Amos 5:24

"Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s all I want."

Amos 5:24 (The Message)
“The Black Church is the only institution that has loved our people from the cradle to the grave. We loved them through slavery, through poverty, and through racism. We cannot make HIV the exception to our love. As the Mother Institution, we must love our people through the valley of HIV.”

- Bishop John Bryant, Chicago
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For more information about this initiative, go to: www.theblackchurchandhiv.org
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The NAACP Health Programs Department would like to acknowledge board member Willis Edwards who has been a committed advocate and outspoken supporter of HIV and AIDS prevention as a person living with HIV. We send our continued prayers, love, and support to our friend and colleague.
For more than three decades, the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS in the Black community has been an uphill battle. Thousands of lives have been lost, families have been torn apart, dreams have been shattered, and the burden of this disease remains on our shoulders. With almost half of all new HIV cases appearing in the Black community, the NAACP is convinced that this epidemic can no longer continue to take the lives of our present and future leaders.

The Black Church and the NAACP have been partners in the struggle for equity and justice since the inception of our organization in 1909. Standing in the epicenter of this debate, the NAACP invites the Black Church to exercise her power as the prophetic and progressive voice in the African American community.

As an ordained Baptist minister, I understand the privilege and responsibility of answering God’s call in the midst of life’s daunting challenges. The discourse around the HIV epidemic is an issue that many feel has no place in the church. However, the Black Church remains the cornerstone of our community and must be a critical voice in helping to reduce the number of new cases of HIV. Join the NAACP’s Health Programs Department as we encourage faith leaders to engage in this courageous conversation in the Black Church and organize for ACTION.

The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative is designed to educate and support Black clergy and faith leaders who want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus outside the walls of the church into the beloved community. By God’s grace, we have the power to end this insidious epidemic. Courage must not skip this generation!

Peace and Power!

Shadowed Beneath His Almighty Hand,

Roslyn M. Brock
Chairman, NAACP National Board of Directors
The state of HIV in the African American community over the last 31 years is a social justice issue that the NAACP has committed to fight! According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in 16 Black men and one in 32 Black women will be infected with HIV. Given that the NAACP’s mission is to ensure the political, education, social and economic equality of rights of all persons, we made a conscious decision that our organization would take immediate action to address this social injustice.

The relationship between the Black Church and the NAACP features a rich history of activism and civic participation for the advancement of justice and equality. The HIV epidemic in the African American community is one pressing issue where the Black Church can make a significant impact. Together the Black Church and the NAACP will ensure parishioners have access to screening, learn how to prevent the transmission of the disease, and advocate on behalf of their respective communities to ensure they have better access to care and treatment.

*The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative* is designed to educate and support Black clergy and faith leaders who want to take their rightful place at the table to address this 100% preventable disease. The NAACP is proud to serve as a resource and partner for Black Church leaders. The fight against HIV & AIDS is a fight we can one day win with the help of one of our community’s most vital institutions. With the help of the Black Church, lives will be changed and justice will be realized.

In the fight,

Benjamin Todd Jealous
President and CEO, NAACP
It has been over two and a half years since the NAACP launched the Let it Rise Tour in 11 cities across the country seeking answers to one key question. What do Black faith leaders need to reignite their social justice fire and address one of Black America’s biggest foes: the HIV/AIDS epidemic? This epidemic is a social justice issue that for the last 31 years has infiltrated our community with a vengeance. African Americans are just under 14% of the United States’ population but represent almost 50% of all new HIV cases. This is a painful truth, but even more alarming as it gets closer and closer to each one of us. However, if we continue to view the HIV epidemic as “someone else’s” problem and not an issue that WE need to address, what will happen to the future of our community?

It has been a personal mission of the NAACP Health Programs Department to help reignite a health equity movement in Black America, with a special focus on HIV. The longest standing community institution that has withstood the test and trials of time has been the Black Church. Historically, the sanctuary has been the place where we gathered to hear a word from the Lord and receive inspiration to fight for equality. Today, the NAACP is calling on Black Church leaders once more to participate in the rebirth of a movement to fight for justice and improve our community’s health and well-being.

