

# **Challenges for Online Sermons and Online Communion during Covid-19 Pandemic: A Historical Perspective of Rural Congregations in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe**

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## **Abstract**

This article aimed to investigate the challenges rural congregations face in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The presentation employed literature review and documentary reviews such as church magazines because it is historical in nature. The findings showed that, unlike urban congregations who continued to benefit through digital gadgets to receive online sermons and online communion, rural congregations lag in all aspects involving digital sermons. Using face-to-face interviews and archival research, this paper proposes improved sermon dissemination packaging as key to the effective spread of the word in the face of difficulties in accessing technologically disseminated sermons in rural areas in Zimbabwe. Underpinned on the technological determinism theory, this paper unpacks technologically based preaching approaches that can be used to send sermons to all areas to improve Christian lives in rural areas in Zimbabwe. The study used a qualitative exploratory study designed to probe the perceptions and experiences of rural communities on issues about online sermon delivery communication. A qualitative research design enabled the researchers to interact with the study's participants. Rural congregations in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe faced several challenges. The most reported challenges were a lack of appreciation for using electronic gadgets to access platforms such as Zoom, Youtube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Google Meet and a lack of data and network connectivity resources. It was recommended that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe strive to make an effort to capacitate pastors in rural congregations and their congregations so that they are well equipped with user-friendly electronic gadgets even in remote areas. This helps the church to benefit and continue to be enlightened with the word of God and communion even during the advent of pandemics such as COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Online Sermons, Online Communion, COVID-19, Rural Congregations, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe