

A woman wearing a vibrant red sari with gold and white patterns is smiling as she works in a lush green field. She is reaching out to touch a plant with small purple flowers. The background is filled with similar green foliage and flowers, creating a sense of a healthy, thriving agricultural environment.

tearfund

CHURCH MISSION

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# *Farming and Enterprise*

Studies in the power of social and livelihood development

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Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you tells him, "Go in peace; stay warm and well fed," but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that? – James 2:15-16

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# Introduction

**We believe people have a right to make a living and provide for themselves and their families, so we help to resource them to do so.**

By providing communities with the resources and education to become self-supporting, they are empowered to find local, long-term solutions to poverty. This booklet shares our conviction about how important this work is and the approaches we use to empower communities.

*Church Mission – Farming and Enterprise* is an introductory study for groups or individuals interested in learning more about issues addressed by Tearfund's work in our Farming and Enterprise cause.

It's difficult to climb out of poverty alone, but when a community comes together, their many hands help to lift each other up. We see our role in this work as resourcing and educating communities through our partners. We use two approaches in our work: empowering communities through agriculture and facilitating and training people to form Self Help Groups.

This approach creates a powerful ripple effect that lasts for generations. Along the way, many social problems are also solved. Families and communities develop sustainable livelihoods and enjoy improved incomes, housing, education and medical care. These improvements increase the power of families and their ability to influence structural change in the long term.

As well as unpacking the details of Tearfund's work in Farming and Enterprise, this study also investigates what a personal response to the issues discussed may look like. We hope this study helps you to gain a greater understanding of the work we do, what motivates us to work in this area, what we aim to achieve and how you can help.

Each study has space for reflection and discussion. We encourage you to form a group to do this study. By sharing this journey, you can focus on the hope we have in the overarching story we believe in.



**We believe people have a right  
to self-sufficiency and security for  
their families.**



## STUDY 1

# Biblical Justice and Empowerment

Photo: Andrew Finlay

**Let's look at God's heart for those struggling on the margins.**

Should we be concerned with helping poor people in other countries to earn a living and become resilient?

The Bible has much to say about economic fairness, debt and giving generously so others can take more power over their own lives. It issues ringing challenges to remove barriers to people getting a fair deal and a fair share.

## No one left behind

**Feeding the poor and hungry, and anger at the structural injustice that keeps them poor and hungry, are recurring themes in the Bible.**

These themes are mentioned over 200 times—more than just about any other topic. This includes both having opportunities and having the freedom and ability to pursue them. Sadly, reality often falls short of this desire for justice and a renewed world.

In Isaiah, God tells the people to “*share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless*” (Isaiah 58:7). In Corinthians, Paul exhorts the early Christians to put this into action when they found gross inequality (2 Corinthians 8:14). These verses speak loudly of God's desire that we give out of our excess to redress the inequality between those who have plenty and those who are in need.

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**They trample on the heads of the poor and deny justice  
to the oppressed – Amos 2:7**

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The Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55) was mandated as a time of “*freedom and celebration*”. It took place every 50 years. The pinnacle of the year was known as the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 25:9) when liberty was proclaimed throughout the nation. Slaves were set free and debts were forgiven. Everyone received their original property back and anyone who had, through unfortunate circumstances, become a bonded labourer to another, was able to return home to their family.

The point of the Year of Jubilee was justice and new beginnings. Injustice would always come to an end. Nobody would remain poor and disaffected forever. Poverty and its effects could not become generational. Debt could not accumulate, slavery was temporary and freedom was in sight. And let’s not forget the land: the land could not be overused and exhausted.

The effect of this was to stop the kind of intergenerational disadvantage that we see so much in poorer communities today.

Jubilee sent clear messages. There was always hope when times seemed tough for some. The economic system was not permitted to let people inherit desperately poor circumstances simply by accident of birth. It provided a lived vision of God’s intention for his world, to be made permanent in a completely redeemed creation in Revelation 21-22.

