

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PASTORAL CARE WITH HIV AND AIDS PATIENTS

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AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
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Abstract

Christians are struggling as they meet the challenge of HIV and AIDS in the church. There is a need to respond with a compassionate heart like Jesus Christ, in putting our gifts and resources together for those who are affected. Our responses to clarify the misconceptions about HIV and AIDS, provide education on the prevention, testing, and current trend on vaccine research and treatment. Church creates avenue for appropriate pastoral care. Christian community provides support for those who are living with HIV and AIDS and their families. HIV and AIDS spread mostly through sexual intercourse. But solutions are being advocated such as abstinence, faithfulness in marriage and the use of condom. These solutions for prevention can only be effective through the aid of theological understanding. Theological power can ignite inner strength in mind to say no to sex before marriage, keeps married partners to be faithful. But condom can be used in case one partner is infected in order to safe the other marriage partner. Condom advocacy in secondary and higher institutions is a bid to nurture promiscuity in the youth of today. This will tilt this generation into destruction that sin brings. Church stand against the use of condom outside matrimonial home is clear. Church should not compromise her stand in this adulterous and wicked generation. The generation that wants to enjoy the pleasure of sin but not the consequence of sin. Church is caring for her members that are suffering from the cruelty of HIV and AIDS without castigating them. People who are living with HIV and AIDS need information, counselling, care and support. These will protect

them for further infection, infecting others through unprotected sexual relationship, and provide access to good food and medical care.

Recommendations

The church should educate the members on the ways that HIV spread and the way it does not. Ignorance, prejudices, biases will die of natural death through relevant educational programmes of the church. The power of the gospel is to be used on our pulpits in reaching out to the fundamental problem of sin. It is time to make available to the church sound teaching preaching, Bible study, and seminar that are relevant to the needs of the people. Behavioral change is made easy when hearts have been confronted with genuine power of God.

Support group can be established in our churches where people living with HIV and AIDS can come together for fellowship, share their burden together and encourage one another. They need to be supported by church finance in getting some drugs that will make them enjoy their living. People that are not HIV positive can also form a support group that will look after the orphans of those who died of HIV/ AIDS.

The church can come together to organize an orphanage care centre through collaborative efforts. Such an institution should be financed and supervised jointly. Where there will be no denomination barrier.

Christian organization that have developed educational materials, research findings, project profile and evaluation should be ready to share it with other Christians who have less or inadequate materials. Denominational biases should be put aside. Those who have adequate resources should be willing to go to the fellow organization that do not have and be partners with

such in sharing helpful resources. This will equip more pastor, church leaders, and interested people to be adequately trained in both proactive campaign in HIV and AIDS and in ministering to HIV and AIDS persons.

It is high time for the church to organize carefully planned prayer for those living with HIV and AIDS. We should not be afraid to pray for the divine healing. We are not cowards. If church should seek solution to HIV and AIDS from God, God can give the secret of how to get drugs that will cure HIV. God has done it in the past, Christians in the past were among great and renown scientists that have better the lot of man today.

Christians should intensify effort on speaking against discrimination against those having HIV and AIDS. The church should be actively engaged on the preventive and caring measures. Christian Education programme should emphasize sex education with biblical concepts and Christian principle of abstinence before marriage and fidelity in marriage.

Church should embark on poverty alleviation for the church members. Church stand should be clear when economic policy of the land is reducing people to third citizen in their own fatherland. Government should make it a must for all barbing salons to have electrical sterilizer; so that HIV infection that might be through cutting of the hair might be checked. And also make HIV screening make free in all government hospitals and advise all private health institution to do so. Church should employ the service of Christian medical practitioners to provide periodic medical check up, educative seminars on HIV and AIDS. Government should remove all the political

propaganda and make the drug free and available in both government and private hospitals at the grass root level.