

Sustaining advocacy through the church

during the Covid-19
pandemic



tearfund

Contents

Author: Sarah N Onduko

With special thanks to

Joanna Watson, Jodi Blackham, Stephen German, Paul Cook, Sas Conradie, Chalwe Nyirenda, Charlotte Flowers, Jamshed Gill, Loida Carriel, Kathleen Needham, Tsion Alemseged, Miles Giljam and Hast Bahadur Sunar for their insightful comments and suggestions that helped refine and strengthen this paper.

Executive summary

- Learning review findings
- Recommendations for churches
- Advice for CCT partners (church and community transformation)

Introduction

**Looking back:
Taking stock of
the advocacy role
of the church in a
pandemic**

**Current
pandemic:
Covid-19**

**Lessons
from the Bible**

**Looking
forward:
Lessons and
recommendations**

Conclusion



Executive summary

Tearfund is a faith-based organisation that envisions and strengthens local churches, denominations and church networks in more than 50 countries – to see communities developed, disasters responded to and governments held accountable. Tearfund supports local churches, denominations and church networks globally as a key part of our church and community transformation (CCT) approach. This is born out of our belief in the church's limitless potential to bring change through and in its community.¹

New public policies, laws and guidelines that introduced social, economic and political practices designed to limit the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic have had a huge impact on society and the church. Tearfund believes the church is a place of community, where everyone is welcome and relationships can be formed across social barriers. This makes it possible for Tearfund's church partners who are already mobilising communities to respond more effectively to the pandemic.

In responding to this global health threat, Tearfund's church partners have interwoven advocacy into their CCT approach, demonstrating the distinctive role the church can play in the public policy sphere by speaking up. This paper shows that when local churches, denominations and networks are strengthened with advocacy and social accountability skills and knowledge, they are able to sustain advocacy throughout a pandemic – as demonstrated through illustrative case studies from Tearfund's Covid-19 response.

The paper provides recommendations for Tearfund partners implementing the CCT approach – on integrating advocacy as a key ingredient in Covid-19 response, recovery and rebuilding a better society. It also provides recommendations to inspire and challenge the church globally to play its distinctive role in influencing the public policy sphere. The CCT advocacy case studies that inform this paper are predominantly from Christian-majority contexts. As new information and case studies emerge from other contexts where Tearfund works, we will document this learning too.

‘We believe in the church’s limitless potential to bring change through and in its community.’

Learning review findings

The key findings of this learning review are that local churches and denominations who have already been involved in Tearfund's CCT approaches that include advocacy have:

- ➔ modelled compliance with government restrictions during Covid-19
- ➔ adopted innovative digital platforms for their advocacy
- ➔ influenced by having a united voice
- ➔ ensured no one was left behind
- ➔ made best use of existing relationships to strengthen their advocacy
- ➔ used existing relationships to influence governments to provide a humanitarian response meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.



Recommendations for churches

The church occupies a distinct space in communities, nations and the world. The reach, breadth and calling of the church mean it has huge potential to support governments in tackling poverty and addressing its underlying causes, which include health care challenges across the globe. As the world emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic, the church can play a critical role through its influence in shaping laws and policies that define social practices and norms in ways that reflect Christ's promise in John 10:10, that people 'may have life, and have it to the full'.



Churches should prepare. The Covid-19 pandemic caught the world and the church unaware. However, this cannot be an excuse to remain in a state of unpreparedness.



The church should use the 'strategic window' provided by Covid-19 to **strengthen its collective voice in the public sphere**. This is a wake up call for the church to leave its comfort zone and take its rightful position in society.



Churches should be the '**eyes and ears**' of society as governments continue to respond to Covid-19, continuously identifying advocacy issues affecting the most vulnerable.



The church has a golden opportunity to **amplify its voice and influence society to build back better**, embrace social justice and protect people on the margins.



Churches should take advantage of their reach and breadth to **establish and strengthen structural advocacy systems** that inform decision-making at local, national and global levels.



The church must embrace and gain knowledge on advocacy in the **digital space and learn more about digital governance**. As society and government increasingly 'go digital', this opens up great opportunities but also poses risks to freedoms and to inclusion.

Advice for CCT partners (church and community transformation)

Adapting existing church and community mobilisation advocacy to make it more contextually appropriate by using social accountability tools is a key strategy for scale-up. During this pandemic, local churches, denominations and church networks have continued to catalyse their communities to engage in advocacy as part of their Covid-19 response. Drawing learning from different case studies collected globally, here are our recommendations for partners implementing CCT. This is primarily for CCT partners at both local and national levels who have not been able to engage with communities.



CCT partners should adopt and integrate contextually appropriate advocacy into CCT processes using social accountability mechanisms. This should be seen as essential to enable holistic transformation within communities.



CCT partners who are already integrating advocacy and social accountability into their work should identify the key achievements and missed opportunities from their Covid-19 responses. They should take stock and use their learning to galvanise further advocacy.



CCT partners and communities have an opportunity to strengthen advocacy using social accountability structures at both local and national level. The disconnect between national Covid-19 policies and laws and the reality of their devastating impact on poorer communities is evident in our case studies.



CCT partners and communities should embrace advocacy research and develop innovative social accountability models that will build resilience measures and equip them to handle future pandemics.



CCT partners have a window of opportunity to lead communities and networks in influencing decision-makers in all spheres of life as communities consider how to build back better from Covid-19.



The illustrative stories in this learning paper, and the wide range of tools that are being developed through Covid-19 responses, demonstrate the opportunity to learn and strengthen CCT advocacy using social accountability mechanisms.

‘The pandemic has not spared high- and middle-income countries either, claiming many lives, challenging health systems and causing severe economic shocks’



Introduction

The church occupies a distinct space in communities, nations and the world. The reach, breadth and calling of the church mean it has huge potential to support governments in tackling poverty and addressing its underlying causes, which include health care challenges across the globe.² Governments around the world have joined together with a goal to end extreme poverty and promote a shared prosperity.³

In communities, church networks are reaching the most vulnerable people in areas where even NGOs cannot reach. The church, outworking integral mission, seeks to restore relationships between God, humanity and the world. This contributes to positive physical, spiritual, economic, psychological and social transformation. When local churches develop and strengthen their vision for integral mission, they become agents of change in their local communities, combining prayer, sharing the gospel and practical service.