### Discuss:

- What are some of the factors that make, and keep people poor? You may like to look at Psalm 10 and Job 24:1-12.
- Read Exodus 22:26-27, Leviticus 19:9-10 and 23:22, and Deuteronomy 15:1-15 and 24:19-22.

Do you think these laws suggest that caring for the poor and ensuring food security for all is more like a *voluntary act of charity* or a *right to a livelihood*? What are the implications for us? What protections for the poor do we have in today’s world? How effective are they?

## A tale of two women

**The value of making a living for one’s family is an assumed right through the Bible. In God’s image, we are creative beings. Creativity through work is a core part of this.**

We don’t want to start a gender war, but women in the developed world work 30 minutes a day more than men (when both paid and unpaid work are included). In the developing world, it’s 50 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Many of Tearfund’s projects focus on women’s empowerment as it is a proven way to enhance other key issues such as income security, health and child wellbeing.

Here are the stories of two working women:

### Ruth’s story

I’m a Moabite woman. When I lost my Jewish husband, I had to decide whether to return to Israel with my mother-in-law, Naomi. It was a hard choice to leave the family of my birth, but I decided to return and look after her as she would be very poor. Naomi and I have been sustained by an application of the gleaning laws.

Gleaning is one of the few things a foreign woman can do. I gleaned from the sides of fields owned by others, including a man named Boaz. When I met Boaz, he said he had heard about the care I had taken of my mother-in-law. He said to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.” When the harvest was finished, Naomi and I felt empowered to draw upon our right to be supported by Boaz, as he is one of our senior relatives. It’s a long story, but in the end, Boaz and I were married. From small things, great things come. We had the amazing privilege of becoming the great-grandparents of King David.



1. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter4/chapter4.html>

### Dikinesh's story

I have seven children. I have tried many different ways of trying to make enough to take care of my family, but they have not been successful. All of them were hard work and there were many barriers that only the poor seem to face.



At first, I thought that the concept of a Self Help Group would not be useful, so I didn't even want to try. But through the group, I've been able to provide household furniture, raise chickens and diversify our food sources. I've also been able to educate my children. I have eight hens now. With my business, I plan to expand from two sheep to four and to grow my hen flock to 30. Through our group, the love and care we show for each other increases from week to week.

### Discuss:

- Compare these very different stories (and read also Ruth 2-4). In what ways did their poverty make life difficult? What laws and customs made things harder for them? How can they take advantage of other customs and laws to get ahead? How did working together with other people help?
- In most of our Self Help Groups, the majority are women. Why is it important for women, in particular, to be empowered?

## Empowered by Christ

**When Jesus gives his mission statement in Luke 4, he claims the Year of Jubilee is one of the key reasons he has come (Luke 4:16-19; see also Isaiah 61:1-2).**

Time and again, Jesus gave attention and dignity to those whom others in his cultural surroundings had pushed to the margins. He showed empathy to those who lacked a significant voice, those who were at the bottom of the societal ladder, whom others looked down on and shunned. In so doing, Jesus empowered such people.

That empowerment is evident in the stories of the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus the rich tax collector, the woman caught in adultery, the woman with a bleeding issue, the woman who anointed Jesus' feet at the house of Simon the Pharisee, and the blind man near Jericho who called out to Jesus to have mercy on him (See John 4:4-30, Luke 19:1-10, John 8:1-11, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 18:35-43). It is also evident in the calling of each of Jesus' disciples.

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**At the heart of Jesus' actions towards those who were pulled down by society was God's view of them.**

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Tearfund holds to the idea that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. This belief informs much of what we do. It causes us to look at all people as deserving of dignity and freedom.

With this in mind, we look around the world and see many things that work against God's vision for humanity. We see systems that oppress and disempower people, robbing them of dignity and freedom. Those systems often place power into the hands of a few, who maintain the oppression because they gain from it.

In response to this, we wish to do what Jesus did: to truly see those caught in systems of oppression, to challenge those systems and to empower those who have been pushed aside, by standing with them.

