

# THEOLOGY IN THE HIV&AIDS ERA SERIES



## MODULE 10

### PREACHING AND LITURGY IN THE HIV&AIDS CONTEXT

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THE HIV&AIDS CURRICULUM FOR TEE  
PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA

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## A NOTE TO LEARNERS, USERS AND READERS

The overall goal of this module is to contribute towards building HIV&AIDS competent churches and theological institutions. This module is part of a series of ten modules entitled, *Theology in the HIV&AIDS Era* which were developed for distance learners. The modules accompany the HIV&AIDS Curriculum for TEE Programmes and Institutions in Africa.

The process of production began with an all Africa training of trainers' workshop on mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in Theological Education by Extension (TEE), held in Limuru Kenya, July 1-7, 2004. The workshop called for the production of a distance learning curriculum and accompanying ten modules to enable the mainstreaming of HIV&AIDS in TEE programs.

Writers were thus identified, trained in writing for distance learners and given their writing assignments. In July 2-13, 2005, twelve writers gathered at the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Botswana with their first drafts for a peer review and a quality control workshop. The result of the process is this series on *Theology in the HIV&AIDS Era* and the accompanying curriculum for TEE. The whole process was kindly sponsored by the Ecumenical Initiative for HIV&AIDS in Africa (EHAIA).

Although the target audience for these modules is the distance learning community, it is hoped that the series will also stimulate new programmes, such as diplomas, degrees, masters and doctoral studies in HIV&AIDS theological research and thinking in residential theological institutions. It is also hoped that the series will contribute towards breaking the silence and the stigma by stimulating HIV&AIDS theological reflections and discussions in various circumstances, such as in Sunday schools, women's meetings, youth and men's fellowships, workshops, conferences and among teachers and preachers of religious faith.

Musa W. Dube  
Gaborone, Botswana  
July 28, 2006

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	MODULE OVERVIEW	8
UNIT 1:	DEFINING THE PROBLEM	10
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	The Problem of HIV&AIDS	
	Ignorance about HIV&AIDS	
	Silence about HIV&AIDS	
	Stigmatisation in Sermons	
	My Personal Story	
UNIT 2:	FOUNDATIONS OF PREACHING	20
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	Definition of Preaching	
	Biblical Foundations of Preaching	
	Elements of a Sermon	
	Perceptions of Preaching in Africa	
UNIT 3:	RECAPTURING PREACHING IN LITURGY	31
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	What is Liturgy?	
	Liturgical Context of Preaching	
	Functions of Sermon in Liturgy	
	Liturgical Patterns and Preaching	
	Liturgy, Preaching and HIV&AIDS	

UNIT 4:	FORMS OF PREACHING	51
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	Forms of Preaching	
	Biblical Forms of Preaching	
	Cultural Forms of Preaching	
	Acculturated Forms of Preaching	
	Story from Serowe Village	
UNIT 5:	FEATURES OF PREACHING	65
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	Preaching a Liberative	
	Preaching as Practical	
	Preaching as Celebrative	
UNIT 6:	PREACHING AS EMBODYING PLWHA	79
	Overview	
	Unit Objectives	
	Preaching and PLWHA	
	Transforming Theology and Preaching	
	Sermon One: God is Compassion	
	Sermon Two: God is Loving and Forgiving	
	Sermon Three: The Church as a Compassionate Community	
	Sermon Four: The Church as Helping Community	

UNIT 7:	<b>PREACHING WITH/TO/ABOUT SPECIFIC GROUPS IN THE HIV&amp;AIDS CONTEXT</b> Three Principles of Building Relationships Sermon One: Preaching with the Youth in the Context of HIV&AIDS Sermon Two: Preaching to the Orphans in the HIV&AIDS Context Sermon Three: Preaching to and about Widows in the Context of HIV&AIDS	100
UNIT 8:	<b>PREACHING AS PROPHECY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&amp;AIDS</b> Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible Prophecy in the New Testament Prophecy in the Church Sermon One: Prophetic Sermons against Poverty Sermon Two: Prophetic Sermons against the Lack of Access to Treatment Sermon Three: Prophetic Sermons against Gender Inequality	117
UNIT 9:	<b>PREACHING USING NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&amp;AIDS</b> Non-traditional Methods of Preaching in Church Non-traditional Methods of Preaching using Popular Media Preaching at Family & Community Occasions Preparing a Sermon on a Birthday of a Small Child Preparing a Sermon for Unveiling of Tombston Preparing a Sermon for World AIDS Day	136

UNIT 10: PREACHING AS GROUP COUNSELLING

152

Group Counselling

Preaching as Group Counselling

Four stage of HIV&AIDS

Sermon One: Crisis Counselling

Sermon Two: Supportive Counselling

Sermon Three: Grief Counselling

Sermon Four: Bereavement Counselling

# MODULE 10

## MODULE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Module 10 of the HIV&AIDS curriculum for Theological Education by Extension. This module will look at preaching and liturgy in the contexts of HIV&AIDS. It consists of ten units which deal with the different dimensions of preaching in liturgy, an important tool in fighting the problem HIV&AIDS. HIV&AIDS is understood to be partly fuelled by ignorance, silence and stigma.

Unit 1 defines the problem of HIV&AIDS and the impact of ignorance, silence and stigma, considered significant factors to the spread of HIV&AIDS. Unit 2 defines preaching, its biblical foundations and the components of preaching (the preacher, the text and the audience). This unit will also consider the African perception of preaching, particularly in regards to initial exposure. Unit 3 describes liturgy and identifies the place of preaching in worship. Preaching and liturgy are believed to be interlinked. They can play an important role in empowering people, breaking the silence and de-stigmatising PLWHA. Unit 4 discusses different forms of preaching. Unit 5 focuses on the features of preaching in Africa, particularly focusing on its unique history. At the end of this unit, please take your first assignment before proceeding to Unit 6-10.

