

POVERTY



AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2010

PRAYER DIARY

Please pray for the work of Christian Aid and its partner organisations throughout the world.

In the Prayer Diary you will find:

- daily requests to pray or to thank God
- a weekly prayer that could be used in church intercessions
- a reference to a Bible passage for reflection

AUGUST

Sunday 1-Saturday 7 August

Please pray this week for the people of Peru. While Peru is known for its tourist attractions, there are huge inequalities and deep poverty. Malnutrition rates in children under five have remained unchanged over the last decade. Peru is said to be the third country most vulnerable to climate change and this will further exacerbate poverty.

Psalm 107:1

Eternal God, your steadfast love endures for ever. May all your people never cease to grow in love and joy and peace.

During the week,
please pray for:

- small-scale farming communities in the Peruvian highlands, who are dependent on the water from rapidly shrinking glaciers
- farmers whose crops have been either frozen or dried up by extremes of hot and cold weather
- CEDAP, working with farmers to get maximum efficiency out of their water use
- CEDAP's work in helping communities fight the threat of water privatisation
- MOCICC, working to raise the awareness of climate change among Peruvians and helping them to campaign nationally
- Peruvians affected in social conflicts, many of which have been related to water access.

Sunday 8-Saturday 14 August

Thursday is International Youth Day. Please pray for Christian Aid's work with young people in the UK and Ireland and around the world.

Isaiah 1:11-17

Loving God, help us to work with others, and when we encounter differences of age, race and nationality, help us to realise that we are all interconnected.

During the week,
please pray for:

- Christian Aid's Platform 2 volunteers, on 10-week placements overseas, praying for their safety and inspiration
- the new intake of Christian Aid gap-year students, giving thanks for their contribution
- child-headed families, where teenagers orphaned as a result of HIV bring up their younger siblings
- NMJD in Sierra Leone, working to make families aware of their education rights
- ANAB in Afghanistan, working with marginalised, partially sighted teenagers
- children who have been traumatised through witnessing violence and conflict.

AUGUST

Sunday 15-Saturday 21 August

Please pray for the people of Egypt this week. While we may associate Egypt with being a tourist destination, the poverty there is far-reaching. Many of the 17 million people who live below the poverty line live in rural areas and lack access to basic services, such as education and healthcare.

Jeremiah 23:24

Creator God, we confess that we have excluded people and have failed to see your image in all of creation. Help us to honour the rights of all marginalised people.

During the week,
please pray for:

- Wadi El Nil, protecting and promoting the rights of stone quarry workers in Egypt, who often work in hazardous conditions for low pay
- fishing communities, increasingly at the mercy of large factories polluting the river
- Better Life Association, helping fishermen to claim their rights to the river Nile and teaching them about more environmentally friendly fishing practices
- COC Bless, working to improve literacy, health, housing, sanitation and income
- Egyptian women, especially in rural areas, many of whom do not have ID cards, making it difficult for them to access services.

Sunday 22-Saturday 28 August

Over seven months on from the devastating earthquake at the start of this year, we continue to pray for the people of Haiti and to give thanks for the tireless work by Christian Aid staff and partners to help rebuild the lives of communities in this devastated country.

Isaiah 58:9b-11

Loving God, lead us into a new vision of humanity, not governed by power or fear, but where the poor and weak are at the centre and can lead us into the kingdom Jesus spoke of.

During the week,
please pray for:

- partners distributing seeds and tools and providing vocational training to help people feed their families
- partners distributing cash to help people decide how best to recreate businesses destroyed by the earthquake
- families who have lost loved ones and who are still coping with bereavement
- families who have been separated – many parents living in temporary camps have sent their children to stay with friends or relatives elsewhere
- all who have donated to the appeal, giving thanks for the huge generosity of churches and the British and Irish public.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Sunday 29 August- Saturday 4 September

Please pray this week for the people of Niger. At the time of writing, the west African country is on the brink of a severe food emergency that could leave more than half its 14 million population starving and 1 million children critically malnourished.

Luke 14:12-14

God of abundance, when none go hungry and food is for all, then shall your light shine like the dawn.

During the week,
please pray for:

- families in Niger starting to abandon their homes in desperate search for food
- farmers who fear they will not have seeds to plant before the next harvest in October
- children having to leave their schools as their families move away
- families who are unable to afford the imported produce from Nigeria, which in some areas is the only food available
- emergency cereal banks and food distribution to reach vulnerable people to help them survive
- people of the wider Sahel region facing a food crisis as a result of poor harvests caused by long, dry spells.