Jesus' healing of a blind man clearly underscored his approach (Luke 18:35-43). While the crowd tried to hush him up as if he was an inconvenience, Jesus heard him and placed the crowd's attention on the man, calling him over. What Jesus asked him next is significant. He didn't assume that the man wanted to be healed of his blindness or that he wanted to be healed of anything. He placed the power in the hands of the man and asked him what he wanted.

Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied.

This is an example of empowerment as Tearfund views it. Sadly international development has sometimes been seen as a process where we have the answers for what we deem to be the problem and we provide the solutions that others should then accept.

In contrast to this, true empowerment places dignity in the hands of the poor. It recognises that much of what they need to change the situation is within their grasp. They just need to be truly seen and given the chance and to have some unjust barriers removed.

### Discuss:

- Read Luke 4:14-21. Jesus doesn't just say he came to "proclaim good news" but "proclaim good news *to the poor*". How does this challenge us about how we see Jesus' mission—and our mission?
- He continues to describe disadvantaged groups. What does this suggest about Jesus' concern for groups who are most oppressed and disempowered?
- In the other gospel passages mentioned, how does Jesus not only help and heal but also give dignity and empowerment to the people he met?

## From theory to practice

**The principles we have discussed in this chapter underlie our work at Tearfund. We don't just apply them in a straight line from theory to practice. We also listen and learn from what our partners tell us is empowering and effective.**

There are several ways Tearfund is joining with these poorer communities to hear from them and to help increase the power and control they have over their lives.

One such way is by working with these people to create sustainable livelihoods, using assets such as land, from which smallholder farmers collectively grow a variety of crops for markets. This seems like a no-brainer, but Tearfund's approach uses methods that give producers more control over the prices they receive.

Another way is by establishing Self Help Groups to empower people economically, so they can save enough within the group to establish a pool of funds to borrow from. One of the authors visited such a group in Ethiopia in 2015. These women, who at first had very little, stood strong, proud of the businesses they ran. They described how they have improved their income and talked of the loving community they have created around themselves. It was both striking and humbling to hear them turn and say, "*So, what are you going to learn from us?*"

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**At the present time, your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality. – 2 Corinthians 8:14**

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## CHAPTER 2

# The Feeding of the Ten Billion

Photo: Helen Manson

**What has food got to do with faith and justice? Lots, it turns out! Whenever We take food for granted, yet eating is our most powerful engagement with the natural world! It remakes the landscape, determines access to land, and defines core components of our lifestyle.**

Whenever a biologist wants to understand a creature's role in an ecosystem, the first question he or she asks is: What does that creature eat, and what eats it? *Homo sapiens* are no exception.

In this study, we look at factors that are depriving people of food and other essentials. We then introduce some of the strategies being employed in our Farming and Enterprise work to help these people put food on the table and improve their household incomes.

## In a world of plenty, why hunger?

Currently (2020) there are 7.8 billion people crammed onto our earth. The population is predicted to hit 9.7 billion by 2064. While our Farming and Enterprise projects are not just about helping people to provide food, it is the most basic need that people must prioritise with their incomes.

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**The field of the poor may produce much food, but injustice sweeps it away. – Proverbs 13:23**

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With improved resilience and greater sustainability, communities and households can meet their needs such as healthcare, adequate shelter and educating their children. But let's start with food...

*Would you walk 5 km to get a bucket of water? Have you ever had to go without food so your children can eat? Are cockroaches, spiders or grass on the dinner menu at your place? For some low-income communities, these things are a reality. <sup>2</sup>*

2. <http://reliefweb.int/report/niger/niger-sahel-food-crisis-families-eat-grass-survive>



Incredibly, enough food is produced to feed the world's population, thanks to advances in production techniques. Yet an estimated 690 million people are expected to go hungry in 2020 according to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report 2020*.<sup>3</sup> Food security is another term that you may come across when talking about hunger. Food security is having reliable access to enough nutritious food to lead a healthy life. The reasons for hunger are complex, but at the heart is a disturbing fact: the systems that control the production methods and distribution of food deny the poorest sufficient access to it.