In Units 6 – 10 we will apply some of the key principles of preaching that you learnt in Units 1-5. In Unit 6 we will discuss six of key principles and apply these to preaching and liturgy focused on People Living with HIV&AIDS. In Unit 7 we will apply these six principles for preparing sermons with the most vulnerable groups affected by HIV&AIDS, namely orphans, youth and widows. The discussion of sermon preparation will focus on some of the challenging issues faced by these groups in the context of HIV&AIDS. Unit 8 will focus on some of the social injustices at the root of HIV&AIDS and their prophetic challenges. Apply the six principles of preparing sermons to prophecy in the bible and the prophetic call to challenge the injustices of HIV&AIDS. Unit 9 will focus on non-traditional methods of preaching in and outside the church. HIV&AIDS require that we use every



available opportunity to address the issues. This unit will discuss the use of television and radio and family and community occasions to address the challenges of HIV&AIDS. Unit 10 will address the fact that everyone is affected by HIV&AIDS and is in need of counselling. To meet the counselling needs of HIV&AIDS, we will discuss preaching as group counselling, addressing the needs of our congregation as well as empowering them with the knowledge and skills to reach out to others. We will prepare sermons that address the counselling needs of each of the four stages of living with HIV&AIDS. It is our hope and prayer that this module will empower you to maximize preaching and liturgy in your church in order to confront the challenges of HIV&AIDS.

## MODULE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- ✂ Analyze ignorance, silence and stigma as contributory factors to the spread of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Define preaching and identify its essential elements
- ✂ Analyze preaching within its liturgical context
- ✂ Describe different forms of preaching
- ✂ Discuss the features of preaching in Africa
- ✂ Apply principles of preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Transform theology through preaching that embodies and identifies with People Living with HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Prepare sermons with vulnerable groups such as orphans, youth and widows that address the issues and challenges of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Preach prophetically in order to address the injustices at the root of HIV&AIDS through understanding the prophetic ministry in the bible and how it relates to social injustice
- ✂ Use non-traditional methods of preaching in and outside the church to address the challenges of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Counsel congregation members and empower them with knowledge and skills about the counselling needs for the four stages of HIV&AIDS, through preaching as group counselling

# UNIT 1

## DEFINING THE PROBLEM

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 1 of this module on preaching and liturgy in the HIV&AIDS context. In this unit we will summarize of how HIV&AIDS affects people and their environment. We will also show how ignorance and silence have rendered preaching and liturgy, which are Christian symbols of life, places of judgement, condemnation and death. This encourages stigma and discrimination which in turn silences PLWHA, preventing them from speaking openly about their status. It has also silenced the pastors and ministers because their judgemental attitudes have denied them an opportunity to understand the complexity of HIV&AIDS. I will also share a personal story which reflects the silence that results from ignorance and the harm it can do.

### OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ✂ Explain the problem around HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Analyse the impact of ignorance about HIV&AIDS on preaching
- ✂ Discuss how silence can be the cause and effect of stigma
- ✂ Inspire your community to speak openly and share their stories

### TOPICS

- ✂ The Problem of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Ignorance about HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Ignorance in the church
- ✂ Silence about HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Stigmatisation in Sermons
- ✂ My Personal Story

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Reading

## THE PROBLEM OF HIV&AIDS

Let us start this unit by looking at the impact of HIV&AIDS on our societies and churches. We refer to this as the problem of HIV&AIDS. We will look briefly at the responses of the church, both positive and negative.

### ACTIVITY 1

*In a paragraph, describe different responses of the church to HIV&AIDS in your country.*

HIV&AIDS has had a catastrophic impact on the human race. The virus has shattered hopes, ambitions and plans of millions of men and women, thereby denying human kind the unique contribution that these individuals could have made. Since its discovery, HIV&AIDS has proved to be more than just a medical issue. It pervades the social, economic, cultural and religious spheres of our lives and it infects and affects all people irrespective of status, sex or race.

The epidemic has invoked responses from national and international bodies. The church, because of its moral authority, had many reasons to join in the struggle against the HIV&AIDS epidemic. Throughout the centuries, the church has had the ability to reach large numbers of peoples on a frequent basis. The church has also been at the forefront of responding to the needs of the poor and marginalized. It has, therefore, earned itself the title 'voice of the voiceless'.

Some churches and church-related institutions have indeed responded positively to the worldwide need to provide care and support to PLWHA and the affected. However, given the capacity, influence and authority that the church has, the church should be able to contribute to a much larger degree.

## ACTIVITY 2

*The church has been called the voice of the voiceless. Explain how the church in your community lived up or failed to live up to this expectation.*

### IGNORANCE IN THE CHURCH

Most church leaders did not learn about HIV&AIDS or anything similar in their theological training. They had no experience in dealing with an issue of this magnitude and kind before. They do not have previous experiences on which to draw. Christians are in need of answers: what is this? What is God trying to tell us through and in the face of this epidemic? A lot of conflicting religious responses resulted from these questions. For some, AIDS&HIV is a sign of the end of days. For others it is God's punishment for an immoral world. All of these responses are based on the Bible. Generally, the result has condemnation, moralization, discrimination, and stigmatization fuelled by churches' attitude toward People Living with HIV&AIDS and those affected by it. Churches have become, as a result, places of exclusion instead of places of solace, refuge and compassion. This is a result of a lack of knowledge or inadequate knowledge about the disease, poor biblical comprehension, and a lack of training in counselling, care and advocacy.

## ACTIVITY 3

- 1. List the different ways in which the ignorance of church leaders on issues of HIV&AIDS in your country has influenced the church's response to HIV&AIDS.*
- 2. List ways in which the ignorance of your congregation on issues of HIV&AIDS has fuelled stigma and discrimination.*

### SILENCE ABOUT HIV&AIDS

The church has not only failed because of ignorance; ignorance has led to silence. They were ignorant. What could they say? Some thought it better to wait than to disgrace themselves by talking about an issue they knew little about. So they choose to remain silent. Maluleke (1997) observes that there are various orders of silence. These orders are connected to two things: a) social location of the silent and b)

material conditions of the silent. The reasons why the poor are silent are not the same as the reasons for which the rich are silent. The meaning of the silence of the powerful is different from the silence of the powerless. This is because the silencing process is different. In the context of the church's silence on issues of HIV&AIDS, the following four issues can be identified:

- Those who are not infected, or claim not to be, can afford to be silent
- The church's belief that HIV&AIDS is disease affecting and infecting 'others' not 'us'
- The deep cry of PLWHA is met with deafening silence from church leaders
- The silence of PLWHA is a silence resulting from stigmatizing and discriminating suppression

While PLWHA are crying in the wilderness, those who have ears and power ignore their voices. This is which Maluleke calls the calculated silence of power (1997:327). The silence of PLWHA results from stigma and discrimination that is actively and passively promoted by many institutions, including the church. For many PLWHA, silence is a survival strategy. Such silence should not be interfered with without consulting PLWHA. A lot of times we have made it our own agenda to talk about the plight of PLWHA without asking them, wrongly assuming that we understand their pain and joy. Maluleke calls this the crushing silence of powerlessness (1997: 327).

## ACTIVITY 4

1. *Ignorance can lead to silence. How has ignorance led to silence in your church in regards to issues of HIV&AIDS?*
2. *List other factors that may have led to silence in your church around HIV&AIDS.*

PLWHA have chosen to remain silent though they are crying to be heard, they are hushed by stigmatization and discrimination.

## STIGMATIZATION IN SERMONS

The Church, especially in Africa, is the centre of life for many people; it is a place where people meet, not only on Sundays. In the following quotation Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia highlights the importance of preaching in the life of the church:

The church provides a tremendous opportunity for meeting people. The pulpit is a powerful place from which to provide education and knowledge, yet, today the pulpit is insufficiently put to use on issues of HIV&AIDS. Preachers should be equipped with the knowledge necessary to communicate to their people regarding HIV; and, to do so, there is a need for training centres for preachers. The Ecumenical African Alliance is gathering information for schools and preachers. The power of the pulpit was recently demonstrated in my country – Kenya. The churches were the vehicle to inform people, it was an important forum to change political leadership in Kenya (2004: 5).

### ACTIVITY 5

1. *List ways in which a pulpit can be used as an instrument of oppression.*
2. *List ways in which a pulpit can be used as an instrument of liberation and healing.*

Unfortunately, this is not the case in many churches. The pulpit has been and still is used to condemn. It has not been used to build but to destroy. It has not been used to comfort and heal but to kill. It has become a place for the prophets of doom and not the prophets of hope. We need to acknowledge and confess that we as ministers, pastors and even bishops have abused the pulpit. Gillian Patterson recounts a story from a mainstream church in a rural area of Kenya:

For many years, Luke was a pastor in a mainstream church in a rural area of Kenya. Few people knew much about AIDS, and when they were told, they didn't believe. Then in 1999, when his three children were 10, 7 and 4, his wife died. The death certificate said tuberculosis, but in the

hospital they told Luke that it might be AIDS. He should really be tested himself. 'On the day I received the result, I was about to die,' he says. Desperate for advice and comfort, he went and told his bishop. 'You are disgrace to the Church,' said the bishop. 'You will not tell anybody you have this sickness, and if you want to retain your ministry, you will marry again soon so that people are not suspicious.' But that, says Luke, would have been killing. He refused to marry, and was duly fired. This was the worst time of his life. His children were victimized at school and made to sit separately, with other 'AIDS children'. He had no job and no money. 'If it hadn't been for the kids, I would have killed myself,' he says. Then an AIDS counsellor saved him by offering sensible advice and real options. Today, Luke is a pastor in an independent African church. He has not married again, but he has friends, he is accepted, and he knows his ministry is of great value to those he serves. 'Every time I stand in the pulpit and say I have AIDS,' he says, 'I know that I am making a small dent in the way people think, and may be giving hope to other people' (2002: 3).

Another story recounted by Patterson reads,

Bernard is a Catholic, an elder of the church, living in a poor area on the outskirts of a Tanzanian city. He thinks he may have AIDS. He doesn't know what to do. He could go to testing centre in town, but what then? There is a Catholic clinic nearby, but suppose someone recognizes him there? If people think he has HIV, he'll probably lose his job. Bernard has two wives, and five children. What of them? He knows where to get condoms, but that is a sin, and any way then the women would guess. Discovery might mean the whole family being ostracized. He would like to talk to a priest, but then he would lose his position in the church. Anyway, nobody talks about such things in church: AIDS is not a nice thing to mention to a man of God. So Bernard carries on as before, getting sicker and more desperate, and dreading the moment when he gets too sick to go on pretending (2002: 4).

## ACTIVITY 6

1. *Stories such as Luke's are very common in our churches. Go and find such stories from your church or from neighbouring churches and recount it.*
2. *List ways in which some of the teachings of the churches make it difficult for pastors and members of the congregation to decide on issues of HIV&AIDS.*

These stories are common experiences for people and churches in the context of HIV&AIDS. They reflect that churches can sometimes be bogged down in issues of dogma and structures and disregard the lives of the people who are faced with difficult choices between 'faith, life and others' lives'. One of the issues that brought Jesus' teaching into sharp focus was its stance against religion reduced to and definable by moral codes and rules. More than once, this stance brought him into confrontation with the Pharisees and the Scribes (Luke 5:17-25). Though Jesus' teaching on love is very clear, we have many examples of moral denunciation, victimization and exclusion of PLWHA directed from the pulpit. They have been labelled sinners and are considered to deserve death. This is an example of a church which has become part of the problem. In effect they are saying to people, 'Go away, you who labour and are heavy-laden. There is no rest for you here' (Patterson 2002: 5).