The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative is a tool for Black Church leaders to assess and identify their role in this fight. It will speak to the heart of those who have been in the fight against HIV, those who have perhaps addressed it once or twice, and even those who have never dealt with HIV prevention in their tenure as a leader. Whatever your level, we ask you to choose this day to commit to A.C.T. (advocacy, community mobilization & education, training) and the NAACP Health Programs Department will support you through this journey.

So what will you do? Will you conduct business as usual? Or will you join us and shout about this injustice? The thousands of lives affected by HIV and AIDS in your congregations can no longer wait for someone else. We ask you to support those in our community who feel they have no one to turn to and nowhere to go. The Black Church and the NAACP are a winning team and will fight until this battle is over!

Humbly submitted by HIS servant,

Shavon L. Arline-Bradley
Director, Health Programs Department

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens ME.”
Philippians 4:13
(King James Version)
We know God created the world to function by certain principles such as equality, morals, compassion, and most of all love. Regardless of who we are, we cannot discount these principles, especially when we consider equality for all humankind. My heart grieves for the person who hears for the very first time the diagnosis of being HIV positive. These individuals struggle with decisions about what to do next or who to tell, and they are plagued by fears of judgment, wondering if they will be disowned or embraced. There are so many things we take for granted. We have family, loved ones, and friends who embrace us and empower us. How many of us take for granted that we are not HIV positive?

The Black Church has been, and continues to be a powerful instrument of support, comfort, and inspiration in our community. Unfortunately, injustice against the Black community has become the fabric of our experience. Nevertheless, what spurred the civil rights movement was our community waking up and saying “we are no longer going to sit back and be quiet.” That was the framework within which the Black Church and the Black community decided to take action during the civil rights movement. Today, the message is the same. We as faith leaders can no longer sit back and be quiet. We have to become the conscience of the movement towards equality, starting with HEALTH EQUITY.

Understanding the influence of our role, as faith leaders we must be true to ourselves about the challenges and difficulties we encounter. In Jesus’ journey on Earth, He experienced systemic oppression as He pursued His mission to restore the well-being of people who were spiritually and socially poor. It was the life of Jesus that brought justice to humanity. The path He chose to overcome oppression is one that we must also follow to truly minister to our communities. Jesus exemplified the best model of strength, power, and equality that we could ever have, and we need to call on that strength to help us address the effects of this HIV epidemic. Today we ask that you no longer just talk about a need for change, but rather be the instruments of change, not only within ourselves but also within our communities.

I am committed to supporting the work of Black faith leaders across this country through this tool, The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative. With God’s help and the leadership of the Black Church, HIV will be a battle well fought and won.

Always Amazed by His Grace,

Rev. Keron R. Sadler
Manager, Health Programs Department

"Only God is able. It is faith in Him that we must rediscover.”
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Pastoral Brief is an introduction to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) advocacy and heightened strategy to reduce the impact of HIV. The NAACP is tackling this issue because of the alarming impact of HIV in the Black community. Black people are more likely to be diagnosed with HIV, more likely to die from the disease, and less likely to receive treatment than any other race in the U.S. The NAACP sees the effects of HIV as a social injustice. Given the Black Church’s historic involvement in advocacy for our community, we have come to you, our faith leaders, to help support us in this effort. Throughout this Pastoral Brief and the supplementary Activity Manual, we hope to inspire you and the communities you serve to join us as advocates and agents of God’s love to support those infected and affected by HIV.

This national strategic initiative of the NAACP is the result of a yearlong, 11-city research tour with over 250 faith leaders across denominations to identify best practices and challenges when addressing HIV within the Black Church. The NAACP also collected ideas and reflections from ministers through individual interviews and survey data. The 11-city research tour was held in cities with a high prevalence of HIV among African Americans. There were clergy participants from the following cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami/Fort Lauderdale, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

This Pastoral Brief will help set the foundation for the purpose of this initiative. The Activity Manual that follows will cover the following topics:

- Chapter 1: Basic facts about HIV and AIDS
- Chapter 2: HIV as a social justice issue, while incorporating church and faith-based perspectives
- Chapter 3: Best practices to help pastors and their churches integrate HIV into sermons, develop programs, and enhance ministries

Pastoral activities have been included in the manual to provide practical, real-life applications for your ministries and broader community.

