

One Voice in Prayer

Your weekly prayer resource

The logo for Tearfund, featuring the word "tearfund" in white lowercase letters inside a blue rounded rectangle. The background of the header banner is yellow with a faint world map and a white line.

Church transforming community

Jesus came and was part of a community. He lived among people with spiritual and practical needs – and he provided spiritual and practical solutions. As Christians (and the church), part of our call is to do the same in our communities.

Around the world, Tearfund often works through the local church to bring transformation where it is needed. This way of working is called Church and Community Transformation (CCT).

Over the past year, supported by your prayers, we have been able to help thousands of pastors and churches to make a difference in the lives of people facing challenging circumstances. Thank you for your faithful prayers.

CCT prayers

This week's *Prayer Diary* focuses on CCT in Rwanda, and we're also sharing the story of Pastor Yalgado and his church in Burkina Faso who are starting to transform their community.

Read more about CCT and Pastor Yalgado's Abundant Life church below.

We currently have 25,000 churches involved in CCT around the world and our vision is to have 250,000 by 2030, but this needs ongoing prayer to achieve. Please join us in praying for more churches like Pastor Yalgado's to be at the centre of bringing transformation to their communities.

Pray with us

Pray for local churches, like Pastor Yalgado's, to take up the responsibility of finding ways to address their communities' needs. Ask God for wisdom and resources. Give thanks for the work that has been done already and for the transformation that has begun. Pray that God will bless them with his favour.

Pray for the world



Humanitarian crisis in Yemen

Humanitarian need in Yemen has never been higher. Pray that the people of Yemen would get the support they need. Pray for vulnerable people in Yemen to experience God's love and care through the work of our partners and other humanitarian organisations. Pray for protection for our partners in Yemen as they operate in an ever challenging context.



Food insecurity in Nigeria

In Nigeria, as of today, 8.3 million people are in need of humanitarian support, 6.6 million people are projected to experience acute food insecurity and 2.9 million have become internally displaced. Pray for the humanitarian services provision and for the humanitarian workers who are often targeted by bandits. Pray for the insecurity constraints and movement restrictions to some areas that limit the access to certain conflict-affected areas. Pray that the most urgent needs of affected people – including safety, food, clean water and sanitation, health services, education and shelter – are met.



Elections in Bangladesh

Continue to pray for Bangladesh which has its national general election later this month. Please pray for a peaceful election season and for righteous, wise leaders to be put in place.

Prayer Diary: transformation through the Bible

Church and Community Transformation (CCT) is the key way that Tearfund works to release whole communities from the grip of poverty. CCT is a Bible-based guided training approach that a local church can use with its community to identify the resources they have. This week, give thanks for how CCT is transforming lives in more than 25,000 churches in communities worldwide and pray as we look to expand that work to 250,000.

Sunday 14 January

‘Working with and through churches using our Church and Community Transformation approach is changing lives in Rwanda,’ says Emmanuel Murangira, Tearfund’s Rwanda Country Director. ‘Every day, I hear of communities working together to improve lives and lift themselves out of poverty. Praise God!’ Ask God for more churches in Rwanda to catch this vision.

Monday 15 January

Last year, as part of a research study, Tearfund surveyed almost 8,000 people across four countries: Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Three-quarters of churches taking part in CCT reported that church attendance and financial giving to the church had increased. Give thanks for how God is using CCT to grow churches.

Tuesday 16 January

Jean Batiste was a violent drug dealer and gang leader, feared in his local community in Rwanda. This all changed after he experienced a whole-life transformation when participating in CCT. Pray for people in communities across Rwanda who have yet to turn their lives around.

Wednesday 17 January

Jean Batiste lived next door to Serapie, who was trained by Tearfund partner Association Mwana Ukundwa as a CCT facilitator at the local church. While he was still dealing drugs and leading a gang, Serapie said to him, ‘Come and see how your life can be changed!’ Ask God to give our CCT facilitators, like Serapie, the boldness to challenge people in their communities.

Thursday 18 January

After being badly beaten up by a local gang, Jean Batiste started to reflect on his behaviour. ‘I needed to change my life,’ he says. As he joined a CCT group and heard teaching at church, Jean Batiste began saving money, and his relationships at home and in the community started to heal. Ask God to continue to bless Jean Batiste and others like him.

Friday 19 January

Today, Jean Batiste is a warden and security manager at the church. He is thankful for the discipleship of his community through CCT and is an active and productive member of the community. Pray for Tearfund’s vision to greatly expand our CCT work so that more people, like Jean Batiste, can live life to the full.

Saturday 20 January

'Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.' (2 Corinthians 9:10)

Lord, we thank you for blessing this amazing work that is transforming so many lives across the world. May it continue to multiply and spread so that more people can be released from poverty, for good. Amen.