Tearfund recognises that poverty is the result of a social and structural legacy of four broken relationships: between people and God, damaged understanding of self, unjust relationships between people, and exploitative relationships with the environment.⁴ Through [church and community transformation \(CCT\)](#), Tearfund envisions and equips the local church in practical ways to work with their local community, identifying needs and mobilising resources to bring about restoration and transformation.



After taking part in CCT training at Chirambi CCAP Church, Hamitoni Banda became a farmer and small business owner. Here, women from Hamitoni's local church in Salima, central Malawi, harvest ground nuts. Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

The CCT approach is adopted and contextualised through local churches, denominations and church networks informed by six key principles: being driven by biblical theology of integral mission, and dependence on God and prayer; intentionally seeking the restoration of all four broken relationships; mobilising the church to become an agent of holistic change in the community; using facilitated Bible reflection to change attitudes and behaviour; relying on inclusive, participatory processes to bring about ownership and sustainable change; and celebrating and mobilising local resources, increasing agency and releasing community potential.

To address issues of poverty, Tearfund seeks to influence the global church and governments to bring about fair and just policies and structures at a local, national and global level. When churches at the local level mobilise their communities to influence the decisions, public policies and practices of powerful local decision-makers with the aim of bringing about good governance, using social accountability tools, this is an approach that Tearfund calls [CCM advocacy](#). Globally, when churches and communities intentionally embed advocacy within their CCT processes with the aim of strengthening the scale and impact of CCT, this process is known as CCT advocacy.

CCT advocacy therefore involves the scaling up, adaptation and contextualisation of CCM advocacy using social accountability mechanisms as appropriate for each of Tearfund's CCT partners and local communities.

Undeniably, the church has played a central role in supporting governments' efforts to curb and stop the spread of recent disease outbreaks, as demonstrated through the Ebola responses in West and Central Africa and the global fight against HIV, among others.⁵ In these responses, the voice of the church was invaluable in shaping norms and practices and in influencing decisions and laws, eg dignified burials in Ebola cases. From the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, faith leaders have been recognised as key stakeholders both by international organisations and governments.⁶

This paper highlights ways in which an already church-mobilised community with training on advocacy and social accountability is able to adopt and sustain advocacy throughout this pandemic. The paper draws lessons from the past, reviews the current advocacy responses to Covid-19, and uses biblical reference to inform how the church can strengthen, scale up and sustain its advocacy role in a global pandemic. The paper is also informed by a desktop literature review (including Tearfund resources) on past advocacy responses.

‘The voice of the church was invaluable in shaping norms and practices and in influencing decisions and laws’



Children in Kanjanguite village, Angola, have benefited from training given by UIEA that has improved the community's understanding of HIV prevention and domestic violence. Photo: Tom Price-Ecce Opus/Tearfund

Looking back: Taking stock of the advocacy role of the church in a pandemic

When governments and private actors are unable to stop the spread of a virus or disease, they naturally turn to their trusted sources and indispensable partners for support and help. Often it is at this point that the church has been identified as a key actor in a response; examples include the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918,⁷ HIV in 1983 and the Ebola outbreak in 2014.



Lessons from the most recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo, as documented by Tearfund-supported evaluations [After the outbreak](#) and [Keeping the faith](#), demonstrate that the church played a critical role in not only providing much-needed practical and psychosocial support, but also in the design and implementation of guidelines, and enforcing positive behaviour.

Lessons learnt and recommendations from responses to Ebola

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa provides invaluable lessons on the role of faith leaders as key actors.⁸ Both our evaluations emphasised the need for governments and other stakeholders to involve faith leaders in planning for response and recovery in health emergencies, given their embeddedness in communities and their unparalleled knowledge of local needs. It was evident that the slowness of governments in involving religious leaders generated mistrust with communities.



📷 A mother and child at a health clinic in Democratic Republic of Congo.
Photo: Hazel Thompson/Tearfund

The evaluations cautioned that the success of faith leaders in promoting behaviour change could lead to them being seen as a means to an end and used as passive actors to address social ills. Yet the changes they promoted came out of dialogue and a shared agenda, which should serve as a blueprint for future engagement.

Even in an outbreak, communities must be informed of their rights: lack of clarity as to what different stakeholders are entitled to – and for how long – leads to unmet expectations, confusion and tension. Clarity on key public policy terms such as ‘free health care’ is needed, to avoid misinterpretation and to manage expectations.⁹

Current pandemic: Covid-19

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 19 July 2021, nearly 189 million cases and over 4 million deaths of Covid-19 have been reported globally.¹⁰ Though primarily a health crisis, the impact of Covid-19 extends beyond health, affecting global economies; depleting livelihoods; disrupting social and cultural norms; causing psychological and mental depression; exposing inequalities; and ultimately challenging world leadership.



In Africa, Asia and Latin America, where poverty levels were already very high and communities struggling, Covid-19 has deepened people's suffering. Poor and vulnerable people in these parts of the world were already in great need: being ravaged by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tropical cyclones in Asia and flooding in Africa; living in protracted conflicts in countries such as Syria, Yemen and South Sudan; struggling with migration issues in Europe, and with Islamic extremists such as Boko Haram in southern, Central and West Africa; suffering from the effects of climate change globally; and having to cope with other long-term diseases.

The pandemic has not spared high- and middle-income countries either, claiming many lives, challenging health systems and causing severe economic shocks. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic has pushed an additional 88 to 115 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction.¹¹



📷 Lotsima Ukumu is the president of Nyamazaz Camp in Democratic Republic of Congo. Photo: Arlette Bashizi/Tearfund

Yet, the magnitude and the impact of this pandemic continue to present Tearfund's church partners with an opportunity to connect with God's holistic mission in the world. This section will demonstrate, from desktop research and using short illustrative stories from Tearfund CCT advocacy work globally, how the church has continued advocating through Covid-19 responses, and will draw lessons and identify opportunities that the church should leverage to influence the 'new society' as we build back better.

Church modelling compliance with government restrictions during Covid-19

Covid-19 exposed the lack of appreciation among public policymakers of the impact of the pandemic on the church, and the critical role the church plays in society. Though the Ebola outbreak evaluations recommended governments and international institutions involve the church and other faith leaders in planning and recovery from health emergencies, there seemed to be a lapse in doing this from the onset of Covid-19 responses. This set the stage for confusion on how the church could respond, as the new rules required an almost overnight change of practices. Despite this confusion, churches were quick to adopt the new laws by reviewing their own laws and guidelines and realigning them with government public policies, to save lives.

‘This act of obedience also strengthened trust with governments, opening opportunity for dialogue’

Tearfund church partners, mainly those at denominational level who were well mobilised before Covid-19 started and were already engaging with their local communities and local government, were quick to adapt to the new rules by obeying them, closing the churches and staying at home; some immediately came up with guidelines aimed at urging their larger constituencies both at national and local levels to obey government regulations.

These new guidelines were shared easily through different digital spaces such as WhatsApp, national and local media, digital written letters, Facebook and website updates. In modelling obedience, the church partners influenced how communities behaved, as the communities trusted the church as a source of information. This act of obedience also strengthened trust with governments, opening opportunity for dialogue. This was the case globally; for instance in the UK, the Evangelical Alliance developed an Emergency Strategic Plan to guide its response.¹²



Illustration 1 Tanzania

In Tanzania, though the Government had not officially declared Covid-19 a pandemic, Tearfund partner Christian Council of Tanzania provided guidelines for their local- and national-level churches on how to conduct services and ensure Covid-19 protection measures were followed, to curb the spread of the virus. Some of the guidelines included promoting precautions such as handwashing stations at churches, wearing face masks at church, physical distancing in church services and limiting numbers of people at funerals.

The churches were able to bury those who died of Covid-19 in their communities and encourage their congregants to follow the precautionary measures. The Government invited the church's input into the national response to Covid-19, called for Tanzanian Christians to pray for three days, and saw that the church's involvement helped calm public fears.

Church adopting innovative digital platforms for their advocacy

The most successful advocacy initiatives that Tearfund church partners have been engaged in over the years have been through face-to-face dialogues, lobbying sessions, campaigning and the use of social accountability tools, among other advocacy strategies illustrated in Tearfund's Advocacy toolkit.¹³ Through Tearfund's [Bridging the gap](#) research it is evident that the collaboration of the church and community to regularly engage with local governments results in increased government responsiveness to community needs, due to the trust that is built.

With Covid-19 restrictions, regular engagement and face-to-face interactions have been limited, forcing the church denominations, networks and local churches together with the communities implementing CCT to primarily rely on existing digital methods – such as the internet and mobile phones¹⁴ – to continue advocating, while others adopted new innovative methods.¹⁵

Some partners used television to hold advocacy dialogue meetings with government leaders and invited listeners to participate and question their leaders, while some increased use of both national and local radio, different television channels and WhatsApp messaging to make bold statements and pronouncements to draw governments' and other key stakeholders' attention to the vulnerable and forgotten throughout this pandemic.



Many people in Uganda listen to the radio.
Photo: Andrew Philip/Tearfund



Illustration 2 Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Tearfund partner Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, working closely with the national church network, saw an opportunity to influence the Government to allow church leaders to use national television channels – prime time – to reach out to Ethiopians with prayer, services and also Covid-19 prevention messages.

This was a historic collaboration between the religious leaders and the Government of Ethiopia, as this had previously been prohibited. As a result, the President publicly supported the faith leaders' response to Covid-19 and communities across Ethiopia also responded well to their faith leaders' example. The use of television during prime time allowed the church to influence the nation positively to respond to Covid-19 government policies and rules towards stopping the spread of the virus in the country.

Church influencing by having a united voice

The literature reviewed indicates that there has been increased collective voices through national denominations, church councils, church alliances and networks¹⁶ advocating at local, national and global levels. For instance, most Tearfund church partners integrating advocacy within a CCT approach, or who had received general training on advocacy, had the knowledge, skill and appreciation of the need to engage governments along with other churches. This has resulted in many being co-opted into national and local Covid-19 response planning and recovery responses. Additionally, governments at national levels are continuously holding dialogues with national church networks on reviewing guidelines and laws that allow sequential opening of churches in different countries, jointly agreeing on the risks and measures that need to be put in place for the reopening.

This is the case in Mozambique and South Africa, among other countries.¹⁷ The unified voices of churches have, in many countries, continued to successfully influence Covid-19 issues, including dignified burials, debt relief and cancellation, migration and calling for accountability of Covid-19 resources. As the Covid-19 response keeps on evolving, Tearfund partners have an opportunity to have a collective voice in vaccine roll-out and implementation plans, to ensure its equitable distribution.



📷 Food packages are delivered to 500 vulnerable families in the municipalities of Algodonal and Santa Lucía in Barranquilla, Colombia, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. **Photo:** Edrei Cueto/Tearfund



Illustration 3 Latin America & the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Tearfund works with a network of churches on migration issues that largely affect migrants from Venezuela and other countries in the region. Migrants have been one of the most affected vulnerable groups during the pandemic, and the network of churches has made public statements to the national and regional governments and international agencies to advocate for free vaccines, health, food programmes and legal status for migrants.

They have also influenced the Colombian Government to review and approve new laws that allow 2 million of Venezuela's migrants and refugees in Colombia to have the legal status to live in the country. The new law was approved in February 2021 and this fundamental requirement (legal status) allows them to receive their Covid-19 vaccines and have free access to the health system.

Church ensuring no one is left behind

The urgent need to save lives meant governments acted immediately to stop the spread of Covid-19. However, in this urgency the most vulnerable groups within society were overlooked in most instances, eg people with sight loss. The closure of public services in other areas has created backlogs and hindered other vulnerable groups from receiving life-saving services. For instance, Tearfund's church partners had identified that older people were forgotten in addressing community needs. This resulted in a study published in 2020 (just before the Covid-19 pandemic became official) called [Ageing in Rwanda](#), which provided strong evidence that older people are often invisible in public life, public discourse and even public planning.¹⁸ In responding to the gap, Tearfund developed [guidance for churches](#) on how to support older people during the Covid-19 pandemic.¹⁹

‘The urgent need to save lives meant governments acted immediately but the most vulnerable groups were overlooked’

The guide elaborates how advocacy for older people can be undertaken and how the church should support older people during Covid-19 responses, as well as the need for the church to be the voice of older people to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 within this vulnerable group. Communities where Tearfund church partners are working are continually identifying the groups of vulnerable people who have been forgotten during this period. Globally, the World Council of Churches launched a new ‘13 million campaign’ to help people living with HIV yet not receiving treatment, urging governments not to forget them during Covid-19 responses, as they are vulnerable and exposed to coronavirus. To create space for older people to advocate for themselves without exposure to the virus, Tearfund church partners have used different safe channels such as radio dialogue platforms.²⁰ As the pandemic continues and governments push to recover and build back better, there is even more urgency for the church to continue advocating to ensure no one is left behind.