## ACTIVITY 7

1. *Cite a story from the gospel where Jesus seems to be giving us a lesson on how to challenge religion that is definable by moral codes and rules.*
2. *What can we learn from this story about how we should confront HIV&AIDS and faith?*

### A PERSONAL STORY

As a young seminarian training for ministry in the Catholic Church in the early 80s, HIV&AIDS was never an issue. When I left seminary at the end of 1987, I had not heard of HIV&AIDS. In the years immediately following my ordination there was no mention of it in the preaching, conferences or seminars with which I came into



contact. The only time I heard HIV&AIDS being discussed as a serious issue was when one colleague of mine, specializing in the area of Church Law, mentioned that people who are being prepared for marriage should be encouraged to go for HIV testing. It did not strike me as an issue worth urgent attention. When I was studying in Europe, there was much talk about HIV&AIDS in Africa. However, we usually dismissed it as dramatizing events in Africa, which is common in foreign media. When I returned to Africa, I was assigned to a seminary. It was not until August 2002 when I attended a WCC workshop on mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in the curriculum in Kempton Park, RSA, that we started seriously discussing the issue of HIV&AIDS. We even invited a team from the nearby hospital to talk to the seminary community about it. It was a scary experience, which few of the students and/or lecturers appreciated. Before then HIV&AIDS has been a problem for people external to the church. It was something we had no knowledge about, something that had to do with homosexuality and promiscuity. We thought it was an issue that had nothing to do with life in the seminary. I personally felt I was not called to talk about it. I thought that if anyone was to discuss it, it should be the Moral Theology department.

Reflecting back on these experiences, I agree with a number of people who say the church has stigmatized people through silence. It has stigmatized many more through moralizing sermons. I have preached such sermons. I was ignorant and unwilling to engage the issue of HIV&AIDS. As far as I can recall, I was not kind to PLWHA. I had deceived myself into believing that at the seminary we were under divine protection. Now I know that the stigma and the possibility of rejection, discrimination, misunderstanding and loss of trust that surrounds HIV&AIDS are doing more harm than HIV itself.

## ACTIVITY 8

1. *Share some of your previous attitudes towards HIV&AIDS.*
2. *Have those attitudes changed? If so, what contributed to the change? If not, what convinces you that such attitudes were correct then?*

## SUMMARY

In this unit we have seen that HIV&AIDS emerged when nobody was expecting it. It was received with mixed feelings by different institutions, including the church. As a result, the responses did not meet the challenge posed by HIV&AIDS. Though it is important to acknowledge that there were positive contributions, much of the church's early response was negative, fuelled by ignorance and silence from pastors and ministers. The church's response was mostly damning. These responses fuelled stigma, using biblical passage for support. In particular, they made use of the connection in the Bible between sickness and sin. Yet, as we have seen, the Bible can also offer us stories of healing and support. In this unit we read the stories of PLWHA who received less than what Jesus, in similar situations, would have given. Taken together, this unit presents the problematic situation on which preaching and liturgy should focus.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Name three ways in which HIV&AIDS is a problem within the church?
2. Identify areas in which the church showed ignorance on issues of HIV&AIDS.
3. List ways by which the church can acquire more knowledge on these issues?
4. Silence can mean different things to different people. What can silence around HIV&AIDS mean to PLWHA and what can it mean to people who think they are not living with HIV&AIDS?
5. Silence can cause HIV&AIDS stigma and HIV&AIDS stigma can cause silence. Discuss the meaning of this statement.
6. Suppose you are Luke's Bishop or superior, how would you react to his story?
7. In such a situation, how do you think Jesus would have reacted? Support your argument with illustrations from the gospels.



## FURTHER READING

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## GLOSSARY

- Advocacy:** An act or process of defending or maintaining a cause or proposal.
- Ineptitude:** Lack of competence or aptitude for a task.
- Moralization:** An act of making superficial moral pronouncements, often in a manner that is not constructive.
- PLWHA:** Acronym for People Living with HIV&AIDS.
- Pulpit:** A structure in a church, erected and used for preaching.
- Social Location:** An individual's place or location in his/her society.

# UNIT 2

## FOUNDATIONS OF PREACHING

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 2. The main focus of this unit is to define preaching and to trace its origin in the Bible. This unit also discusses the three essential components of preaching, the preacher, the text and the audience. The term *preaching* did not originate in an African milieu. However, in their contact with preaching, Africans have developed and re-defined it; thus, this unit will look at the perception of preaching in Africa.

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ⌘ Define preaching
- ⌘ Analyse the biblical foundations of preaching
- ⌘ Identify the essential components of a sermon
- ⌘ Explain how Africans perceived preaching in their first contact with it

### TOPICS

- ⌘ Definition of Preaching
- ⌘ Biblical Foundations of Preaching
- ⌘ Elements of a Sermon
  - Preacher in Relationship
  - Preacher in Relation to Him/herself
  - Preacher in Relation to the Text
  - Preacher in Relation to the World of the Audience
  - Preacher in Relation to God/Christ
- ⌘ Perception of Preaching in Africa

Summary, Self-Assessment, Further Reading, Glossary

## DEFINITION OF PREACHING

What is preaching and what does it mean to preach? Everybody defines preaching in their own way. Some define it from the point of view of the preacher (Brookes 1964). Others define it as a process or art (Calvin). Yet others define it based on its content (Thompson 1966). This shows how difficult it can be to try to arrive at a single definition for preaching. In some scholarly circles, there is a tendency to distinguish between preaching, homily and sermon. In this module these terms are going to be used interchangeably. Preaching is usually used to describe an action. A homily or sermon can be used to refer to content (the information/message we share when we preach). However, the term *preaching* can also be used to refer to the content.

### ACTIVITY 1

1. Write your own definition of preaching.
2. Examine the definition and see whether it comes from the perspective of the preacher, the content or the audience.

For the purposes of this presentation, we are going to define preaching as *an art through which God, in the person of his Son, uses human instruments to make Godself known to humanity through the preached word*. This definition underlines the essential constitutive elements of preaching which will be addressed in detail in the next sections.

Let us look at the components of this definition:

*“Preaching is an art...”* this part of the definition defines preaching as a skill; it is an action. This is true in so far as the communication aspect of it is concerned. A skill can be acquired or inborn. There are some people who are better than others in communicating a message despite the similarity of their training. The content of the sermon does not depend on the skill of the preacher. However, the presentation of the content requires a skill which can be learned, can be inborn and can be improved.

*“Through which God...”* God is the source of preaching; if God ceased to exist, preaching would lose its essence. Preaching is a way of carrying out God’s agenda, namely that God should be continually revealed to humanity and that humanity should know God continually. When God does reveal Godself, God does so in different ways. One important way that God has revealed Godself is through God’s Son, Jesus Christ. God is now both the agent and the content: “The Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

*“Uses human instruments...”* During his earthly ministry, Jesus had disciples/followers working with him. They were human instruments through which God’s message would be proclaimed (Mark 4:14). When Jesus was taken to heaven, they went to preach (Mark 16: 20). For example, Luke became an instrument of the Lord through the message that he received from those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (Luke 1:2). God continues to employ human instruments in making God’s message known to humanity.

## ACTIVITY 2

1. *Make a list of preachers who are skilled in preaching without any formal training.*
2. *Make a list of preachers who combine skill and training.*
3. *Make a list of preachers who have been trained but who lack skill.*

### Biblical Foundations of Preaching

What do we mean by biblical foundations of preaching? In this section we want to know whether preaching is justified in the Bible. Can the term or the practice be traced back to the Bible? Indeed, preaching has biblical foundations. The notion or idea of preaching dates back to the times of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.

In the Hebrew Bible, for example, the word or words that commonly represented the idea of preaching are ‘announcement’ or ‘proclaiming good news’ (Isaiah 40: 9; 52:7; 61:1). If preaching is about communicating God’s message, we must assume that it did not start in the New Testament. God spoke to God’s people in the Old Testament as well. God communicated God’s messages or promises through the medium of families. In Genesis 18:19 we are told that God informed Abraham and his family that

God's promises would be transmitted through him. Deuteronomy 11:19 confirms this method of message dissemination, "Teach them to your children, and keep on telling them, when you are sitting at home, when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are standing up."

Asante (2003:7) observes that, "This private family instruction was to be supplemented by the public preaching of the Word every seven years during the feast of tabernacles (Deut. 31:9-13) by the priests and Levites." God has always had something to say to God's people. God also used the Prophets, who were heralds or mouth pieces of God, to communicate messages to the people.

### ACTIVITY 3

1. *In what ways is preaching a concept from the Hebrew Bible?*
2. *Make a list of four instances in the Old Testament that could be associated with preaching. In each instance identify the preacher, content and the audience.*

In the New Testament different words were used to express the idea of preaching. The most common are *kerusso* and *evangelizo*. *Kerusso* specifically refers to the act of proclaiming. *Evangelizo* refers both to the act of proclaiming and its content (what is proclaimed). The latter could therefore be translated to the following: to proclaim good news or the gospel. It is from this latter term that the word evangelise originated.

Preaching the Good news constitutes one of Jesus' threefold ministry. The other two are teaching and healing. The disciples of Jesus continued with the same ministry. Peter and Paul are depicted as preaching, teaching and healing. Asante is right in saying that preaching is at the heart of Christianity because it is the chief means of imparting the saving truth, the good news about our Lord Jesus Christ (2003:8). Thus, preaching has biblical foundations and remains an important medium for communicating God's saving power.

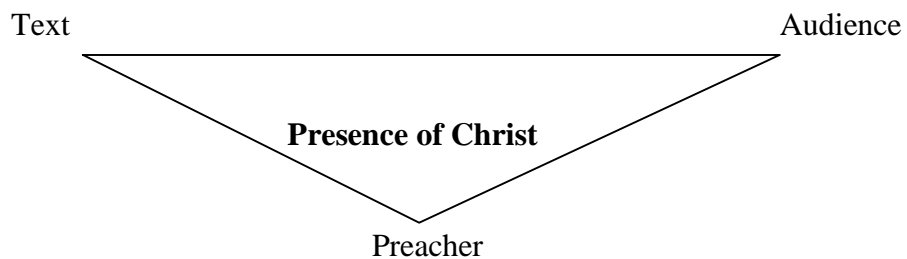
## ACTIVITY 4

1. *The New Testament uses the term evangelisation. State how this term is related to preaching.*
2. *Make a list of 4 instances in which Jesus preached: identify in each instance the content and the audience.*

## ELEMENTS OF A SERMON

A sermon or homily presupposes the following elements:

- The preacher
- The text
- The listeners or audience



### Presence of Christ

These three are components to a sermon. The preacher should combine the biblical text with the reality of the audience. Some authors would add an additional component, namely, the *presence of Christ*. The presence of Christ is considered important for each of the three essential elements. I have not considered it as I believe that it is included in the three components highlighted earlier, namely the preacher, the text and the audience. We will now look at each component in turn.

## ACTIVITY 5

*Draw your own chart illustrating how the preacher, the text and the audience relate to Christ.*



## The Preacher in a Relationship

The preacher is someone who comes out of the congregation and goes back to the same congregation as a herald or messenger of God's word. As Long notes, "s/he is no longer simply one among the many. Something has changed, and the preacher is in some new relationship to the others in the community" (1989: 23). The preacher is caught up in multiple relationships. We have to view him/her in relation to himself, in relation to the world of the text and in relation to the world of the audience.

*The preacher in relation to himself:* Brooks once defined preaching as "truth through personality." According to this definition, the personality of the preacher greatly influences the effectiveness of a message. For Brooks, the authenticity, sincerity, and honesty of the preacher serve as the core of evangelism. The preacher does not just bear witness to a creed—he bears witness to the truth that lives in his heart and, in so doing, communicates these living truths to the hearts of others. This said, various denominations have different approaches to this issue. The reformers or Protestants believe that both the disposition of the dispenser/preacher as well as that of the recipient are important to the effectiveness of the word or the sacrament. The Catholics believe that the word or the sacrament is the conductor of grace and not the preacher/dispenser.

### ACTIVITY 6

1. *List the things that are core to preaching in your own church.*

*The preacher in relation to the world of the text:* Asante (2003:15) noted that preachers are dealing with and mediating between two worlds: that of the text and that of the audience. Each exists in fundamentally outside of the other. The preacher's role is to bring them together. What is the role of the preacher in relation to the text? The text contains God's word, intended for the people; thus, the preacher becomes not only the messenger but also an interpreter of the text. The text, as it were, is a product of a culture, time and place different from our own. It recounts problems and issues

that do not always directly correspond to our own. However, we believe that this text has relevant messages for contemporary hearers. What is the task of the preacher, then, in relation to the text?

- The task of the preacher is to interpret the text, the word of God, the scriptures
- The preacher must familiarize him/herself with the text. Familiarisation in this context means reading and studying the text. This is because interpretation of the text presupposes familiarity with the text
- The preacher must familiarize him/herself with good theological literature as this puts him/her in contact with his own context and the context of the text. The text is dynamic. It has been interpreted and re-interpreted over many years. These interpretations are contained in theological literature
- The preacher must read spiritual books to widen his horizons.

Armed with the knowledge of the text, the world of the text and the world of the listeners, the preacher is better placed to link the past and the present lives of the people.

## ACTIVITY 7

1. *The text is often used to oppress people. Take an example from your context to show how that has been done.*
2. *In a paragraph, explain why you think interpreting the text is so important for preaching.*

*The preacher in relation to the world of the audience:* We have mentioned earlier that the preacher confronts two worlds, that of the text and that of the listener/audience. The audience is normally people of a particular place, culture, time, age and educational background. Their concerns and their perspective will differ from one place to another and from one time to another. In order, therefore, to preach

effectively to audiences, their context has to be seriously taken into consideration. A preacher has to study not only the text, but the situation or context of the people. One of the reasons why Christianity was uprooted in North Africa was the failure of the evangelists to take the context of the people seriously. Asante states,

Culture must be respected because it involves people. Effective preaching demands a serious consideration of the people to and among whom one preaches. The socio-cultural situation of the people then dictates not only the content of the message but the mode of delivering the message (2003: 21).

## ACTIVITY 8

- 1. In your opinion, is it important to know your audience to preach effectively? Give reasons for your answer.*
- 2. Outline ways in which our preaching fails to relate to the socio-cultural situation of our people? Suggest ways of improving our preaching?*

## PERCEPTION OF PREACHING IN AFRICA

Preaching, as it is done in most Christian churches of western origin, is based on a Euro-American style, philosophy and worldview. They use images and symbolism that are not adapted to the African audience. The modes of transmitting information or truth in a Euro-American setting differ significantly from effective modes of information transmission or teaching in an African context.

Africans had and continue to have a unique way of learning and relating to life. In the western world defining is part of the knowledge process. Preaching, as generally defined in theological books, does not fit the African model of religion. Religion in Africa is more about ritual and action than preaching. It is a way of life that permeates every aspect of life. The African worldview is holistic. Given the fact that African

religion, with its cycles of life, is for celebrating, preaching cannot be an isolated event in worship experience, it is part of the process of celebrating life (Du Preez 2000:8).

Hence, preaching is an elusive concept. It is with this understanding that we have preferred to talk about the *perception* of preaching in Africa as opposed to the *idea* of preaching. What was Africans' perception of preaching? We will look at their approach to preaching by analysing the words used to describe it.

## ACTIVITY 9

1. List various names for preaching, sermons or preachers in your language.
2. Analyze these names. What do they imply?

In Sesotho (language of Lesotho) to preach is translated as *ho khotatsa*. This term literally translates as: to encourage, to support, to comfort and to console. So preaching has a connotation of exhortation. It carries more of a positive tone than a neutral one. Preaching, generally, carries neither a positive nor a negative tone. It is neutral. You can preach to reprimand, to encourage or to exhort. In Setswana (language of Botswana) to preach is translated as *go rera*. The word *go rera* means to consult and to talk over an issue with another person. Preaching from the point of view of Setswana implies communication between the preacher and the audience. It is a dialogue between the preacher and the audience. It implies participation of both the preacher and the listener in delivering the sermon.

The notion of preaching may be extraneous to Africa. It was not born in Africa but Africa has accepted it and adapted it to fit its own situation and genius. Preaching as a way of communicating has to reflect African ways of communication or information dissemination. Storytelling has been one of the most effective ways of communication. It comes quite naturally for most people, particularly for Africans. People love to hear and tell good stories (Lerotholi 2004: 3). The story has the ability to be remembered and to communicate the message in the simplest terms. The Bible is a good example of a collection of stories that relate to us. The story was used to

share information, for imparting knowledge, for exciting the mind and for sharing values from one generation to the other.

## SUMMARY

In this unit, we have seen that preaching can be defined from different perspectives, and that different words, such as sermon and homily, have been used to refer to preaching. We have also seen that preaching has a basis in the bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. The sermon presupposes a preacher, the text which forms that basis of the content and the audience/people for whom the text is interpreted and to whom it is applied. In some contexts, the personality of the preacher is an important condition for effective preaching. The preacher has to read and familiarize him/herself with the text to preach well. It is also important for the preacher to know the world of the audience, their joys, frustrations and the language and images that appeal to them. Above all, we have said these three aspects of preaching seek to make the presence of Christ realized. In our terminology in Africa, there is no word for preaching. However, in our contact with the act of preaching we devised names according to how we perceived preaching.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Define preaching in your own words.
2. Illustrate the basis for preaching in the Old Testament.
3. Name three elements of a sermon.
4. Compare the following terms: preaching, homily and sermon.
5. Discuss how Christ is present in the relations between preacher, text and audience.
6. According to your own analysis, is a sincere and honest preacher more effective than a preacher who is not honest and sincere?
7. What name would you use to define preaching in your language?
8. What form of communication is common in your culture and how can it be used to enhance preaching?