We hope that the Pastoral Brief and the Activity Manual will help facilitate partnerships and collaboration among the NAACP, faith leaders, non-profit organizations, and other health and social justice advocates to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS in the Black community.

“Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s all I want.”

*Amos 5:24 (The Message)*
Throughout its history, the NAACP has worked to combat policies and practices that undermine human rights and social justice. Our mission is to ensure the “political, educational, social and economic equality of rights for all people and to eliminate race-based discrimination.” As the Association enters the second century, we remain focused on work related to economic justice, education rights, voter empowerment, the criminal justice system, and health care access for all.

We are particularly committed to our role as an agent of change in the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis. This initiative addresses HIV, not just as an epidemic disproportionately impacting the Black community, but as an issue of health equity.

Since its beginning, the HIV epidemic has claimed nearly 619,400 lives in the United States. Despite the preventable nature of the disease, more than 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). **Although Blacks make up 14% of the total U.S. population, they make up 44% of the new HIV infections** (CDC, 2012).

Health inequity … is the face of social injustice.

We need to ask ourselves: Why are racial and ethnic minorities disproportionately represented? Why do Blacks die sooner than their
infected White counterparts? Who or what is responsible for this epidemic in our community?

There are no easy answers to these questions, but solutions exist and they involve you, as our faith leaders.

We know how effective faith leaders are in raising awareness and mobilizing our community around issues such as diabetes, heart disease, unemployment, racism, and voter registration. We respect and celebrate the significant role that you have played in the promotion of the spiritual, physical, and mental well-being of the Black Church.

The NAACP is asking you to:

1. **READ THE PASTORAL BRIEF AND ACTIVITY MANUAL** to learn more about HIV and what role you could play in addressing HIV as a social justice issue.

2. **CONSIDER INVITING THE NAACP OR A LOCAL COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH AGENCY TO FACILITATE IN-PERSON TRAININGS** about HIV as a social justice issue. This will help you and your leadership develop or expand your church’s response to the HIV crisis.

3. **INCREASE DIALOGUE ABOUT HIV AND COMMIT TO ON-GOING ACTIONS** to raise awareness, engagement, and advocacy about HIV as a social justice issue within your church and the larger community using the strategies outlined in the manual.

As you read the Pastoral Brief, our hope is that it will invigorate you to act; you will be inspired to address HIV and other health-related issues with your congregation from a social justice framework. In addition, we hope that you will increase your advocacy efforts related to HIV and health policy. We invite you to join the fight for a system that ensures that we all have access to the information, insurance, prevention, care, and treatment that we deserve.

“But he’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don’t take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.”

*Micah 6:8 (The Message)*
A man, who loved and worshipped God with all his heart, was offered a wonderful opportunity that would benefit him professionally. Preparing for this meant undergoing a full medical examination, including an HIV test, which he was sure he would pass with flying colors. When his examination went as planned, he had no reservations about waiting and returning for his test results later. A short time passed and the gentleman later returned to his doctor’s office, and the nurse called him back to share his test results. She told him that the test was positive and gave him some brochures. The young man thanked her and left the office thinking, “Great! I passed!” And then it hit him. Positive? For HIV? He re-read the papers he received from the clinic. He was HIV positive. Confused and in shock, he returned to the clinic and asked the nurse to explain everything to him once again. This was just not possible! He had only been with two people in his life, and he was married. How could this be?

Devastated, confused, angry and completely grief-stricken, the young man decided to go to the one place where he knew he would be comforted: his church. As he entered the house of worship, one of the church mothers greeted him cheerily and asked him how he was doing. The pain in his heart was too much to bear, and he broke down in tears, sobbing inconsolably on the ground. It took several minutes of coaxing from the church mother, head pastor, and associate pastor before he told them the news that he was HIV positive.

