


TELL YOUR STORY

A refugee story of faith
and hope, told in words
and art.

Tresor's Story





Tell Your Story celebrates the journey of participants from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) refugee backgrounds – including those currently seeking asylum. The aim is to both encourage hope and healing in participants, and to inspire faith, hope and understanding in others.

With training provided by experienced Salvation Army coaches, and with prompts/questions provided, participants (looking through the lens of faith) use both their words and art forms to tell their stories. These are shared online and in booklet form.

Tresor's story

My name is Tresor Bikorimana and I am the third of nine siblings, born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The focus of this story is to give a short testimony of God's provision in my time as a refugee and beyond. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to give a testimony of God's work in my life. I thank every reader for their time. May the God of Heaven be glorified!



Below: The Democratic Republic of the Congo is my homeland.



“Bikorimana” = God’s provision

Before writing this story, my father and I had a conversation to gain an understanding of how we became refugees. My dad started by saying, “Mwana wanje unvisha amatwi yumutima, akubere ububikiro” which means, “My son, listen carefully and take it to heart.”

He said, “In 1995, there was a prophecy that said someday my family and I would live overseas for God’s work. Hearing this I had a lot of doubts, because I had never known, or had a friend or relatives in another country (besides one). From what I knew about neighbouring countries, foreigners did not have the right to work. It seemed impossible that I would leave my country.

“In the same year, a prophecy came saying that God would allow me to become sick a little as the cause of leaving my country, and from then on I believed and waited on God to fulfill his prophecy,” he said.

“IN 1995, THERE WAS A PROPHECY THAT SAID SOMEDAY MY FAMILY AND I WOULD LIVE OVERSEAS FOR GOD’S WORK.”

Leaving home and finding refuge

Years passed, and I (Tresor) was born in 2000. During the time, there was a civil war and during that war, my dad was shot twice in his stomach and badly injured. His friend wrapped him in a blanket and there were kind people nearby who came with a helicopter and took him to Burundi.

He gained consciousness after a week or two of being in the hospital. When he was fully healed after some time, he prayed saying, “God by your will, I’m here so help me pay the bills of my treatment.” God answered him by sending someone unknown who gave my dad a cheque that was equal to the entire bill (saying God told them to do so).

Back in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my mum became like a widow and a single parent because no one knew whether my dad was dead or alive. As life kept getting worse, my mum decided to seek refuge in Burundi, which was a nearby country that was accepting refugees, and as a way to possibly find and reunite with my dad.

We ended up finding each other and living together in Bujumbura, the capital city of Burundi for 18 years. In those years, my parents never worked for pay, as they did not have the right to work under refugee status. Instead, they put their energies full time into serving God – from evangelism to working as ministers/pastors.

“God always provided our daily bread, just like God provided manna to Israelites when they were in the wilderness.”

God's miraculous provision

Despite my parents being officially jobless we were never hungry, never thirsty, and always had something to wear. God always provided enough for us to keep on living and from time to time would send a person who would be like an uncle or aunty in Jesus Christ, and they would give us a gift that covered rent, food, clothes and shoes.

God always provided our daily bread, just like God provided manna to Israelites when they were in the wilderness. God also kept sending prophets to encourage and remind us of prophecy that was spoken to my father, saying that one day we would live overseas and serve God.



In 2017, we had to move to a refugee camp for our safety as there was conflict between civilians and the government. In the refugee camp, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided houses, food and a small plot of land to plant on.

The process of coming to Australia started at the end of 2018 and by February 2019, we were headed to Australia. The process took less time than expected.

Australia was the fulfillment of God's prophecy to my dad back in 1995.

Below: I'm proud to be Congolese despite not being able to experience living in the country.





Above: This is the day I became a Salvation Army Soldier.

Coming to Australia

Coming to Australia, we first arrived in Wollongong (NSW) and, after six months, my father found work in Cowra, and I stayed in Wollongong for my schooling. Our family later bought a house in Brisbane.

My parents have worked as pastors, but it was difficult for me at times to find work, because I did not have qualifications and experience.

I then successfully applied for a role as assistant team leader with Cairns Street Chaplains, helping intoxicated people and maintaining wellbeing and safety within the Cairns safe night precinct (Cairns Central Business District). I also work part-time as an emergency relief officer (case worker), helping community members.