‘Communities where Tearfund church partners are working are continually identifying the groups of vulnerable people who have been forgotten during this period’



📷 Mukeshimana (left) and Clarisse from the Zivu community in Rwanda take a break in their banana plantation.
Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund



Illustration 4 Malawi

In Malawi, Tearfund partner Eagles used radio to share Covid-19 messaging and received a call from a community member with sight loss who made Eagles aware of the plight of people with sight loss during this pandemic.

They had no access to any of the written information being shared as it wasn't in Braille. They were also not able to attend village meetings, so they were not receiving required support such as hygiene supplies. Therefore, Eagles reached out to the local government officials from the district the caller lived in, who confessed that they had not considered the special needs of people with sight loss when they were planning the response to Covid-19 in their area.

Eagles, in identifying other resources to respond to the need, met with Torch Trust for the Blind who had a database of 1,000 people with sight loss, and discussed how they could access government funding for producing leaflets about Covid-19 in Braille.

Eagles met with national government officials with the information they had gathered and asked them to consider the unique needs of people with sight loss in Malawi during Covid-19, such as proper access to water and hygiene facilities at community boreholes. They are also petitioning the Government to provide more funding to organisations and district initiatives to support people with sight loss and other vulnerable groups in rural communities. This was a reminder for Eagles and the church to be sensitive to vulnerable groups in responding to Covid-19.



📷 People living with disabilities in Malawi are supported during the Covid-19 pandemic by Tearfund partner Eagles.
Photo: Jimmy Likagwa/Eagles

‘Communities where Tearfund church partners work are continually identifying the groups of vulnerable people who have been forgotten during this period’



Illustration 5 Mozambique

In Mozambique, Tearfund partner Christian Council of Mozambique identified that the most vulnerable communities did not have access to Covid-19 awareness and prevention information because they don't speak or read the official Portuguese language.

The senior church leaders from Christian Council of Mozambique approached the government's National Director of Health to ask the government to disseminate Covid-19 messages in local languages, to allow the local communities to respond and prevent the spread of the virus.

The government responded positively, and is now promoting a massive prevention and awareness campaign – using television and community radio – in local and sign languages.

‘Our partner identified that the most vulnerable communities did not have access to Covid-19 awareness and prevention information in their languages’

📷 A scientist in Malawi works in his laboratory.
Photo: Chris Boyd/Tearfund



Church making best use of existing relationships to strengthen their advocacy

Lessons from the Ebola response demonstrate that communities were lax in implementing the guidelines set out by governments as they did not trust the information from government sources. It was not until faith leaders were co-opted into the Ebola response that communities started to respond. The [Bridging the gap](#) research demonstrates that the church plays a catalytic role with communities, bridging the broken relationship between citizens and governments, and it acknowledges that relationship-building is an essential driver of effective advocacy. Tearfund's CCT approach emphasises the need for the church to build relationships and trust with communities, to map and identify community needs, identify advocacy issues, and map out stakeholders, decision-makers and powerful strategic partners within their communities.

In some cases this has enabled communities to start developing strategic relationships, and brought the decision-makers and other church coalitions and networks to the table to discuss how to mitigate the identified issues. With the onset of Covid-19, for most of the Tearfund partners the pre-existence of relationships proved to be an easy gateway to influencing governments on emerging needs for the vulnerable in their communities. However, this was not the case for the CCT communities that had not been through a phase of identifying advocacy issues.

‘Tearfund acknowledges that relationship-building is an essential driver of effective advocacy’





Illustration 6 Tanzania

In Tanzania, Tearfund partner Christian Council of Tanzania has, over the years, been strategic and intentional in developing relationships with national government officials from various ministries, as they continually advocate for different emerging issues.

Though civil society space is usually limited in Tanzania, Christian Council of Tanzania has been trained in the CCT approach – which they have adapted as a key programme countrywide – and has been trained on integrating advocacy.

This has strengthened their capacity to integrate advocacy at the local to national level. More specifically, when the Government of Tanzania failed to acknowledge Covid-19 as a health emergency, the advocacy space was closed for civil society and the church to engage.

However, it was at this time that there was a public outcry over inhumane methods of burying those suspected to have died due to Covid-19. Christian Council of Tanzania mobilised the church leaders to advocate for dignified burials for Covid-19 deaths. The pastors developed a message they wanted to send to the people and an appeal letter to the President on conducting dignified burials.²¹

The messages were sent to the media, to each member church, and to the Ministry of Health. The President of Tanzania heard the appeal of the church and denounced on national television the practice of night burials of those who had died of Covid-19, and promoted health precautions against the disease such as handwashing stations at churches, wearing face masks at church, physical distancing at church services and limiting numbers of people at funerals.



Community members involved in the CCM programme in the Diocese of Mara and Ukerewe pray together in their new church building.
Photo: Mark PW Scott/Tearfund

‘Pastors sent an appeal letter to the President on conducting dignified burials’



Illustration 7 Rwanda

Members of the DUHINDUKE self-help group (SHG) in Rwanda came to realise that saving and lending small loans was not enough to bring about the development they dreamed of. They had an idea about farming, but they lacked land.

They introduced their dream to Association Mwana Ukundwa (AMU), who advocated on their behalf. AMU, in collaboration with the local Tumba authorities, requested that Huye district should offer almost two hectares of land for SHG members to farm commercially, and see their dream come true. AMU allocated the land to the 64 farmers who initiated the farming idea and who were particularly vulnerable.

In return, the farmers were asked to provide their labour and bring additional manure, which was not easy for them because they had to do some work for their neighbours to get the manure. But by working together on their consolidated land, they harvested 3.26 tonnes of maize, and the group has freely given out 100kg to support their neighbours who were affected by Covid restrictions.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, AMU advocated to the government to purchase the maize from the SHG farmers, as the local government was buying food to feed the very vulnerable. The price was 700 RWF/kg and the farmers were paid 2,275,000 RWF. During the lockdown, in partnership with the Tumba local government sector and AMU, the farmers were able to meet their families' economic and food needs.



