



## Serving Christ and His Suffering Church



**Esther lost her hands  
because of her  
love for Jesus**

# The Believers' Fellowship

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, Chair of the Board of Trustees, TBF Trust

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Many years ago I was in the village of Ayod in what was then called Southern Sudan. It was during the bitter civil war in which the mainly Muslim, mainly Arab North was trying to impose Islamic law on the mainly Christian, mainly African South. Southern Sudan was devastated in this conflict. Many Christians were either killed, displaced or dispossessed by the armies of the North. The infrastructure was destroyed. There was great hunger and hardship.

On the Sunday I was asked to preach at a local church. My guide, who was an 11-year-old boy much taller than me, led me through bush and scrub until we reached a fallen tree which he told me was the church. Soon the Christians began to arrive and gathered in a circle. They wore nothing but scraps of clothing and, before it was time for ministering the Word of the Lord, they took up the collection. Each of them opened a little piece of cloth and took from it a few kernels of maize and put them in the middle, until there was a mound about the size of a small teacup. Then I was asked to give thanks to God for this offering to Him.

I had never before realised the meaning of Acts 4:32 in which Luke tells us: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had." (See also Acts 2:44-45.)

Here in Southern Sudan were Christians dispossessed because of their faith, suffering intense loss

because of their faith, gathering together on the Lord's Day and out of their poverty presenting what little they had to the Lord to help His people, which was just a handful of maize kernels. Here were believers sharing everything they had, believers who had all things in common.

This story of a Southern Sudanese Christian community illustrates a much greater truth which we see in Acts 4. The early believers came together. They shared what they had with each other. They cared for each other. They ministered to each other's needs. They entered into each other's pain and suffering. This was a strong characteristic of the early Christians, though now much despised in many "Christian countries". We live in an age of selfishness, of acquisition, of self-worship, an age whose watchword is "more". The idea of giving everything to God and to our fellow believers seems not only alien but ridiculous. The distinctive of the early Church is despised.

Yet the model of Acts 4 still speaks to us. To mark the new season of TBF Trust's ministry, which began almost a year ago, we have embraced this model and taken our initials to mean "The Believers' Fellowship". As the believers gathered, as they shared, as they provided for the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable, so our calling today at TBF Trust is to do the same, continuing the early Christian tradition of true Christian *koinonia* [fellowship].

# What TBF Trust is doing by God's grace and with your gifts

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## Uganda: "The Church needs to become her arms"

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"I thank the Lord that I'm alive," said Esther to TBF Trust. "Jesus knows my pain. I never wanted to give up my faith, and I never will. In fact, I was on a fast the day I got attacked and I believe that's how I survived because I was praying to my living God."

It was in March 2025 that Esther's husband attacked her mercilessly with a machete, severely wounding her head and cutting off both her hands. He left her for dead, but passers-by found her and rushed her to hospital. Almost miraculously, she survived.

At the time of her marriage Esther was unaware that her husband was a Muslim but, when she discovered, it led to years of suffering as he tried to pressure her in various ways to convert to Islam. Esther stood firm in her Christian faith.

Esther is currently being cared for by her sister and other Christians. But long-term she needs a safe place to live, where her husband cannot find her, and a way to support herself and her two school-age children. "Esther lost her arms because of her faith, because of the Church," said a senior Ugandan church leader, "and this is the time when the Church needs to become her arms and support her in this great difficulty."

TBF has sent funds to rent a home for Esther and the children in a safe area where her husband cannot find her. We have also given start-up costs for a small shop for Esther, which she will run with the help of relatives, to enable her to support her dependent children.

Please pray for Esther that the Lord Jesus, for whom she has suffered so much, will give her His peace and protect her in the future.