Seeking to comfort him, the associate pastor stretched his hand over his head and told him that he was just given a prophecy to “pray the gay” out of him. The young man was stunned; he was not gay. He left that church feeling even more desolate and spent the next month and a half agonizing about how he was going to deal with his HIV diagnosis.

He decided to attend support group meetings in the community. Here, he felt welcomed and the friends he made helped him face his new life with hope. To his joy, he found a place of worship whose church community and leadership was welcoming to him, a man living openly with HIV. He joined the church, began to grow the church’s HIV ministry and started his own organization that focused on HIV/AIDS education.
After several months of pursuing this new calling, one Sunday, the young man was invited to speak about HIV at a church that was celebrating a Week of Prayer focused on healing. During the prayer meeting, a woman in the last stages of cancer came up to the pulpit to ask for special prayer. The pastor laid his hands on her head, anointed her with oil and hugged her while he prayed. Feeling inspired, the pastor then asked the young man to stand and represent all of those who are infected with HIV.

As the pastor began praying, instead of hugging him like he did with the cancer patient, he stretched his hand over the young man’s head. This brought back memories of the painful experience with his former pastor. Why wasn’t he anointed with oil or hugged for comfort as the woman who went before him? Was the pastor afraid to touch him? However, this time, the young man smiled to himself and vowed that he would continue his work to educate everyone, especially those in the church, about the true nature of HIV.

**PASTORAL REFLECTIONS**

This man’s story is not unique as situations like this occur quite often in Black Churches all over the country. As you reflect on his experience, as a faith leader, we ask you to consider the following teachable moments:

1. **ONE OF THE HEALTH DISPARITIES AFRICAN AMERICANS FACE IS A LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH TERMS.** Oftentimes, we don’t go to the doctor’s office for annual examinations. If we do, we don’t always ask our doctors the questions we should because of fear, pride, or ignorance. When it comes to HIV, the Black Church can help empower our community to take control of their health and provide information and resources. Just as we have done with diabetes, high blood pressure, and breast cancer, we should continue to help educate our community about HIV/AIDS and testing information.

2. **HIV DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE.** HIV can be passed from anyone regardless of race, sex, marital status, class, religion, or sexuality.

3. **A CHURCH THAT AFFIRMS THE GOSPEL IS ONE THAT ACCEPTS ANYONE AND EVERYONE.** Social justice was at the core of Jesus’ ministry, and this should serve as the primary example of how all other ministries should be implemented. Just as Christ turned no one away, our church doors should be open to all, especially in their times of despair, sadness, and need. As we make efforts to address the HIV crisis, the Black Church should not be a place where people experience HIV stigma and discrimination, but rather a place of healing, support, and acceptance.

4. **COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS CAN OFTEN PROVIDE THE RESOURCES THAT CHURCHES MAY NEED TO EDUCATE AND SUPPORT ITS MEMBERS.** More importantly, churches do not need to handle this responsibility alone. Partnering with health organizations can help educate faith leaders on HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment. Parishioners who work as health care providers may also be able to provide support.

5. **SUPPORT FROM THE CHURCH CAN UPLIFT THOSE DEALING WITH HIV TO EDUCATE AND UPLIFT OTHERS.** Following Christ’s teaching, the Church should be a source of strength, a place where Blacks can expect to be treated socially just, respected, and welcomed, especially when they have been marginalized by the community or society at large.
As faith leaders and individuals, we each need to be honest about how our levels of compassion vary depending on the person and/or situation in front of us. Think about how you may feel when ministering to or working with any of the following people:

- A man who has been fired.
- A woman who has been raped.
- A child with cancer.
- A person struggling with drug addiction.
- A person who is cheating on their spouse.
- A grieving person who is angry at God.
- A person recently released from prison/jail.
- An adolescent gang member.
- A person who is HIV positive.

How would you connect with each of these individuals? Would your attitude towards them be guided by God’s love and kindness? This modern-day parable shows us that we sometimes can fall short of providing the compassion deserved by all, including those affected and infected by HIV.

People are spiritually and emotionally aware of how we feel about them, especially when they are hurting. Even if we pray for them, our words and body language expose what is in our heart. Let us make a commitment to allow the love and compassion of Jesus to be expressed through us to each person whose path we cross.

Anyone who affirms the gospel accepts everyone, regardless of his or her situation or condition. At the core of Jesus’ ministry was the concept of social justice, and this should also serve as a guide for how we approach our work in the church and our communities. We need to commit now to being the body of Christ with appreciation for each person as a sacred creation of the Most High God.
WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Social justice is the sustained commitment to create a society based on equality and fairness for all people. It calls for fair and equal treatment of the “haves” and the “have nots.” The social justice movement is centered on fighting all forms of oppression, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. It calls for systemic change of governments, policies, and practices that empower all people to live healthy and productive lives. While social justice can be explored from an economic, educational, and political perspective, it also has a historic and biblical foundation that compels us to work for the equitable treatment of all people.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF HIV

New cases of HIV in the Black community are increasing, especially among young men and women. As NAACP Chairman Roslyn McAllister Brock said in a December 1, 2011 USA Today article, “Blacks are more likely to become infected, less likely to get treatment, less likely to know they have the disease, and more likely to die from HIV and AIDS than any other race” (Brock, R. & Jealous, B. T., 2001).

In 2009, it was estimated that African Americans accounted for 44% of all new HIV infections that year, despite representing 14% of the US population (CDC, 2011). If Black America were its own country, it would rank 16th (Wilson, Wright, & Isbell, 2008) in the world for incidence and prevalence of HIV.

The high number of people living with HIV in Black communities, and the fact that Blacks tend to have sex with partners of the same race/ethnicity, means that we face a greater risk of HIV infection with each new sexual encounter (CDC, 2011).
Socioeconomic issues associated with poverty, including limited access to high-quality health care, housing, and HIV-prevention education, directly and indirectly increase the risk for HIV infection and affect the health of people living with and at risk for HIV infection (CDC, 2011).

The high rates of HIV for Black people in the U.S. point to the overwhelming injustices in the political system, health care system, economic system, and educational system. This threat to the survival and well-being of our community is a human rights issue. HIV is impacting our community. It is our responsibility to speak out and fight the systems that make and keep us vulnerable to HIV infection.

THE BASICS: HIV AND AIDS

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). People living with HIV may appear and feel healthy for several years. However, even if they feel healthy, HIV still affects their bodies (CDC, 2012).

HIV is no longer a death sentence, as it was three decades ago. It is now considered to be a chronic, manageable illness. With proper care and treatment, people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. If we can get more of our community to access HIV testing and treatment, while providing more information and access to tools for prevention, we CAN reduce this epidemic and prolong the lives of those who are infected.

As we develop effective approaches to address HIV, we must move beyond individual responses and initiatives. Our goal is to...
empower faith leaders to respond from a place of collective strength and demonstrate love in its actions and ministries. If we do not join together in this effort, staggering numbers of our people will continue to be infected and many will die. This is a matter of life or death.

RESPONDING TO HIV IN OUR COMMUNITY
Throughout our history, our churches have served as places of hope, health, and healing. But we should also acknowledge that they have been places that have caused deep hurt and pain. The Black Church’s collective response to HIV requires fair and honest reflection and a concerted effort to right our wrongs. HIV is not always easy to face due to social stigma. Sexually transmitted diseases and illness are difficult subjects to talk about. It is okay to have reservations about dealing with HIV from the pulpit, to be concerned about how your congregation will respond, and to be unsure about how to share this kind of information with your ministerial staff and colleagues.

However, this issue is too great to ignore. The only way for us to help our congregations is to understand all aspects of HIV, so that we can help our community rebound from the impact of this epidemic.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”
Matthew 23:23 (New International Version)
In his time, Jesus gave a voice to the marginalized, love to those who were rejected by society, and power to the oppressed. Likewise, the Black Church historically has been a place of healing—spiritually, physically, and emotionally. Churches have served as places to plan revolutions, experience revival, celebrate our cultural identity, and ponder our divine destiny.