Telesphore and Primitive's lives in Gisagara district, southern Rwanda, were beset by family conflict for years but they now live in peace, thanks to counselling and reconciliation support from AMU.
Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

‘AMU advocated for self-help group members to receive farm land from district authorities’

Churches using existing relationships to influence governments to meet the needs of the most vulnerable

The humanitarian response environment has drastically changed due to the restrictive nature of the health policies and laws to curb the spread of the virus. As a result, there was no space for the church to respond to community needs. Many governments came up with categories of 'essential service' providers, who were only allowed to work and engage with communities with clearly laid out procedures. This initially created a barrier to church responses.

In many of the communities where Tearfund church partners are working, the training on integral mission and, more specifically, the advocacy role of the church, provided the knowledge and skills that the church and communities employed to start to engage in public policy dialogue, advocating for the church to be recognised as an essential service provider.

Though governments responded differently, it was only when the churches had succeeded in influencing their government that they were allowed to respond to the humanitarian and psychosocial needs more fully within their communities.

This was possible as governments reviewed their guidelines to include the church as an 'essential service', with stipulated clear regulations and guidelines on conduct.

The church holds a unique space as it is embedded in the community; it is an ideal administrator of humanitarian aid. Covid-19 has underlined the fact that advocacy can play a powerful role in enabling church engagement in humanitarian response.



📷 Mtshale Nyoni displays some of his wooden carvings which help him make ends meet, although Zimbabwe's drought means life is still hard. Photo: David Mutua/Tearfund



Illustration 8 Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the government's Covid-19 regulations did not allow the church to move to the communities to provide any humanitarian and psychosocial support. Tearfund partner Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (the General Secretary and the Board) lobbied the government ministries to seek exemption for church leaders. As a result, they received an exemption letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs allowing church leaders to operate because they were providing psychosocial support, which was deemed an essential service.

Lessons from the Bible

God's heart is expressed through the commissioning vision of Jesus' final words on earth – it is to see every expression of humanity, both individual and corporate, restored by the Spirit of God through the redemptive message of the gospel. He wants every person to have the opportunity to experience God's life and be adopted into the community of the family of God (Mark 16:15). He wants every nation to be able to experience the transformative impact of the kingdom of God in every dimension of its cultural life, shaping every sphere of society.²³



The scriptures clearly tell us that even as God created individual human beings, he also designed the nations.²² As surely as he designed the systems that give life to an individual, so also has he designed the systems that give life to a nation, which we call the spheres of society – each designed by God.

However, from Genesis 3 the Bible records that sin separated humans from God's perfect plan. The Bible talks about plagues and pestilence which have the magnitude and impact of Covid-19 in the modern world.

Covid-19 has shaken and challenged the foundations, beliefs and social norms that have, over the decades, informed our individual lives and the nations. It has reminded mankind that life on earth is frail – we are all mortal human beings. It is therefore important for Christians and the church to understand the desire of God to influence power and decision-making in the spheres of society, so that laws and policies that define societal practices and norms reflect Christ's promise in John 10:10 that they 'may have life, and have it to the full'.

A window of opportunity

Covid-19 has presented an opportunity for governments, church and society to restructure, re-strategise and rebuild out of the ruins of the pandemic, but also embrace the new society.

Isaiah 65:17–25 describes the vision of a new society, one that the church should aim at partnering with God to establish on earth in all the spheres of life. Verse 20 speaks about our health and God's plan for mankind to live fulfilled lives: 'Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.'

Looking through a biblical lens, this pandemic is a key moment for the church to advocate for public policies, guidelines and practices that are realigned with God's vision of the new earth. It's an opportunity the church should seize.

It is ‘for such a time as this’ that the church is called to be the light of the world as written in Matthew 5:13–14: ‘You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.’

Why the church needs to advocate during a health pandemic

Sickness can be a tool that the enemy, who is the thief, uses to steal, to kill and to destroy humankind. When an individual or society experiences a health crisis, mental sickness arises and poverty levels increase; because the person or community is not able to work, community resources are depleted, which leads to economic poverty, famine and ultimately death.

Some communities already lacked health facilities, resources and capacity to handle health challenges before Covid-19. It is evident that the church in many countries has stepped in to support governments’ efforts to provide medical services to different communities through investments in infrastructure and health facilities. Hence government policies have a direct impact

on how the church is able to provide health services to needy communities while addressing issues of inequalities and failure to implement health policies, which as a result disadvantage the most vulnerable. The church, therefore, is a key player in the health sector in most countries and the impact of Covid-19 affects the communities who are the congregants in church and the communities where the church is based.

The church and community transformation approach particularly seeks to mobilise the church to become an agent of holistic change in the community, and relies on inclusive participatory processes to bring about ownership and sustainable change through mobilising local resources, increased agency and releasing community potential.

When advocacy is integrated into CCT approaches, particularly in a Covid-19 advocacy response, it enables an evidence-based approach to identifying local and higher-level health advocacy issues, drawing upon issues identified by communities and providing legitimacy for national church leaders to advocate on those health issues at all levels – sub-national, national or international.

Advocacy enables churches and communities to monitor implementation of Covid-19 policies, laws and agreements at all levels, pushing for greater vertical and horizontal accountability through facilitating the flow of information about national Covid-19 health guidelines and policies. It also provides a collective voice based on collaboration and networking with other church health initiatives and platforms, leveraging the church’s large and broad-based membership – particularly in Christian majority countries – which is often well connected to decision-makers. The church in its advocacy should play a life-saving role like Esther’s in the Bible²⁴– to protect and safeguard the most vulnerable and needy in communities.

Tearfund’s [Advocacy toolkit](#) is a key resource that explains why and how the church needs to advocate, and provides guidance on strategies the church can use to advocate even in a global health pandemic. Tearfund has also produced [practical resources](#) on Covid-19 that guide our church partners’ Covid-19 responses.

Looking forward: Lessons and recommendations

During the Ebola outbreak, the HIV epidemic and now the Covid-19 pandemic, the church has been recognised as a strategic partner by international donors and governments. It is also evident that advocacy by the interfaith community, of which the church is a part, played a key role in influencing change in some of the restrictive environments in which the world found itself due to the guidelines and rules that demanded immediate behaviour change.