▲  
*Esther and her two school-age sons in their current house. The outside of the house is shown on the front cover of this newsletter. Esther's husband cut off her hands because she refused to convert to Islam. TBF Trust is assisting with funds to rent another house in a safe area with a room she can use as a shop. With God's blessing and the help of her relatives she will be able to support her sons*

## Lebanon: Food and medicines for Christians under bombardment

“I don’t want to leave my home. Here I was born, here I was baptized and as long as my church is active my Christian brothers and sisters are not leaving. I want to stay and not become displaced,” said Petros, who lives in south Lebanon.

When all the inhabitants of a Christian village were warned to leave in case they were bombed, a church minister responded, “We Christians have been living here for centuries. Our ancestors built churches, schools... We don’t have weapons in this village, we are not fighting. We are under pressure from all parties involved in the war to leave. We have decided to continue our Christian presence, and though we are in need of food, water, medicine, yet we’ll stay to continue our life and witness to the Lord.”

During chaos and airstrikes late last year, our project partners in Lebanon were distributing food and hygiene items to hundreds of Christian families, paid for with funding from TBF Trust. Money from TBF Trust also helped provide



▲ Petros (left), who suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure, receiving medicines and a voucher to buy more medication. TBF Trust covered the cost of food, hygiene items and medicines for Petros and many Christians in Lebanon at a time of great danger and need

“It is much appreciated to see you are supporting our survival,” said this Lebanese Christian, showing the contents of his family food parcel funded by TBF Trust



medicines for the sick. The beneficiaries included those who remained in their villages despite the danger and those – mainly with children – who fled to other parts of Lebanon, seeking safety.

Praise God for the courage and commitment of Lebanese Christians determined to maintain a Christian presence and witness despite the dangers.



▲ Food parcels stored overnight in a church hall before distribution

# For your prayers: Devastation in DRC

*The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has also been called Zaire, the Belgian Congo, the Congo Free State and the Independent State of the Congo. It is sometimes casually known as Congo-Kinshasa, referring to its capital city.*

“We don’t know what to do or how to pray; we’ve had enough of massacres. May God’s will alone be done,” said a church elder in DRC. His comment was made after the beheaded bodies of about 70 Christians were found in a church building in Kasanga, North Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Christians had been captured from their village on 13 February 2025 by an Islamist militant group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

Violence has ravaged DRC for at least 140 years. Terrible brutality occurred under the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium, who owned this vast country as his personal property from 1885 to 1908. It then became a colony of Belgium but conflict of various kinds continued until and after independence in 1960. Meanwhile Christianity expanded and became the dominant faith.

Currently the north-eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu, bordering Uganda and Rwanda, are enduring the most violence. Multiple groups are involved in the violence, which has multiple causes. The international media are primarily interested in the M23 rebel group and its ethnic-based conflict. No doubt part of the international concern is the metals and minerals mined in the area which are vital for technology such as computers, mobile phones and electric vehicles.

Alongside this is religious-based violence coming from Islamist militants. This anti-Christian violence is much less reported, though an attack on a Christian mission and hospital in 2022 did get some media attention. One

of the major perpetrators is a group currently called Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). They make plain in their publicity that they are killing the local people because they are Christians. ISCAP are also battling against the Congolese military.



*A medical fund provided by TBF Trust will pay for treatment in this hospital for some of the neediest Christians displaced by violence*

ISCAP emerged in April 2019 whereas ADF has been in existence for nearly 30 years. One faction of ADF has pledged loyalty to ISCAP. ISCAP itself has pledged loyalty to Islamic State (ISIS) and its rise to prominence came after ISIS suffered defeats in Syria and Iraq. In 2022 ISIS leaders urged Islamists from around the world to migrate to Africa and get involved with the jihad there. ISCAP’s fighters are believed to include Arabs as well as Africans from several different countries. Ugandans are the most numerous, and some of the Congolese fighters were forcibly recruited. ISCAP funds itself by illegal mining of gold in eastern DRC.

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# Here is my gift to provide practical help for persecuted Christians.

Title ..... Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Phone ..... Email .....

**TBF Trust will not give your name or contact details to anyone else.**

I enclose a cheque/voucher payable to "TBF Trust" for £ .....