## FURTHER READING

- Asante, E. 2003. *Foundations of Preaching*. Kumasi: Wilas Press.
- Brooks, P. 1964. *Lectures On Preaching*. New York: Seabury.
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- Lerotholi, G. 2004. "Teaching Homiletics in the Era of HIV&AIDS." Paper presented at a Workshop on Integrating HIV&AIDS in Theological Curricula, Mmelesi Lodge, Lesotho.
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## GLOSSARY

- Preaching:** An art through which God, in the person of his son, uses human instruments to make Godself known to humanity through the preached word.
- Kerusso:** The Greek word for preaching or proclaiming.
- Euangelizo:** The Greek word for evangelising or proclaiming of Good news. It is sometimes used interchangeably with *kerusso*.

# UNIT 3

## RECAPTURING PREACHING IN LITURGY

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 3. In the previous unit we have defined preaching and traced its biblical foundations. In this unit we are going to examine the features of liturgy and the role of preaching within liturgy. Preaching has an important role to play in worship. Similarly worship helps to shape preaching. Both are interrelated and inseparable. Several functions of preaching in liturgy are discussed. Liturgical moments are defined differently depending on church denominations. In some churches liturgy and liturgical moments are prearranged. In some churches they depend on the spontaneity or discernment of the leader. The subject of the sermon is determined by these considerations. This unit will examine an example of how liturgy and preaching can be merge to best address the congregation.

### OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ✂ Define Liturgy
- ✂ Analyse the relationship between liturgy and preaching
- ✂ Outline and discuss the functions of the sermon in worship
- ✂ Inspire people to improvise liturgies and sermons that speak to people's specific life situations

## TOPICS

- ⌘ What is Liturgy?
- ⌘ Liturgical Context of Preaching
- ⌘ Functions of Sermon in Worship
- ⌘ Liturgical Patterns and Preaching
- ⌘ Liturgy, Preaching and HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Touching Story from Serowe Village

Summary, Self-Assessment, Further Reading, Glossary

### What is Liturgy?

We have heard the word liturgy being used. We have attended or even conducted a church service. The purposes for church services are varied. There are services for weddings, funerals, tomb unveiling, graduation ceremonies and others. Our experience is that while there may be something common to all these services, there is also something different. In some churches ‘the word’ may be the common denominator between various types of services. In other churches it may be ‘the Eucharist’. Churches that have the Eucharist as the core of their liturgy will celebrate it at every service. For churches in which the word is central, they will read and expounded on it in every service. What is this liturgy that we are talking about? *Liturgy can be defined as a list of related activities that are done by the assembly of believers at every public church service for the purpose of glorifying God.* The word that is sometimes used for liturgy is ‘worship’. When believers gather to worship, glorifying the God who redeems, enables, and sanctifies, they are practicing liturgy and/or worshipping (Craddock 1985: 41).

## ACTIVITY 1

1. *Describe liturgy or worship in your own words.*
2. *Explain the central feature of worship or liturgy in your own church.*

Let us now explain what this definition says.

*List of related activities:* In liturgical celebration there is usually more than one activity directed towards a common goal. In a liturgy of the word, for example, there



is reading from the Scriptures, punctuated by a song or a short antiphon, followed by exposition on the texts read. These three activities (reading, singing, exposition) are not only focused on a common message, they are interrelated.

*Assembly of believers:* These activities are performed by an assembly of people who are united by a common belief. This works well with the gospel which says that where two or three are gathered together in the Lord's name, the Lord is present in their midst. A characteristic feature of a Christian liturgical celebration is the presence of Jesus.

*For purposes of Glorifying God:* What distinguishes liturgy from other activities of similar nature is the purpose for which people gather. There are a number of forms of gatherings and assemblies. These gatherings and assemblies are not necessarily liturgy. What makes them liturgical is the fact that they are done for the purpose of glorifying God. God is our creator, our saviour and our end. For this reason, He deserves to be glorified and given praise.

## ACTIVITY 2

1. *State the difference between a liturgical assembly of worshippers and other groups of people.*
2. *Make a list of activities that are normally done in your church on a Sunday or on any other day of worship.*

### Liturgical Context of Preaching

The leading question in this section is whether or not it is necessary for preaching to appear within the context of worship or liturgy? For some, the church is not a necessary context for preaching. They assert that preaching can be done at the corner of the street or in a bus. For others, preaching can only be practiced in church. Before looking at this issue, we need to develop a base of understanding. The church does not necessarily refer to the building structure in which people congregate to worship. It can also refer to an assembly of people who are gathered together for the purposes of worshipping, regardless of location.

## ACTIVITY 3

*Compare and contrast liturgy in your church with synagogue worship, as described in Luke 4:16-2.*

Christian worship, as we know it today, has much in common with the synagogue worship of the New Testament. In fact, the form of today's church can be directly traced to this period. It consisted of reading from the scriptures, exposition, public praise and prayer. The text of Luke 4: 16-22 gives a good example of this. This passage recounts a service in which Jesus expounds on a scripture reading. This example from Luke illustrates activities (reading, exposition, public praise, prayer) done by the assembly of believers with the aim of glorifying God. Historically, preaching or expounding on scriptures was tied to liturgy. It is for this reason that it becomes difficult for some Christian churches to dissociate preaching and liturgy.

The relationship between sermonizing and liturgy is not one-sided. Just as preaching prepares the assembly to celebrate liturgy, liturgy shapes preaching in several ways. Let us look at ways in which liturgy shapes preaching.

*First*, festivals help us to hear the Gospel from different perspectives and with different emphases. For example, in Advent we celebrate Christ's return and on Pentecost we revisit Christ's resurrection. Similarly, during weddings we celebrate partnership, common support and equal responsibility. The scripture passages read on these occasions help to focus our attention.

*Secondly*, the language of prayer and Scripture, ritual action, and physical environment cooperate to form a specific style that influences the style and content of the sermon. The shape of the liturgy constrains the form of preaching. For example, in earlier sections we have seen that denominations that put the word at the centre of preaching, preaching could be longer than in denominations in which liturgy is packed with celebration of other sacraments.

