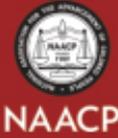




## THE BLACK CHURCH & HIV THE SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE



### Faith leaders Across the U.S. Address HIV/AIDS from The Pulpit

We, as faith leaders, can make a difference in the lives of our congregates and community by using available resources and the Word of God to raise awareness about health injustices and ways to stop the HIV epidemic in Black America. One of the most important ways we can educate our Church is from the pulpit.

Below are testimonials from faith leaders across the country who have brought the conversation of HIV/AIDS to their congregations and inspired **action** to end the epidemic.

#### **Action**

##### **Reverend Dr. Dorothy Lucas**

###### **Chicago, Illinois**

“My approach was to ask what Jesus did. No place in any Bible -- and I got several different versions -- have found where Jesus asked anybody, “How did you get sick?” The question was, will you be made whole? Period. That’s the whole thing about my discussion because we’re about serving, right? It was so traumatic to them [those infected by the disease] for a minister to say, ‘well what did you do?’ ... And that’s not the question that Jesus asked. Scripture-wise, I like the story of the Good Samaritan because despite the differences, he still helped. I used to do a newsletter, a health ministry newsletter, and I covered every aspect [of HIV]. We are the avenue for where the majority of people find information. Back in the old days, the educational systems began with the Church. So again, with HIV/AIDS, we have to bring it back to the Church. Everything begins with the Church.”

##### **Reverend Anthony “Tony” Lee**

###### **Hill Crest Heights, Maryland**

“We conduct quarterly HIV testing and counseling in our Church and we provide HIV/AIDS educational classes (HIV101) for community members and other Churches in the area. Our Church also offers other Churches training on how to conduct HIV/AIDS testing and counseling and how to set up HIV 101.”

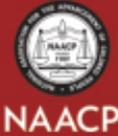
##### **Reverend William Francis**

###### **Atlanta, Georgia**

“We did not look at HIV through a thin lens – we looked at it overall. We looked to see where we could address homelessness, mental health, and HIV, and it wasn’t in a silo. It wound up being that where we can address HIV, is when we feed the homeless, we offer HIV testing. When we’re doing our ministry, sex and sexuality comes up in those conversations, so we address HIV, STDS, and healthier sexual relations then. For men, another social determinant is access to care – we don’t like to go to the doctor -- so let’s address that from a wholeness perspective and look at optimal health. So, we’re doing blood pressure, glucose testing, prostate screening, and HIV testing, and we’re doing all that without isolating, stigmatizing, and hiding HIV testing, so it’s very routine.”



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### **Reverend Frederick Schells**

#### **Chicago, Illinois**

“As the director of the HIV/AIDS ministry and the president of the Missionary Baptist Church, we are committed to a grassroots campaign. And I do mean grassroots. We go to the community, and we go door to door with HIV information, literatures, and brochures.”

“I saw through the numbers put out by the CDC that our seniors are being affected by HIV and AIDS, and that didn’t sit very well with me as it did when I originally got into this battle for the cause of HIV. People just don’t know. So, I ... currently do senior workshops and senior living facilities for our seniors. So, when they see me coming through the door they go, “We don’t need that,” but by the time I get through, they understand why I came.”

### **John Stanford**

#### **Houston, Texas**

“We brought in HIV/AIDS professionals to actually explain to our members all of the issues involved around AIDS. What we try to do is to promote information and education. I mean, that is the only way that we have a chance at defeating this kind of crisis [it’s] to basically inform people and educate people around the issues.”

### **Katicia Pitts**

#### **Washington, D.C.**

“The bulk of the work is done with the help of the volunteers. A plus for the Church is that we don’t always have to have [lots of] staff, but we do have a strong community. We have about 20 people who are part of the HIV AIDS ministry. We have been trained by CDC to do the educational counseling piece, so we train [our volunteers], and they have been going out and doing the testing and all those other things.”

### **Phillip Kesic**

#### **Chicago, Illinois**

“Personally, I may not pass condoms out within the sanctuary, but if you let me stand outside my Church door, I’ll pass them out in a heartbeat. I think we have to look at the issues of life and death, and standards do change. They change all the time because people become more aware and people understand scripture better. It’s for Churches to determine their understanding of scripture; it’s not for me to do that. I only can do that for my personal self and as much as I can lead my congregation in teaching.”

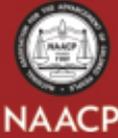
### **Reverend Ricky Bradshaw**

#### **Houston, Texas**

“What has helped us at Union is to put this issue on our website. Instead of the same routine information, it has sex trafficking, [and] it has HIV/AIDS. Instead of talking about ‘Go build another Church,’ we’ve decided that we need to get our Churches engaged in the culture instead of asking the culture to come to the Church. We’ve taken a position of getting these issues to our Churches by making it public on our domains. One way you can help us is by helping our denominational offices take the leadership of getting in the domain of communication using a website, social media, whatever they [the community] are doing, we need to start getting [the message] out.”



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### **Bishop John Bryant**

#### **Chicago, Illinois**

“We need to meet with our representatives, but not only go, but go prepared. I am constantly invited to the policy table in Washington, D.C. And they’ll say to me privately, ‘we want the community to get this and that.’ But I have to admit when I sit at the table, those around that table are prepared. Behind each one of them is a staff person who’s from an office that works full-time on what they are talking about. I’m sitting there by myself ... Here’s the proof with the NAACP partnering with us. If we meet before we go and put in place a kind of structure where we can know what we’re talking about and have a staff. So, we need a large enough group like that to do our homework. Before each one of those [policy and grant] meetings, the emails should fly to us from different groups, strategies, what we’re going to say, how we’re going to say it.”

### **Philadelphia Faith Leader**

“At our Church, we have a medical moment every third Sunday. We have a health professional come in and talk, and HIV is one of the things she has talked about.”

### **Brooklyn Faith Leader**

“We have a free breakfast at our Church once a month on Saturdays and we use that as a way of feeding people who are hungry. The members can come and the neighbors can come. The purpose is for them to meet each other. It’s called, ‘Meet Your Neighbors Breakfast, Free Breakfast’. Now what we did was we added the testing piece to it. We have folks from a clinic come in once a month and do the testing, as well as feed the homeless. A lot of homeless people come for that. And, the members meet them and invite them to Church, so this is a great ministry. So, we’re testing them and then we also have incentives, we’ll give them a \$10 card ... if they get tested.”