## Called to be allies of the poor.

**The Bible sees adequate nourishing food as a basic human right. It consistently calls, not only for charity for the poor but justice, through the provision of those basic needs. At times, it talks of God meeting those needs, as in Isaiah 41:17-20. At others, the challenge is put to God's people to make sure those needs are met, such as in James 2.**

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**For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.**

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In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats and it is exactly these issues—the plight of those who do not have power over life's essentials—that dominate. Jesus makes it clear that the evidence that we are following him is changed hearts that motivate compassionate acts of mercy and taking stands for justice. This involves active care, but also not letting people suffer when we can do something about it.

Vulnerable communities living in low-income countries often do not have access to the safety nets that we in higher-income countries have. When natural disasters occur, conflict strikes or crops fail, there is generally no government welfare system. Often people don't even have savings to fall back on when their livelihoods are affected.

Recognising the complexity of these challenges and the fact that there is no single solution, Tearfund's work addresses multiple aspects of the problem.

**Firstly**, Tearfund responds to disasters with humanitarian life-saving aid.

**Secondly**, built into all our long-term projects are preventative measures called Disaster Risk Reduction. This is essentially about reducing the impacts of a disaster. If, for instance, an area is prone to slips in heavy rain, trees are planted on hillsides or agriculture and horticulture techniques designed to work on slopes are used.

**Thirdly**, we use Climate-smart Agriculture. As Climate change makes growing crops and raising livestock more difficult, we help to introduce measures to mitigate climate effects. This may be introducing measures such as water harvesting in dryer areas or mulching crops and zero-till methods so the land retains water. Our work improving agricultural technologies helps people make the most of the land they have.

It also improves marketing opportunities so people can add value to their produce to get higher incomes. This is often done by working in cooperatives so people have power together to cut out the middle man and advocate for fairer prices for products.

Tearfund supporters have enabled changes to happen. Our Farming and Enterprise cause is currently assisting 62,000 smallholder farmers through investing in innovative agricultural programming and the establishment of farming cooperatives and Self Help Groups. To love these people whom God loves is to love God.

**Discuss:**

- Read Matthew 25:35-40. In modern systems for distributing food, water and clothing, are there ways in which we contribute to depriving people from accessing food? How can we challenge this?
- In what ways can we help people access food, especially those in low-income countries?

**Threatened Food**

Here are some threats to the global and regional supply of food.

- **Climate change** is causing environments to change and more extreme weather patterns to occur. As these patterns become more frequent, dry areas are becoming dryer, while wet areas are getting wetter. It becomes harder to farm the land and sustain a livelihood.
- **Conflict** drives people from their land—sometimes permanently. At the moment, we are seeing unprecedented levels of internally displaced people and refugees—many as a result of conflicts. According to the UN, there are currently (2020) 79.5 million displaced people. Among this number are many farmers forced from their land.
- **Land tenure insecurity** is common. Governments, profiting from bribes, sometimes issue development rights over land where urban poor communities have lived for generations. In extreme cases, deliberately-lit fires sweep through poor neighbourhoods, giving an excuse for forced relocations. Many poor people protest, including standing in front of the bulldozers but are often ignored or arrested for disturbing the peace.
- **Land grabs** are another threat to rural dwellers. Believe it or not, in many poor countries the government allows—and even enables—richer overseas governments and corporates to buy up huge tracts of land to secure their own food supply in the future, or to grow biofuels. Farmers who owned the land often only see a fraction of the return. Some are forcibly moved off their land with little or no compensation.<sup>4</sup>

- **Commodity speculators** are also in the mix here. These individuals profit from price fluctuations through bets on the future value of the commodity. All too often, the result is that staple foods become too expensive for those living in poverty.
- **Farm subsidies and trade barriers** in high-income countries also disadvantage farmers in poorer countries, often making it impossible for them to export their goods. This limits farmers in poorer countries to local markets, which are often saturated with low-cost imports from high-income countries. While free trade agreements help to reduce these export barriers, the poorest farmers often remain unprotected from fast-paced changes that threaten their livelihoods.
- **Urbanisation** is increasing at a fast rate as people flock to cities in the hope of a better life. More food is then needed in cities, but the mechanisms to get it there are often inadequate to meet the demand, and food spoils on the way. This can also mean higher food prices, which deprive urban dwellers of access to nutritious food—especially those who are unemployed.