Burkina Faso: Pastor Yalgado's church of Abundant Life

In 2023, Tearfund supporters enabled 7,321 people to receive training in how to deliver community transformation work through local churches and helped 6,180 more local churches to start transforming their communities.

We call this work church and community transformation – or CCT*.

This is the story of Pastor Yalgado Sawadogo and how his community is being transformed through the church.

A more abundant life for Pastor Yalgado's church

Pastor Yalgado is 41 years old. He's married, has three children and leads a church called Abundant Life in the town of Ouahigouya in northern Burkina Faso – about 180 kilometres from the capital, Ouagadougou. It's a semi-arid area with temperatures that range from quite hot to very hot.

Over the past years, Ouahigouya (and much of the region) has been affected by the impacts of brutal violence, political instability and climate change. As a result, many people in Pastor Yalgado's community have been displaced from their homes.

In the past, Pastor Yalgado explained that the church's activities were mostly focused on evangelism. It wasn't going very well though and he says, 'We weren't able to bring effective solutions to the needs of the church as well as those of the church members.' He describes feeling powerless and he cried out to God in prayer for a solution.

The church and community being transformed

And for Pastor Yalgado's church, some of that solution came in the form of training run by Tearfund. The sessions included sharing vision and talking about integral mission [the idea that the local church is also called to address the practical needs in their community]. Following on from this, Pastor Yalgado and the church leaders were encouraged to start running the training and Bible studies they had received with members of the church and the community. It was a great success! 'We brought together 30 women – 15 from our congregation and another 15 non-Christians,' says Pastor Yalgado.

As a result, the church drew up an action plan to start to respond to some of the community's needs.

'With these activities, we're able to bring the community and church together to show them that we're also interested in community life,' says Pastor Yalgado. 'Our activities have reached many people!'

Soap, food and water

Part of the action plan involved teaching women in the community how to make soap. It was an activity that drew many people in – including a large number who wouldn't usually go to church. As

well as providing the women with a useful skill, the training gave the church an opportunity to share about Christ and the gospel.

Encouraged by the success of this activity in the church, the senior pastor and Pastor Yalgado arranged a meeting with the local imam and other community leaders to start to build relationships and to talk about ways that they can all work together to find solutions for the challenges people in the community are facing.**

As a result, members of Abundant Life church gathered together bags of food and soap to share among many of the internally displaced people in their community. They were able to bless people who have had to flee their homes in other parts of the country because of violence or climate disasters and who now live in extremely difficult conditions and often don't have enough to provide for their needs.

Looking forward to even more

The church's plans have been a success so far, but Pastor Yalgado believes there is more to be done. 'Looking ahead,' he says, 'we're planning to build a water point for the whole community, because we have a water problem in the neighbourhood. We'll also be taking stock of what we've been able to achieve under our action plan, to start the activities we weren't able to do in 2023.'

***What is CCT?**

CCT starts with the Bible.

Local church members – or, in many cases, the church leader – receive training to facilitate Bible studies. These studies encourage people to recognise the church's mandate to address the practical needs in their communities and to identify the resources they have available to start to respond.

The Bible studies always end with a call to action. It may be something small to start with, such as committing to changing a way of thinking, but the action can quickly grow in scale to things like improving or building schools, clinics and roads.

Tearfund and our local partner organisations don't fund these initiatives – but we equip participants with all the practical knowledge and skills they need to carry out these plans. This might also include things like building self-help groups where people can learn to save together.

In this way, whole churches and communities can find themselves working together to bring about change – helping people to lift themselves out of poverty for good and to realise their God-given potential.

**This kind of work is exactly in line with what the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has pointed out in a December 2023 report is needed to bring sustainable relief to the region. It says, 'Moving from the distribution of emergency packages towards community-based resilience- and solutions-focused support will be critical to efforts to address the displacement crisis more sustainably, particularly for 39 per cent of IDPs who have been displaced for two or more years. It also represents an appropriate evolution of action in response to feedback from affected communities about their needs and preferences and will help to address the expectations of national authorities relating to the engagement of international partners. The current situation is on the cusp of becoming a protracted crisis, solid groundwork must be laid for durable solutions for the displaced and their host communities.'

Pray for CCT and Burkina Faso

- Lift up families in Burkina Faso and the surrounding region who have been impacted by things like violent conflict and climate disasters and have had to flee their homes. Pray that they will be able to rebuild their lives in safety and that God will provide for their needs.
- Pray for local churches, like Pastor Yalgado's, in the region and around the world to take up the responsibility of finding ways to address their communities' needs. Ask God for wisdom and resources.
- Give thanks for the work that has been done already and for the transformation that has begun. Pray that God will protect these steps forward and bless them with his favour.

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