I have made an online bank transfer of £ ..... on ..... (date)

Account **TBF Trust** / Account no. **57052960** / Sort code **30-92-63**

I would like to make a donation by card.

Amount £ .....  credit/debit card  CAF card

Card number

Expiry date  /  CVV  Signature .....

Please send me a Direct Debit form for regular giving.

I do not require an acknowledgement of this gift.

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

(APPLICABLE TO UK TAXPAYERS ONLY)

*giftaid it*

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer: please fill this in below if different from the details above.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must mark the box below:

I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past to: TBF Trust. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/ or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title ..... Name .....

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Please notify TBF Trust if your circumstances change.

If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your gift donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

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**TBF Trust, Unit 2, Fordbrook Business Centre,  
Marlborough Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5NU**

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The combined effect of all this violence is great suffering for the people of north-eastern DRC. Increasingly the targets are Christian leaders and their families and church buildings. ISCAP also puts pressure on local people to convert to Islam.

On top of this, 2025 has seen torrential rain in DRC, leading to deadly floods. In the capital, Kinshasa, 33 people died in floods in early April; some were drowned and others were killed when the walls of their homes collapsed. At least 62 died when surging water engulfed villages in South Kivu province on 9 May, washing away homes and cutting off communications.

Please pray for an end to all violence in DRC. At the time of writing, there are peace talks trying to settle the ethnic and political issues and end the



▲ *TBF Trust is funding food distribution amongst Christians displaced by violence in the north-east, living in conditions like this*

violence of M23. But what about the violence directed against Congolese people because they are Christians? Ask the God who “makes wars cease to the ends of the earth” (Psalm 46:9) to bring peace to His people in DRC. Pray also that He will calm the raging waters.

## How TBF Trust is helping Christians in DRC

1. Rice, beans, cooking oil, cooking fuel and soap for Christian families displaced by war and violence in the north-east.
2. Medical fund for very vulnerable Christian families displaced by war and violence in the north-east. The fund will cover consultations with doctors, medications, clinical tests, hospital stays and other related costs.
3. Small business start-up for a pastor and his extended family, totalling nine people. They have fled the violence and are living in a one-bedroom flat. While the pastor ministers unpaid a nearby church, his wife will support the family through a small grocery shop. TBF Trust is covering the start-up costs of the shop.
4. Food and utensils for Christian families affected by the flooding in Kinshasa in April. Many families lost everything and are now living in churches, stadiums or tents in very unhealthy conditions.

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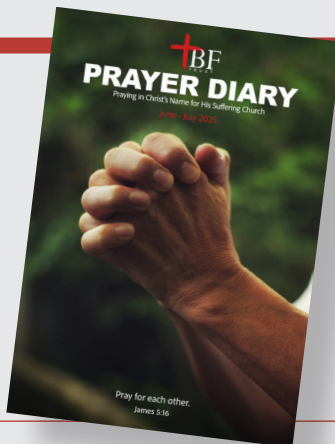
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## Have you got your TBF Trust prayer diary for June-July?

Please contact the TBFT office (see page 7) to request your copy or for extra copies to give your Christian friends.



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## Could you leave a legacy to TBF Trust?

May we invite you prayerfully to consider including a legacy to TBF Trust when you write your will? If the Lord leads you to care for persecuted Christians in this way, you could use the following wording:

“I give to TBF Trust (registered charity number 271602) at Unit 2, Fordbrook Business Centre, Marlborough Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5NU the sum of £..... (free of all taxes) for its general purposes and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other authorised officer will be a sufficient discharge to my executor(s).”

Alternatively, your legacy could be expressed as a percentage of your estate.

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*Front cover image: TBF Trust is helping Esther in Uganda, whose hands were cut off by her husband, enraged because she refused to convert to Islam. Turn to page 3 to read more.*

For projects and donations, please visit our website  
**[www.tbffrust.org](http://www.tbffrust.org)**

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