These barriers to being able to produce or purchase adequate food cause many health problems—not only from insufficient food but because the available food is not nutritious. Juxtaposed with this is the fact that, in high-income countries, about a third of food produced for human consumption (1.3 billion tonnes) is wasted per year, and many people go to gyms to counter the effects of over-eating.

**Discuss:**

- When pondering the question of how to feed the world's people, how do you feel? Do you feel hopeless or hopeful? Inspired or daunted?
- What level of responsibility do we have to do something about injustices that deprive people of life's basics such as enough food and other essentials?

4. For example, in Cambodia over the past 20 years, the Government has leased over 45 percent of the country's land to private investors, including for rubber plantations by two of Vietnam's largest companies. The consequences for those who live in the way of the land grabbers are devastating. Since 2003, at least 500,000 people have been forcibly removed from their land, often without consultation or compensation.



## Focus: Climate and food production

The main way many people will experience climate change is through food: what they eat, the price they pay, and the range of foods available. The impacts of climate change are likely to kill many thousands of people and undo much of the progress that has been made towards food security

According to the World Health Organisation, between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause \$100 billion worth of damage per year and approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

- Southeast Asia could see rainfall increase by 20% in some areas, reducing the growth of rice and other staple crops.
- Pacific countries have seen dramatic revenue loss across agriculture and forestry, which by 2050 could hit 20% of GDP. Tropical cyclone intensities are expected to increase by 15%. Sea level rise will claim much productive land.
- In the Middle East and North Africa, yield loss of up to 30% is expected for rice, about 45% for maize and 20% for wheat, mostly due to droughts.
- Africa is the most vulnerable continent, experiencing longer droughts, floods and cyclones. Crop yields across sub-Saharan Africa may decline by 10-20% by 2050 and demand from growing populations may double food prices.

Researchers see a collision ahead between the rising world population and a climate system that is diminishing harvests in many areas. Economic growth has helped reduce poverty but a big driver of that growth—fossil fuels—has attacked the life-support systems of the earth. Our growth has returned to bite us.

### Discuss:

- Read about climate change—the evidence and the effects—at <https://climate.nasa.gov/>
- How is climate change a global justice problem?



May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work  
of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands.

– Psalm 90:17

## STUDY 3

# Be Transformed, Don't Conform

Photo: Helen Manson

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**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will. – Romans 12:2**

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*I have realised that more than I'd like to admit, I've been affected by what the world values—achievement, individualism, money, and busyness. I've allowed my heart to become cold when it encounters the needs of this world. And I want to change. I can be tempted to try and change myself... to close my eyes, scrunch up my nose and think happy, compassionate thoughts—willing myself into the compassionate person I want to be. But I've tried that before and I know it doesn't last.*

*What I need is God to transform me. I need the Holy Spirit to change me and the scriptures to renew my mind so I won't "conform any longer to the pattern of this world"*

*– Excerpt from Hope Lives by Amber Van Schooneveld*

## That disempowered feeling

**We live in a blessed country. We have a social welfare system, access to credit and a range of job opportunities. Yet, even here, some families are struggling to put a roof over their head and food on the table. We can only imagine how much harder it is for those who have none of the welfare safety nets that we enjoy.**

For many farmers, having a small plot of land has meant little more than being able to grow enough food to feed their family. They are vulnerable if a crop fails, or if they can only produce one crop a year due to harsh or unfavourable weather conditions and with no access to irrigation.



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**Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. Not being able to earn enough attacks a person materially and morally. It eats away one's dignity.**

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For those who have a little more land, there has been the opportunity to grow a surplus, but even then, it often means taking whatever price the buyer offers farmers, especially if several individual farmers are growing the same crop or they can't transport their crop to the market.

The quote above is from a woman who wants her family to earn enough to take care of their needs. Banks will loan money to farming families, but at a price—and only if they can raise collateral. Fair loans to the poorest farmers are rarer because, without collateral, they are riskier for the bank. But that's where they are most needed.