Sunday 5-Saturday 11 September

Wednesday is International Literacy Day. At least 1.2 billion poor people across the world cannot read or write. This restricts their ability to carry out everyday activities such as reading signposts, understanding medicine labels and machinery instructions, confirming commercial transactions, and avoiding being cheated. Please pray for Christian Aid partners working to improve literacy rates across the world.

Deuteronomy 30:19

Gracious God, in you we see the power of life. Help us to set ourselves alongside this power and live so that all might have life.

During the week,
please pray for:

- Fundacion Machaca in Bolivia, helping people to read so that they can write proposals for money-making schemes
- girls, who often lose out on the chance of education and face fewer prospects as a result
- women whose illiteracy makes it harder for them to access healthcare and family planning
- STARS in Afghanistan, running literacy classes in the remote villages where they work
- HARD in Sudan, working with young people who have often missed years of school because of decades of civil war
- communities in Sierra Leone, who, thanks to NMJD's work are able to learn about hygiene, education and their rights.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 12-Saturday 18 September

This time a year ago, Indonesia was hit by a devastating earthquake, and the Philippines by severe flooding. We pray this week for the people of this area of the world, and for all who have lost their homes, possessions and livelihoods in disasters.

Psalm 51:7-10

Living and loving God, give us a new spirit, a new heart, a new strength of purpose and courage to play our part in living your story in the world.

During the week,
please pray for:

- the 10,000 people who lost their homes in Manila
- YEU, which distributed medical help to survivors of the quake last year
- YTB, which provided Jorong Pauh villagers with food and essentials as well as materials to build temporary shelters while they waited for reconstruction to start
- Pusaka, which has been working to ensure that children can resume their education as soon as possible after the disaster
- partners around the world working to implement early-warning systems to help communities prepare for future disasters.

Sunday 19-Saturday 25 September

Tuesday is the International Day for Peace. Conflict can destroy decades of development work, and set back the prospects of further development for years to come. Please pray for Christian Aid partners providing emergency assistance to those living under the shadow of conflict and for its work to find just resolutions to conflicts around the world.

Amos 8:4-7

God in Jesus, you became poor so that we might be rich. Forgive us if our actions mean that others are poor so that we might be rich.

During the week,
please pray for:

- partners in Sierra Leone helping communities to rebuild their lives after decades of conflict
- partners in Angola working to reconcile groups who fought on opposing sides in the conflict
- Christian Aid's work in Colombia, calling on the government to protect the rights of communities living under the shadow of 40 years of armed conflict
- the international community to exert pressure on Israel and the Palestinians to find a just resolution to the conflict there
- Palestinian refugees who make up 10 per cent of the population of Lebanon but who do not have equal rights to education or schooling.

REFLECTION

The rich man and Lazarus: a story for the rich? (Luke 16:19-31)

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is one of the best known in the New Testament. Its powerful imagery makes it difficult to ignore. Although chiefly aimed at the Pharisees who, we are told in an earlier verse, were lovers of money, it was not only the Pharisees' love of wealth that sets them apart but, more importantly, their hardness of heart. While we might feel revulsion at the lavish lifestyle of the rich man, the horror lies in the fact that he ignores the needs of his neighbour.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus draws the rich as well as the poor into fellowship. He eats with the rich and teaches them about the kingdom of God in their own terms (Luke 14:16-24, 28-30). Jesus does not prejudice people on the basis of what they own. We see in Mark 10 that he loves a rich man who is overwhelmed by the command to sell all he owns and give the money to the poor. What is significant is people's attitudes towards wealth and what they do with it.

Christian Aid estimates that developing countries are currently losing at least \$160bn of tax every year because of tax dodging by unscrupulous businesses. This is revenue that could be used to invest in desperately needed services such as schools, hospitals and pensions.

Our lives in a world of 6.5 billion people mean that the question of 'who is my neighbour' is many times more apposite and complex today than when it was first put to Jesus by a lawyer (Luke 10). The story of the rich man and Lazarus does not call us to condemn wealth, but to notice the needs of our neighbours – both on our doorsteps and further afield – and to examine our own lives in the light of this.