The power of God in my life

I have seen many miracles over the years. This shows me that Mighty God — who lives among his chosen people; the God whose will is built on love, compassion, grace, mercy and forgiveness — dwells with us.

In 2018, I had a bleeding problem on my right thumb, which started as a small tumour. My older sister had her own family and at that stage she was living in The Democratic Republic of the Congo, and my family and I were living in Burundi. She is a nurse and came to visit us in Burundi and that's when she realised how bad my condition was. She advised me to get treated as soon as possible.

I went to hospital and the hospital decided to do surgery the following day. For two weeks, my thumb was fine but in the following week, my thumb returned to bleeding and the hospital advised me to get used to the condition.

Months later, I was visited by prayer intercessors, and they told me that God sent them to me with spiritual writing on paper. They told me to put the paper and my thumb in a cup of water and they prayed for me. After that, it took a week for my thumb to go from bleeding to fully recovered.

Psalm 115, in the Bible (NIV) begins: *“Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”*



“Not to us, LORD,
not to us but to your
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because of your love
and faithfulness.”

Psalms 115:1 (NIV)



Top: With my family in Burundi.
I was seven years old.

Right: This is me with my whole
family in Australia.

Bible story:

My refugee story reminds me of Abraham's story. It, like mine and that of my family, is a story of God's clear prophecy and fulfillment of God's promises.

Abraham's story can be found in Genesis, starting at chapter 12. In chapter 15, God makes a promise to Abram (whose name was changed by God to Abraham) that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars and be given a special land.

"Then the word of the LORD came to him: 'This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.' He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the sky and count the stars — if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'" Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.""
Genesis 15: 4-7 NIV)

"FOR THE WORD OF THE LORD IS RIGHT AND TRUE; HE IS FAITHFUL IN ALL HE DOES."

Psalm 33:4 (NIV)

The prophecy of living overseas, that was given to my dad in 1995 was fulfilled by moving from the Congo to Burundi, living on God's miraculous provision for 18 years, and then to Australia. In my lifetime, I have been able to see God's work in my life, and in the life of my family. I am assured that God is always at work and he is faithful to his word. Psalm 33:4 in the Bible says, *"For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does."* (NIV)

I thank The Salvation Army for creating a pathway for me to share my refugee story, and I thank Cynthia, Rosy, and Xuyen for running the storytelling training. Thank you too, to my study mates. I was truly blessed and encouraged by hearing your stories of God's provision and sharing prayers. To readers, thank you! I hope through my story of God's provision, you are able to pray for and see God's rich provision in your own life too. Bless you!

Below: We lived for 18 years in Bujumbura, Burundi, which is located on the shore of Lake Tanganyika.



The Tabernacle (God's dwelling place)



Above: My paper art depicts the Tabernacle of God and the cross, representing salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Tabernacle was the place where God dwelt among his people, the Israelites. It was a place for worship, forgiveness, blessing and a place to seek God's will. The Tabernacle held the Most Holy Place where God's presence dwelt and the Ark of the Covenant. It also held the Holy Place, plus there was also an altar for burnt offerings (outside the Tabernacle).

A long time ago, we (Gentiles) were foreigners, and not a part of God's people. But now, in God's plan, we have become God's children through Jesus Christ. He said: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6, NIV).

Before Jesus Christ, God's people would sacrifice a male lamb without defect for forgiveness. But now Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice, made once and for all, offering eternal life and showing God's love. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16, NIV).

God will again, one day, dwell with his people.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes'" (Revelation 21:3-4a, NIV).

A message of hope – card art

It all begins with this card. This gives us a glimpse – a vision – of how our future might look.



The way a watch moves. Twelve hours form a day. We need light to be able to do what is needed in the day.



The hours form day and they also form night. Time and life also move in seasons.





In every season we experience a path, and on that path, there are times of darkness and times of light. In terms of plants, there are also seasons – seasons of greenery and growth, times of harvest, and dry times. The dry times may feel like being in a desert – but those times often last for a season, not forever.

The refugee life is like being in darkness, and looking for light. That darkness forces those living as refugees to seek light, to seek a country that will give them the right to live.

Jesus is the light
that comes from
God. The brightest
light of all.



When we open our arms and hearts towards everyone, including those with refugee backgrounds, it shines the light and love of Jesus through our lives, radiating that love and light to others.



BELIEVE IN GOOD