### Discuss:

- Reflect on the quote above. Why is it important to be able to earn enough, rather than rely on charity?
- What might you need to consider changing to see the world change?

## More Than Just Milk

**Meet the Waikato dairy farmer who didn't always want to be a dairy farmer but ended up helping change thousands of lives in northern Sri Lanka through dairy farming.**

After the Sri Lankan war ended in 2009, many farming family's living in northern Sri Lanka lost family members, making it difficult for them to maintain their work in the rice fields. This meant they had to look at other ways to make a living.

Nine years after the war ended, Ross Wallis, a sixth-generation Waikato dairy farmer from Raglan found himself helping 4,500 poor



Ross Wallis visiting the dairy project in Sri Lanka

dairy farmers in Sri Lanka through Tearfund, as part of a post-war dairy recovery project. Ross always had a passion for missions, but using his skills in dairy farming didn't fit his vision of doing missions until now.

Even though Ross grew up on a dairy farm, he never thought he'd be a dairy farmer. In fact, he swore he would never be one. He and his wife Shayney always had a heart for missions. They worked for Youth with a Mission (YWAM) for nine years from 1990-1999. Ross's father had just bought another dairy farm and needed some help. What was supposed to be for a few months turned into 20 years! Over this period, Ross grew to love dairy farming. "I could see the results of it beyond just milking cows. It was the business of dairy farming I really enjoyed and fell in love with."

Their dairy farm supplies to Fonterra and Ross was elected to join the Fonterra Shareholders Council. The Anchor product goes to Sri Lanka as milk powder." Ross and his wife were asked to film an advertisement about what Fonterra was doing in Sri Lanka. A couple of staff from Tearfund saw the ad. Tearfund's chief executive Ian McInnes met with Ross to see if he wanted to be a part of Tearfund's dairy project.

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**He (Ian) sat down with us and explained what they were doing in Sri Lanka. The lightbulb came on for us. It tied our passion for missions with dairy farming.**

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Ross had heard about the war in Sri Lanka but he didn't realise how many farmers were displaced by the war and returned to their land with nothing. The Sri Lankan civil war killed around 90,000 and internally displaced about 280,000 in Sri Lanka between 1983 and 2009.

Before the war, the majority of farmers in Sri Lanka were subsistence farmers, living below the poverty line. Their income they'd receive from working in the rice fields wasn't nearly enough and many farmers were in debt. Working in the rice fields was very unpredictable too, especially with the effects of climate change. Many families had one or two cows, but the cows were a way to get protein and milk for their curries, never as a reliable source for income.

In the north of Sri Lanka, people are very traditional, so working in the rice fields is a man's job and milking the cows is a woman's job. More than 30 per cent of homes in the north of Sri Lanka lost a man in the household and the women didn't know how to work in the rice fields. This left few ways for some women to earn an income for their families.

This is where Tearfund's dairy project came in. It was a way to rebuild communities and people's dignity and pride, giving them back what they had lost.

The project started eight years ago with just eight farmers producing 150L of milk a month. Now, 4,500 farmers are producing 500,000L a month. That's more than a 3000% production increase!

Tearfund was looking for some New Zealand dairy farmers to support the programme, this is when they found Ross. Ross didn't realise how effective Tearfund's dairy project was until he saw it and decided to get involved.

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**If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. – Isaiah 58:10**

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"I'm just a Kiwi dairy farmer. I'm just sharing what I know. It's really simple stuff about feeding cows, keeping them watered. Giving farmers the vision of what their future could look like.

"My milk's been going to Sri Lanka for over 40 years from the Waikato. I think we owe it to them. This is a huge opportunity for dairy farmers to give back." Ross and his wife have been giving \$300 a month to the project for over four years. "I believe in tithing and giving. I tithe 10% and I give 10%. My \$300 automatically becomes \$600 because New Zealand Aid doubles it."

"It is not a random fact that you live in New Zealand—it is God's hand at work in your life. In Ephesians 2:10 it says "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do". God has placed you in your family, neighbourhood and country and He has work for you to do."