While there are diverse Christian denominations and doctrines, the Black Church is the only institution birthed during slavery that has continued to be led by the Black community and dedicated to the just treatment of its race. With a foundation in liberation theology, Black Churches have used sermons, ministry programs, and community action to address inequities across various systems. Members have turned to church for spiritual guidance, as well as assistance with legal, educational, vocational, political, and health issues.

**HIV: A MINISTERIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR FAITH LEADERS**

The following characteristics of Jesus' ministry are the same factors that are critical to addressing HIV:

1. **HEALING THE SICK** - When praying for the sick in your services, also pray for the healing of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; make sure to treat it as you treat other illnesses.

2. **SERVING AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE OPPRESSED AND UNDERSERVED** - Our communities are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS and have inadequate access to quality health care, including testing opportunities and treatment. You can serve as an advocate - from the pulpit to the state house.

3. **BUILDING COMMUNITIES WITH FAITH AND LOVE** - As John 3:17 (NLT) tells us, “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.” As faith leaders, include the needs of those with HIV in your church ministry and promote an environment of acceptance, understanding, and compassion for ALL.

If faith leaders were to examine and speak out about the root causes of HIV disparities in the Black community and partner with other entities to address these disparities, we could see a dramatic decrease in HIV transmission rates in our lifetime.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.”*  
We have learned in the past that when the Black Church and the NAACP come together, great things are accomplished. Eliminating HIV will take another great effort and it is with the faith community and faith leaders, like you, that we can mitigate the effects of the epidemic.

Understanding that our community views the church as a place of refuge for spiritual and many other personal needs, we believe that your leadership and engagement will play a critical role in changing the course of HIV in the Black community. By reaching out to and speaking for those who need a voice – those who are unaware of their status and those who do not think they are at risk – faith leaders will not only be following the teachings of Christ, but also advocating for social justice, just as you did in the Civil Rights movement. We at the NAACP are asking faith leaders to join our efforts, lend their influential voices to the issues of equity and justice centered on HIV, and speak out to end the disparities facing our community.

**THIS IS OUR CALL TO ACTION. HIV IS OUR FIGHT. LET US PUT ON OUR ARMOR.**

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**Jesus’ Mission Statement**

“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ‘Go,’ he told him, ‘wash in the Pool of Siloam’ (this word means ‘Sent’). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.”

*John 9:1-7 (New International Version)*
PASTORAL BRIEF REFERENCES


The following are definitions for key words and phrases that are identified in **RED** when they first appear in the Pastoral Brief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a chronic, potentially life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health inequity</td>
<td>Disparities in health [or health care] that are systemic and avoidable and, therefore, considered unfair or unjust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a sexually transmitted disease. It can also be spread by contact with infected blood, or from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breast-feeding. It can take years before HIV weakens your immune system to the point that you have AIDS. There’s no cure for HIV/AIDS, but there are medications that can dramatically slow the progression of the disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>The basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence</td>
<td>The frequency with which something, such as a disease or trait, appears in a particular population or area during a specific period, e.g., the number of new HIV infections that occur during a given year (Incidence and prevalence are both terms that are commonly used to refer to measurements of disease frequency).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberation theology</td>
<td>Twentieth century Christian theology, emphasizing liberation from oppression, whether racial, sexual, economic, or political.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>The prevalence of a disease is the proportion of a population that is affected by the disease at a specific time, e.g., the number of people living with HIV infection at the end of a given year (While incidence refers to new cases, prevalence refers to existing cases).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Social justice is the equitable distribution of social, economic and political resources, opportunities, and responsibilities and their consequences.</td>
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</tbody>
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“I have family members who have HIV/AIDS. I was very ignorant, and I had heard so many different things about HIV/AIDS. When I went into the room, I was scared to death. Because of the air I was breathing and the air they were breathing, I thought I might [contract it]. Education is what allowed me to move forward and to understand.”

- Reverend Ronald Bishop, Houston