can give by donating in monthly amounts:

€8/mo could provide a young female leader from a Self Help Group with training and business development support

€15/mo could provide clean water for one household and their livestock for one month

€40/mo could help sustain a Self Help Group in Ethiopia for one year

€60/mo could help us respond where the need is greatest

€133/mo could sustain the continued facilitation of 30 Self Help Groups

Thank you for partnering with Tearfund Ireland.

If you give €21 a month, the yearly total will meet the €250 needed for us to benefit from Revenue's charitable tax scheme. At no additional cost to you, we can potentially receive an additional €112.32 from Revenue, increasing your yearly donation to €364.32!

Similarly, if you give €40 a month, we could benefit from an additional €224.64 from Revenue, increasing your yearly donation to €704.64!

Matching Gifts

Are you an employee of a company or organisation that participates in a matching gifts programme? Many companies (including large multi-national companies) have a matching gifts programme – with some even doubling the matching gift to make a €150 gift turn into €300!

By using a matching gifts programme, your support of Tearfund Ireland's work can go even further. Chat with your company today to see if they offer a matching gifts programme. If you would like to enquire about how your company can begin participating in a matched scheme, please contact us on enquiries@tearfund.ie

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