### **Discuss:**

- Ross allowed God to use who he was, his occupation and his faith have worked to bring transformation to people's lives in Sri Lanka. Have you considered asking God what you could do with who you are?
- Ross believes in tithing—giving 10% of his salary and giving (responding to needs as you become aware of them) what do you believe about tithing and giving?

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**"peak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. – Proverbs 31:8**

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## STUDY 4

# Live to Empower Others

Photo: John Watson

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**You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.**

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It is often hard to know how to address an injustice that has become a systemic problem. Yet more often than not, big systemic problems grew up from a matrix of small actions from a myriad of people.

This statement is true of the barriers to full empowerment faced by many groups in New Zealand and around the world. What can you do? This chapter sets out some basic ways in which you can respond, both through direct action or indirectly by making changes in your life.

## Faith in Action

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**Key verses: James 2:14-25**

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### Discuss:

- “Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.\*” This is common paraphrase. What St Francis actually said was: “It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.” What do you think this statement means – how can you preach without words?
- Can you think of a way to demonstrate your faith to a watching world?
- What is keeping you from helping others?

\* This is common paraphrase. What St Francis actually said was: “It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”

To be a disciple of Jesus is to live out a whole life response. Our actions, character and the way we live should all be working together. One aspect of this is to stand up for Justice. This could mean you need to make changes to your life. Where you see unjust systems, or people being oppressed and treated unfairly, perhaps you need to speak up or advocate for change.

The many verses in the Bible about serving people in need are not meant to be a guilt trip, they are meant to transform us into people with compassionate hearts who care about the same things God's cares about. He wants our hearts as well as our actions. Actions undertaken out of a sense of guilt or duty are not the response he is looking for. God wants a deep relationship with you where actions flow naturally in response to our connection with Him.

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**You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds,  
and I will show you my faith by my deeds.**

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## Learn

We can't change the world's problems on our own, but there are some actions we can take to make life a little easier for people living in hard circumstances. You could start by taking time to learn more about the complexity of poverty and the many different issues and solutions.

Visit the Tearfund website and look through the resources related to Farming and Enterprise. Here you will discover information and personal stories that will encourage you keep growing in your understanding of the many complex issues involved in this cause.

## Pray

As you learn, begin also to pray about the issues and the people whose lives are affected. Pray about how God would like you to respond and ask Him to show you things he wants you to change.

## Act

Put your faith in action—do something in response! Perhaps it's as simple as organising a fundraiser so that you can make a difference by contributing to the work of Tearfund overseas. Perhaps you could choose to give some of your money regularly to support work you feel passionate about—Farming and Enterprise for example.

Maybe you could make some lifestyle changes, responding to issues such as climate change, recycling, and ethical consumption or reducing waste.

You could also sign up to join Tearfunds Advocate network at [tearfund.org.nz/Church/Advocate-Network.aspx](http://tearfund.org.nz/Church/Advocate-Network.aspx). You will get regular updates and ongoing opportunities to learn and get involved to support Tearfund and the work happening in the Farming and Enterprise cause.

There are many ways you can help stand up for those struggling to earn a fair income for their work. Buying Fairtrade goods is one of the ways you can help. The Fairtrade organisation advocates for better working conditions and improved terms of trade for farmers and workers in low-income countries. The standards include the protection of workers' rights and the protection of children, the preservation of the environment. It also includes the payment of Fairtrade minimum prices and an additional Fairtrade premium for Fairtrade cooperatives to invest in initiatives to support local communities or business development. You can find out more at [fairtrade.org.nz](http://fairtrade.org.nz).

## Discuss and Pray:

- What practical lifestyle, consumption and advocacy ideas can you come up with? How might you action those?
- Small groups can be key sources of positive peer pressure. How can your group help its members make changes and take action—whether by learning, praying, giving, living or advocating?
- Take time to pray together for the projects you have read about in this booklet. Do some of the examples of projects speak to you? How can you commit to helping these people?





Photo: Helen Manson

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