Covid-19 provides a strategic opportunity for the church to live out its purpose of not only caring for the needy and vulnerable but also of speaking out with them and for them, and empowering them to speak out for themselves on issues that are affecting communities. It also calls for the church to influence public policies and laws that are being developed during Covid-19 responses and recovery, eg laws on dignified burial, laws on refugees, and laws to allow churches to respond to community needs as ‘essential services’. The Bible has also affirmed that the world will experience increased plagues and pestilence – though no one knows when.

‘In tackling Ebola, HIV and now Covid-19, the church has been recognised as a strategic partner by international donors and governments’



📷 Tearfund partner Eagles distributes resources to people with sight loss as part of its Covid-19 response at Bangula and Phokera in Nsanje, Malawi. **Photo:** Jimmy Likagwa/Eagles

It is wise for the church to be well positioned to continue to influence and shape societies’ narrative according to the gospel of Christ. Looking to the future, there are lessons the church can draw from the current pandemic to inform how it should step in and continue to sustain its advocacy role. This section will highlight recommendations for the church globally and more specifically for Tearfund’s church partners.

Recommendations for the global church and Tearfund's church partners

1. Biblical insight about future pandemics: preparation is vital

The Bible talks about plagues and pestilence which have the magnitude and impact of Covid-19 in the modern world. Jesus spoke prophetically about the inevitable signs that would precede the end of the world: 'There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.' (Luke 21:11)

The World Health Organization is asking the nations of the world to not be 'dangerously shortsighted' in moving from one outbreak to another while doing nothing to prepare and prevent them from happening.²⁵ It is generally accepted that the Covid-19 pandemic caught the world and the church unaware; however, this cannot be an excuse to remain in a state of unpreparedness. 'If we fail to prepare, we prepare to fail.'

Tearfund church partners who were already mobilised and working with communities through strategic relationships with decision-makers have demonstrated through this period that it is possible to adapt and sustain advocacy even through a global pandemic. Covid-19 has provided an opportunity for the church to take stock, learn and prepare, as there are many advocacy lessons from this pandemic and past epidemics.

- **Discernment and prophetic insight. The church should prepare for the future. Like the sons of Issachar, the church needs to understand the seasons that are ahead of us.²⁶ It says in the book of Amos: 'Surely the sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7). The book of Ecclesiastes mentions the different seasons with a time for every purpose under the heavens. The church must warn people and share the gospel. Like Noah, the church must prepare and preach the gospel and call the people to God's saving grace; like Moses and**



Aaron, the church must speak up for the oppressed and voiceless, and stand up for truth and justice; and like Nehemiah, the church must be ready to lead the way to rebuild society based on God's justice.²⁷

2. Covid-19 responses and recovery: the church should speak up in the public policy sphere

Literature has shown that the church plays a strategic role in the response and recovery phases of epidemics and man-made disasters.²⁸ From the Ebola response, it was recommended that faith leaders should be included in humanitarian response as true partners, not just instrumentalised as communication channels or service deliverers. Globally, international organisations such as the World Health Organization, national governments and the private sector have grown in their appreciation of the role of the church in the response and recovery phases of Covid-19. The church has advocated at the local and national level for governments to review restrictive laws to open space for humanitarian and psychosocial support. This is a wake-up call for the church to leave its comfort zone and take up its rightful position in the public sphere, rebuilding the new society.

- **The church should use this ‘strategic window’ and its social capital to reaffirm its voice in the public sphere and advocate to governments to establish clear mechanisms and structures that allow the church to actively participate in Covid-19 decision-making processes, to help shape new practices, social norms and behaviours as the world, nations and communities are building back better.**

3. Leaving no one behind: the church is the eyes and ears of society

The public policies and guidelines that governments have adopted and developed during this Covid-19 period are divorced from the realities and living conditions of the most vulnerable and marginalised in our society. It is in such a time as this that governments have a responsibility to protect society. However, during this pandemic many vulnerable groups have been left behind; for example, many people with sight loss at local level did not receive Covid-19 protection information relevant to them, older people who needed to isolate

themselves due to their level of vulnerability to the virus were not sure how to meet their basic needs, and immigrants in most host countries are not receiving social protection and basic needs. These and many more vulnerable groups are experiencing a much bigger pandemic beyond Covid-19. Increased corruption and poor governance of Covid-19 funds have adversely affected the poorest and most vulnerable people, as it has taken life-saving services away from them.²⁹ The proximity of the church to communities makes it the eyes and ears of the reality that they face.

- **The church should be sensitive and act on the suffering of the most vulnerable and poorest people in our society. Now more than ever the church needs to speak out for those who cannot speak out for themselves, and defend the rights of people living in poverty. For instance, the church needs to speak out on the need for governments to prioritise vulnerable people in Covid-19 vaccination programmes.**

4. Window of opportunity: building back better

Covid-19 has exposed the social, economic, political and structural weaknesses that have been well hidden in our society. It has brought some of those giant systems to their knees, brought global inequalities and systemic challenges to the surface, shaken economies and threatened the core foundations of our lives. Globally, nations and societies are trying to adapt and build a better society out of the ruins; private and public institutions and the church are asking themselves ‘how to build back better’. Governments are inviting stakeholders to dialogue forums to brainstorm on how to continue responding to Covid-19 and build better nations. In some countries, churches have been invited into these dialogue and decision-making spaces.

- **From the ruins of Covid-19 a new society is emerging, new social norms are being developed and nations are redefining their priorities. This is a golden opportunity for the church to lead in deliberate and honest conversation on how society must build back better, to ensure an economy that is founded on justice and dignity for all.**

- **Internally, the church should take up this opportunity to stop, evaluate itself and hold honest conversation on some of its own policies, guidelines and beliefs that hinder the church from influencing the new society. The Bible says: ‘My people are being destroyed because they don’t know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognise you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children’ (Hosea 4:6, NLT). The church can no longer stand ignorant of this responsibility. The church must not miss this opportunity to access decision-making spaces to influence laws, practices and social norms.**

5. Multi-level advocacy approach: the church’s structural advantage

Evidently there have been increased multi-level advocacy efforts by the church in collaboration with other key stakeholders at all levels. However, there is untapped potential and opportunities that the church has not taken advantage of. Covid-19 health policies and guidelines have been led by the WHO, allowing countries to adapt and review their own laws and policies and lead in implementation of the policies.



