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THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN PREVENTING HIV/AIDS AND HELPING  
THE VICTIMS

SUBMITTED BY  
ISAAC ADESOLA ADEBIMPE  
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## ABSTRACT

This study, *The Role of the Church in Preventing HIV/AIDS and Helping the Victims* is an attempt to sensitize the church especially in Nigeria on what it can do to help in fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The research is made up of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study, while chapter two contains what other scholars have said about the same issue and the relevant issues. Chapter three is about the views and the reactions of the church about HIV/AIDS, the challenge for the Church, the Biblical basis for care-giving and church responsibilities. Chapter four is based on the implication of the study for the contemporary society, while chapter five deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations. In this work, the researcher found out that the origin of HIV/AIDS disease is difficult to trace, but the time it was discovered is identified. Although HIV/AIDS epidemic cure has not been discovered, yet it could be prevented and managed. The research revealed the involvement of some denominations in the fight against HIV/AIDS, such as Baptist and TEKAN. Private organizations and Nigerian government have also worked in this area. The researcher also found out the wrong conceptions about HIV/AIDS, which this thesis has helped to correct. Furthermore, it is recommended that the church can set up an AIDS awareness ministry, establish an orphanage, instruct its members to insist on getting screened blood and go for HIV test as soon as possible. The infected should not lose hope of recovering, but rather develop a positive life-style. It also suggested some practical steps of educating the populace on how HIV could be contracted, managed and avoided.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The church as a body is an agent that can help, and go a long way in fighting the catastrophe of HIV/AIDS in our society. Some churches and denominations like ECWA, TEKAN, Baptist have begun to campaign against HIV/AIDS and provided aids to the infected, and the affected. If individuals, churches with government and non-governmental organization could team up and fight HIV/AIDS socially, economically, educationally, morally and religiously, we can together create a new world free of HIV/AIDS.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Due to the study on HIV/AIDS the following suggested recommendations are brought forward:

- i. The church can set up AIDS ministry. Pastors can encourage their members to participate in fighting HIV/AIDS by committing themselves, spending their belongings and devoting their times for the course of caring for the infected and the affected, such as: the orphans, widows and widowers. Church can recruit and train volunteer workers to provide hospital and home-based care for the people living with HIV/AIDS.
- ii. The church as a body, e.g Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) can speak for the HIV infected on the justice and human right of the people living with HIV/AIDS. In as much as they are human and citizens of the country, their rights, despite the bad state of their health should be protected. The church can instruct its members not to maltreat the people living with HIV/AIDS.
- iii. There are certain traditional practices that encourage the spread of this disease e.g making of traditional marks with unsterilized instruments, sharing of

wives, and gender inequality-maltreatment of women, must be stopped. The church should rise against such and discourage them in its environment so that we can have HIV/AIDS free society.

- iv. The church can instruct its members to insist on getting screened blood, whenever there is a need for blood transfusion. The church can advocate for blood testing centres in every part of the country.
- v. The church should encourage every member of the society to go for HIV test, in order to be certain of their HIV status. Not only that, counseling should be given to those that tested positive and early treatment should be encouraged.
- vi. The task of educating the youths about sexual matters should be shouldered by the church and the parents. Sexual issue is better taught in the church and at home than among their peers.
- vii. Establishment of orphanage, especially for the AIDS affected children will help in making a future better society. It is a way by which the church can demonstrate the love of Christ.
- viii. Message of hope, self-worth, faith and healing should be encouraged on the pulpit. We should make church a conducive place and setting for the HIV/AIDS infected and affected, now that we have realized that pastor could also contract the virus without sexual promiscuity.
- ix. Pulpit could even be used as a means of teaching people the danger of pre-marital and extramarital sex, since the virus is highly spreading through unholy sex and that it is also forbidden by the Holy Scripture.

- x. All Christians should join in campaigning against HIV, in order to discourage its spread and probably put an end to its existence within a couple of years in our society.
- xi. The infected should develop a positive life-style. They should put their hope in God's providence for healing miracle and sustenance.