Christian Aid's campaign demanding that people and companies pay the tax they owe and that developing countries obtain the revenue that is rightfully theirs is not one that is biased against the rich. But it does ask us to consider the following questions: who is our neighbour? Are we so wrapped up in our own fulfilment that we forget our neighbours whose potential is denied? Are we ready to share our resources so that we can all become the people God would have us be?

These questions are as pertinent now as they were in Jesus' day. And now as then, they are not questions to be put off for another day.

For further information about Christian Aid's tax campaign, including the theology underpinning the campaign, visit:
www.christianaid.org.uk/tax

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Sunday 26 September -Saturday 2 October

This week marks the end of the Commonwealth Games in India. Please pray for the people of India, home to one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Luke 16:19-31

Forgive us Lord when we forget the poor and fail to welcome the outcast. Give us the grace to change so that we may live and love with the joy and richness of Jesus.

During the week,
please pray for:

- Dalit people, especially women, who suffer massive caste discrimination
- Dalit women forced to clear human waste from dry latrines using their bare hands and pieces of cardboard
- SKA, organising a mass rally in New Delhi to campaign against the demeaning practice of clearing human excrement from dry latrines
- The Deccan Development Society (DDS), working with rural communities to transform wasteland into cropland
- DDS's work helping illiterate women to produce radio programmes on issues such as genetically modified crops and climate change
- DDS's work with women's groups or 'sanghams', helping them to diversify their crops and to influence local and state government policies.

Sunday 3-Saturday 9 October

Elections are taking place in Burma this month. Please pray for the people of Burma, and pray that the aspirations and needs of all Burmese people are met.

Psalms 137

God of compassion, in a world where poverty, violence and greed can extinguish the hopes and freedom of so many, make us restless until all can rejoice.

During the week,
please pray for:

- the millions of Burmese people who have been displaced by fighting or land acquisitions
- the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), providing shelter to thousands of refugees
- Burmese people who have fled to neighbouring countries, and live as illegal migrants
- TBBC's work helping refugees to supplement their diet by growing food in the camps
- TBBC's work developing productive ways of earning money in the camps, including employing women as weavers.

OCTOBER

Sunday 10-Saturday 16 October

Please pray this week for Christian Aid partner, the Mali Folkecenter (MFC). Communities in Mali say that changes in climate are making it increasingly difficult to survive. The Mali Folkecenter works with local communities on environmental protection and access to clean drinking water supplies, as well as the provision of clean energy to rural communities that currently have no electricity supply.

Psalms 66:1-2

God of joy, as we praise you and give thanks, we pray that we may experience your living word, and seek for ourselves and others the presence, direction and power of your Spirit.

Sunday 17-Saturday 23 October

Please pray this week for the people of Afghanistan, the poorest country in the world outside of Africa. Christian Aid supports those living on the edge, providing livestock, basic healthcare and literacy classes, but is also working at a structural level, lobbying for the implementation of human rights, especially women's rights.

Luke 18:1-8

God of justice, shake up our apathy and give us persistence so that we may stand on common ground with those who struggle for justice.

During the week, please pray for:

- MFC's climate change network, influencing government policy on climate change and development
- families separated as men leave women behind to seek work
- MFC's work helping civil society to understand the issues around climate change
- MFC's work with communities, installing electricity generators, creating jobs and industry opportunities
- MFC's work installing solar panels, which means that women have been able to attend evening literacy classes.

During the week please pray for:

- STARS, providing families with kitchen gardens in an area where 94 per cent of households have very poor food consumption
- STARS' work advising pregnant women on diet and infant health issues
- CRDSA, providing advice on working as cooperatives for remote dairy farmers
- CRDSA's training for women to make traditional Afghan carpets, helping to create employment opportunities
- CRDSA's workshops on human rights, HIV, and gender issues
- Afghan migrant labourers who have felt forced into Iran or Pakistan to find work.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Sunday 24-Saturday 30 October

As the storm season draws to an end in the Caribbean, please pray this week for the people of Nicaragua. With a long coastline, Nicaragua often bears the brunt of the storms that sweep across the Atlantic every year. It is one of the three countries in the world worst affected by weather catastrophes, and the UN has warned that the storms here will get worse.

Psalms 65

Creator God, we give thanks for your grace revealed in creation, for your good gifts to us and for the fruits of the earth. May we use them for the good of all, so that your kingdom may come on earth.

During the week, please pray for:

- Nochari and MCM helping vulnerable communities prepare for the storms and resulting floods by finding ways to protect their homes
- families who are marooned by the heavy rains and are unable to get to market for days
- Christian Aid partners supporting cooperatives who help small producers access markets to sell their products
- MCM's work with partners introducing flood-resistant crops like chayote, which can survive being waterlogged
- Nochari's work setting up village emergency committees to carry out evacuations.

Sunday 31 October-Saturday 6 November

At the time of writing, elections in Zimbabwe are being predicted to take place next year. Please pray for Christian Aid partners, particularly for the Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe, involved in peace and reconciliation projects in deeply scarred Zimbabwean communities. Pray that their work will reduce the likelihood of the violence that marred the 2008 elections.

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Loving God, hear the prayers of those who cry out to you, and where joy is gone and hope abandoned, may your kingdom come.

During the week please pray for:

- all Christian Aid partners in Zimbabwe, giving thanks for their immense courage during times of violence and upheaval
- church leaders in Zimbabwe leading conversations with the government as they strive for a peaceful future
- brave and passionate student activists who have spoken out for human rights, often at risk of personal safety
- SCMZ's work bringing together testimonies, helping young people facing extreme violence to share experiences, reconcile and heal
- the safety of many Zimbabwean female students who are involved with older, married men to help them cover costs.

NOVEMBER

Sunday 7-Saturday 13 November

In this week of Remembrance, we pray for the people of Sudan. Since 2005's Comprehensive Peace Agreement brought an end to more than 20 years of civil war, a fragile peace has been kept in southern Sudan. But with the agreement now in its final year, the country is fast approaching a crossroads.

Psalm 17:6-9

Jesus Christ, prince of peace, we hold before you the victims of oppression and war, and cry for peace in our world.

During the week,
please pray for:

- MRDA, building new schools and investing in teacher training to help Sudan build a future
- the four million people who lost their homes during the conflict
- a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Sudan
- a peaceful outcome to the upcoming referendum when the southern region will vote on whether to separate from the north
- the people of Darfur, where millions continue to suffer appalling conditions in refugee camps.

Sunday 14-Saturday 20 November

Friday is World Toilet Day. This year's Christian Aid Week resources featured the people of the Matopeni slum in Kenya, and partner MNU's work starting there to provide drains and water points while the local government put in a toilet block. We pray for this work and for the community who will manage it.

Isaiah 65:17

God of life, we give thanks for those who work for a brighter future, and hope on behalf of those who are yet to see change come.

During the week,
please pray for:

- brave community activists in Matopeni who are working for change, for example, by organising local recycling
- the thousands of Kenyan people driven to Nairobi by climate change, where the slums are their only option
- MNU's work lobbying for water reform at a national level
- waste management youth groups, improving the environment by ensuring residents' waste is collected and removed
- the rights and dignity of slum dwellers to be heard by powerful Kenyans (many of whom are property owners and who have a stake in keeping things as they are).

NOVEMBER

Sunday 21-Saturday 27 November

The 16th UN climate change conference takes place in Mexico this week. After the failure of Copenhagen this time last year, we pray for legally binding agreements to cut emissions and to help poor countries to develop in a green and sustainable way.

Luke 1:78-79

God of hope, as we prepare for your advent with searching minds and contrite hearts, make known to us your healing spirit and redemptive love.

During the week,
please pray for:

- rich countries to commit to cutting emissions by 40 per cent by 2020
- technology that can help cut emissions to be made available to poorer countries
- low-carbon development and adaptation to the impacts of climate change in poorer countries, supported by funds from rich countries
- all those at risk of extreme hunger as agriculture yields diminish
- the people of Bangladesh, where rising sea levels are threatening millions of homes and farms
- communities exposed to malaria for the first time because their climate is changing.

An online version of this prayer diary can be found at
www.christianaid.org.uk/prayer

You can find further resources – including policy papers, reports and worship materials – at www.christianaid.org.uk/resources

Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its roots.

Front cover picture: Local washer women make a living in the Boac River, Philippines. The river was the site of a catastrophic mine spill in 1996 and many washer women are now affected by metal poisoning. The company responsible have paid out very little compensation. Christian Aid's partner MACEC is helping the washer women and hundreds more in the affected communities to demand compensation through the courts. Compensation will help them pay for much needed healthcare as well as provide finance for them to develop alternative livelihoods.

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