📷 Women from the Zivu community supported by AMU work in their banana plantation in Gisagara district, southern Rwanda. Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

This demonstrates how global policies and decision-making processes trickle down from the global to the community level. To be able to influence all the multi-level decision-making processes, the church needs to understand the different decisions that are made at each of these levels and how they impact communities, so that they can design appropriate advocacy plans and strategies. Globally, the church has a structural advantage that is similar to government structures – aligned from global church councils and coalitions to local churches at the community level. Hence the church has the ability to influence both ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’.

With Covid-19, most of the public policy decisions have been made through ‘top down’ strategies, although the church in most instances has been able to influence at the different levels of decision-making, harnessing its structural advantage and influencing power not only on policies but also on positive societal values and norms that will build resilience and support societies into building back better.

- **Globally, the church should establish and strengthen internal advocacy structures and capacity, and develop long-term advocacy strategies at all levels of public decision-making spheres. This will enable the church globally to galvanise its structural advantage and professional resources to create spaces for communities to participate at local, national and international decision-making levels.**

6. The digital space: the church needs to increase its knowledge and skills

Digital connectivity is not a convenience any more, but a necessity that society has been forced to use due to the limits on human contact that have been imposed by the pandemic. All sectors of society have been affected by the digital migration:

commerce, education, health care, politics, socialising and religion. State and non-state actors in many countries are now exploiting opportunities created by the pandemic to shape online narratives, censor critical speech and build new technological systems of social control.³⁰

Churches were not left behind in the digital migration as they sought to find alternatives to continue preaching and serving the congregations and communities around them. Though there are many positives of moving into the virtual world, where evidently the church is now leveraging the different digital platforms to advocate and invite communities to participate, the church has not fully exploited or understood this space. Despite its great potential, digital society has prompted governments to limit the flow of information to its citizens, and expand surveillance powers and the deployment of new technologies (such as digitised Covid-19 vaccine IDs) that allow surveillance of people.³¹ Some of these regulations and practices intrude on people’s basic human rights.

- **The church should provide oversight and safeguarding in the digital environment to monitor areas that are already central concerns to the public, such as privacy rights, fake news and targeted propaganda to influence elections, among other digital concerns. This is not an option for the church but an inevitable requirement, as any laws and guidelines will have an equal impact on the church.**
- **The church should learn and acquire digital governance skills: Tearfund partners have increasingly used different digital platforms to advocate, but there is huge untapped potential and a need to acquire skills on digital governance, digital tools and knowledge on different digital policies and laws, and how to adapt digital spaces to mobilise and reach out to the community.**

Advice for CCT partners

CCT partners should adopt and integrate contextually appropriate CCT advocacy using social accountability mechanisms to enable society build back better holistically from Covid -19. Covid-19 closed down the normal space in which mobilised communities could respond; many partners had to lobby and influence their governments to recognise the church as a key actor in responding to the impact of Covid-19 and open up space for them to be able to provide the much-needed support at community levels. Covid-19 affirmed that the church cannot be ignorant of how policies and laws impact society and the work of the church. Hence the voices of the communities and the church in the public policy sphere are essential as society is re-emerging.

CCT partners who are already integrating advocacy and social accountability into their work should identify the key achievements and missed opportunities from their Covid-19 responses. They should take stock and use their learning to galvanise further advocacy. This should be

a joint learning with the communities in celebrating advocacy successes, identifying gaps and agreeing on how to address the gaps. Tearfund should support this learning and provide the necessary skills to bridge the capacity, knowledge and skills gaps they identify.

CCT partners and communities should embrace advocacy research and develop innovative social accountability models that will build resilience and equip them to handle future pandemics. As communities are conducting research and evaluations on how to emerge from Covid-19 and strengthen the CCT process, they should increase their understanding of emerging public policies and how they will impact society; and increase their appreciation of the advocacy role the church and communities must play at local and national level. For instance, it is evident that most denominations, church networks and communities who had been integrating advocacy were able to find simple yet effective ways of continuing to advocate, eg sending public letters to decision-



📷 Food packages have been delivered to hundreds of vulnerable families in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic. **Photo:** Edrei Cueto/Tearfund

makers, using media platforms like radio to hold policy discussions with targeted decision-makers, and influencing through national platforms and networks. Advocacy and social accountability evidence-based innovation models are a critical component in learning and in developing a stronger and better society.

CCT partners and communities have an opportunity to build and strengthen local- to national-level advocacy and social accountability structures and mechanisms. The disconnect between national Covid-19 policies and laws and the hard realities of life at community level was evident. Churches in some countries, eg Malawi, who had already been trained on CCT advocacy, were able to identify an advocacy issue that affected a vulnerable group in society and use this as a case study to conduct further research for more evidence, using this information to amplify the issue at national level. There is now a great opportunity to equip the different church structures on how to amplify the voices and the needs of communities to the different levels of decision-making. Moreover, the pandemic has demonstrated that most Covid-19 policies and regulations are centrally developed at national level and implemented at different governance levels. Therefore, the CCT partners and communities should build on the appropriate strategies and mechanisms to ensure that the identified community advocacy issues are acted upon at both local and national levels.

As the world seeks to inform the new society emerging from Covid-19, this is a window of opportunity for the church that has been envisioned on CCT to lead communities and networks in influencing decision-makers in all spheres of life on the issues that communities identify and prioritise. Covid-19 has validated the undeniable responsibility of the church to be active in the public policy sphere; Tearfund church partners who have been able to advocate throughout this pandemic should use this opportunity to sustain advocacy voices and action in a more strategic way. Additionally, the churches and communities that have been slow in appreciating the integration of advocacy into the CCT approach have a golden opportunity to acquire advocacy knowledge, skills and experience.

An opportunity to learn and strengthen CCT advocacy using social accountability mechanisms, in order to ensure local needs are met. Tearfund CCT partners who have not mobilised communities during the pandemic should be trained on advocacy as a strategy that brings the community together to identify the most pressing Covid-19 advocacy issues, eg accountability of Covid-19 resources,

‘This is an opportunity for the church to lead communities and networks in influencing decision-making on the issues that communities identify and prioritise’

vaccine disruption and accessibility, and social protection programmes that affect them and the most vulnerable among them. As governments and the WHO establish new rules, regulations, response and recovery plans, these influence how communities and nations are re-emerging from Covid-19. New social norms and practices are being developed and adapted – so Tearfund CCT partners have an opportunity to influence these practices and norms so that they respond to the needs of their communities.

Conclusion

Tearfund CCT partners have demonstrated that with the right skills and knowledge, it is possible to continue advocating even in a global pandemic. Globally, many issues of injustice are being magnified, extreme poverty is increasing due to struggling economies and loss of income, and communities that were vulnerable before Covid-19 are even more vulnerable now.

The church has a unique opportunity to invest further in communities that have suffered badly, and to build back better holistically, paying great attention to leaving no one behind. Additionally, there is a greater need for the church to step out into the public sphere to position itself as a strategic and active ally, drawing down resources for the community and especially for those in greatest need.

As the world goes through this pandemic and Tearfund focuses on strengthening the CCT approach through Covid-19 lessons, there is a need to equip churches, denominations and networks on the integration of advocacy and provide tools in the existing CCT communities, as well as build advocacy capacity in new CCT communities. Covid-19 has provided an opportunity for the church to demonstrate its purpose as defined in Isaiah 58:12: 'Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.'

‘Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings’



Working together to build a new home in Nigeria.
Photo: Andrew Philip/Tearfund

Definitions and acronyms

Covid-19

An infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus

CCT

Church and community transformation

CCM

Church and community mobilisation

WHO

World Health Organization

Advocacy

Influencing the decisions, policies and practices of powerful decision-makers, to address underlying causes of poverty, bring justice and support good development

Epidemic

The occurrence in a community or region of cases of an illness, specific health-related behaviour, or other health-related events clearly in excess of normal expectancy (WHO)

Pandemic

The worldwide spread of a new disease

Local church

A sustainable community of local Christian believers, who come together to worship, study the Bible and pray; the local church may meet in a church building, community building, school hall, someone's home or outside – anywhere where they can gather together

Church network

A group or system of interconnected churches that are non-denominational in nature; they do not have an overarching governance system, but instead share similar values and commit to sharing resources

Denomination

A recognised autonomous branch of the Christian church (including megachurches) which governs, shares doctrine and resources a group of churches

Bibliography

Bulmer, Andrew, and Bob Hansford (2009) [*The local church and its engagement with disasters*](#), Teddington: Tearfund

Davis, Francis, Emmanuel Murangira and Madleina Daehnhardt (2019) [*Ageing in Rwanda – challenges and opportunities for church, state and nation*](#), Teddington/Birmingham: Tearfund and University of Birmingham

Featherstone, Andy (2015) *Keeping the Faith: [The Role of Faith Leaders in the Ebola Response](#)*, London/Teddington/Birmingham: Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund and Islamic Relief Worldwide

Flowers, Charlotte (2016) [*Bridging the gap: The role of local churches in fostering local-level social accountability and governance*](#), Teddington: Tearfund

Hamilton, David Joel (2014) [*God Revealed Through the Spheres of Society*](#), Singapore

Konteh, Fred (2017) [*After the Outbreak: Analysis of the post-Ebola recovery period of Sierra Leone and Liberia with lessons for future health emergencies*](#), Teddington/Milton Keynes: Tearfund and World Vision UK

Lawson, Melissa, and Joanna Watson (2016) [*CCM Advocacy guide*](#), Teddington: Tearfund

Watson, Joanna (2015) [*Advocacy toolkit, 2nd edition*](#), Teddington: Tearfund

Williams, Kirsten C (2018) [*Intersections of Technology and Civil Society International*](#), Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

Williamson, Camilla et al (2021) *Are older people being heard? [The impact of COVID-19 on older people's ability to exercise their voice](#)*, London: HelpAge International

Woolley, Lucie (2017) [*The role of local churches in humanitarian and development responses*](#), Teddington: Tearfund

World Bank and Institute of Information Society (2016) [*Digital Government 2020: Prospects for Russia*](#)

Endnotes

- 1 <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/how-we-work/what-we-do/church-and-community>
- 2 <https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/reports/2017-tearfund-integral-inspirational-and-influential-en.pdf>
- 3 www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview
- 4 <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/tools-and-guides/understanding-poverty>
- 5 www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/pages/news/news/2014/08/ebola-outbreak-in-west-africa-declared-a-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern
www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/why-the-hiv-epidemic-is-not-over
- 6 www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020
- 7 www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/influenza/CSR_ISR_2000_1/en/#:~:text=The%20pandemic%20of%201918%2D1919,a%20complex%2C%20constantly%20changing%20virus
- 8 Featherstone (2015)
- 9 https://assets.worldvision.org.uk/files/5114/9149/5777/WV_Tearfund_Exec_8pp_WEB_SinglePages.pdf p 7
- 10 <https://covid19.who.int/>
- 11 www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021
- 12 www.eauk.org/assets/files/downloads/Our-response-to-the-coronavirus-crisis.pdf
- 13 <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/roots-guides/advocacy-toolkit--a-roots-guide>
- 14 <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/advocacy-in-the-digital-age>
- 15 <https://learn.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/covid19/covid-19-tearfund-addressing-rumours-and-misinformation-en.pdf?la=en>
- 16 World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Alliance, World Baptist Alliance, World Lutheran Alliance among others.
- 17 <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/1614/hope-for-reopening-of-Churches-in-mozambique-as-religious-leaders-meet-president>
<https://allafrica.com/stories/202005190750.html>
- 18 <https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/policy/2020-tearfund-consortium-ageing-in-rwanda-compressed.pdf>
- 19 <https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/tools-and-guides/covid-19-tearfund-supporting-older-people-guidance-for-churches-manual-en.pdf>
- 20 www.oikoumene.org/news/new-13-million-campaign-to-help-people-living-with-hiv-yet-not-receiving-treatment
- 21 Communiqué from the members of the General Council of Christian Council of Tanzania. 'on their place in the fight against Covid-19'.
- 22 Genesis 1:26-27; Acts 17:26
- 23 Hamilton (2014) <https://ywam.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/God-Revealed-through-the-Spheres-of-Society-1.pdf>
- 24 See Esther 4:16
- 25 www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2020/12/27/default-calendar/international-day-of-epidemic-preparedness
- 26 1 Chronicles 12:32
- 27 Genesis 6:9-9:17; Exodus 5
- 28 Featherstone (2015)
- 29 www.transparency.org/en/press/2020-corruption-perceptions-index-reveals-widespread-corruption-is-weakening-covid-19-response-threatening-global-recovery#
- 30 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2020/pandemics-digital-shadow>
- 31 <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/certificate-covid-vaccination-can-we-do-better-yellow-card>