*Thirdly*, liturgy guides the preacher in their formulation of theological concepts, such as praise, salvation, grace, sin, and repentance. Each of these concepts, though while essentially remaining unchanged, can be communicated with differing emphasis and intensity, depending on the context. The concept of salvation discussed in a community where abuse of women and girls is rampant should be formulated differently than in cases in which the community is making steady progress in changing attitudes and mentalities.

*Fourthly*, preachers that are motivated by the local culture may attempt new ways of communicating the Gospel. Thus, preaching may occasionally take alternative forms, such as music, drama or dialogue. Rather than being an interruption of liturgical action or the main event, preaching is integral to the liturgy. The freshness of the sermon and the stability of the liturgy complete each other. While preaching speaks to the mind and heart, the lessons contained in the objects, gestures and outward signs of the liturgy have great power. Their power is based on the fact that God's message was designed to reach us in ways that corresponds to our way of being human.

## ACTIVITY 4

1. *Put in writing other ways in which liturgy can shape our preaching.*
2. *Write a list of ways in which preaching can also influence the flow of liturgy or worship.*

While we admit that there are many positions on the relationship between preaching and liturgy, we believe that worship provides the best atmosphere for preaching (Cox 1985: 37). Activities before the sermon prepare one's mind and heart for the reception of God's word. The sermon also sets a tune for what follows. When we make our intercessions, we do that on the basis of what God has said to us in his word. In short, worship is characterized by structures and patterns which orient the worshipper, providing them with a sense of being in a special space and time.

## FUNCTIONS OF SERMONS IN WORSHIP

Preaching is first and foremost about communicating God's word. It is a proclamation which is addressed to the community of believers and those beyond the church. For the latter to be realized, the first has to be lived and re-lived by the community. The gospel of John articulates this sentiment in the following passage: "They will know that you are my disciples if you love each other." The love that weaves together the Christian community is both life and witness. In the following paragraphs we will look at the function of a sermon in the context of worship.

First and foremost preaching *creates worship*. If it were not for God's word there would be no need for Christians to come together for worship. Just as God's word was there in the beginning and brought something out of nothing, God's creative word is still here to bring us together and to shape us into a worshipping community. This gives power to the word. The word does not depend on the worshipping community for its power but the word of God is destined for people and without this aspect its thrust remains unheard.

### ACTIVITY 5

*In a paragraph, describe how the word of God can create worship.*

Preaching *binds us together*. When a worship community has been created, it is continually bonded by the word. As stated in the famous hymn, "Bind us together Lord with cords that cannot be broken", the proclaimed word focuses the worship community on what God intends for them. It reminds the worship community that they are a special assembly, created and bound by the word. The practice of liturgy, response, and song, further bounds the worship community to each other. HIV&AIDS threatens to break the bond that unites us as the body of Christ. When one member of the body stigmatizes and discriminates against another member of the body, the unity of the body is compromised (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

## ACTIVITY 6

1. *Think of examples in your culture where the word has the ability to bond people together.*
2. *List instances in which the word of God brought people into a worship community.*

Preaching is an *act of remembrance*. God has been active throughout history, just as God is active today. Preaching reminds us that God once heard the cry of God's people, saw their suffering and took note (Exod. 2:24-25). God support the Israelites during the most difficult times in Israel's history. God never abandoned them, even when they deserved his punishment. God sent them prophets to remind them of God's own covenant. Later, God spoke to us through God's Son, Jesus Christ. Preaching reminds us of the times when we have turned away from God. It also reminds us of the times when God did not allow us to be overpowered by sin, oppression, and hunger. If God does this for some, God will do the same for us. When we are reminded of these mighty deeds of God, we respond through praise.

## ACTIVITY 7

1. *How often have reading of biblical stories impacted you?*
2. *Describe one instance such instance, explaining the impact of the Bible story on you.*

Preaching is an *act of healing*. When the word is read and preached it is God who is present and talking to us, through Jesus. Through the word of Jesus many were healed. Jesus' words continue to heal many people; of particular relevance to this study, His words can heal people injured by the discriminating and stigmatizing effects of HIV&AIDS. We are careful to make a distinction between healing and curing. There was a time when leprosy divided and ostracized people in the Jewish community. Jesus came into their midst. He not only turned the hopeless situation of lepers into a healing experience, but he also liberated those who were bound by the oppressive laws. AIDS is a modern leprosy fuelling the same hopelessness, ostracism,

stigmatization and discrimination. The mighty deeds of God have to be revealed through us (Luke 17:15); God may not cure HIV&AIDS but God may heal the stigmatizing and ostracizing effects of HIV&AIDS.

## ACTIVITY 8

- 1. State your reasons if you feel that preaching is used or not used sufficiently as an instrument of healing in our churches?*
- 2. What could be the reason for not using it for healing?*
- 3. What is the most common form of healing in our churches?*

### LITURGICAL PATTERNS AND PREACHING

We need to acknowledge that the Church in Africa is as diverse as its cultures, contexts and countries (Dube 2004:viii). Patterns of worship will differ from one tradition to the other. In some churches, the liturgy is predetermined and the readings pre-arranged. In some, the readings are dependent on the occasion. Each of these modalities has its merits and weaknesses. In denominations where liturgy and readings are predetermined, we tend to be faithful to what we think the text within the liturgical worship demands. This may not necessarily be informed by the most pressing needs of the community. The advantage is that the congregation knows well in advance what readings are going to be read. This allows for planning and preparation of both liturgy and scripture readings.

In denominations in which preaching and worship is dependent on the leader's discretion, spontaneity and creativity are the order of the day. This also allows the congregation, especially the leader, to be contextual and respond to the most pressing needs of the community. There may be problems if the congregation is hearing the word for the first time when the minister reads and expounds on it.

## ACTIVITY 9

1. *Explain briefly the liturgical pattern in your church.*
2. *Discuss the merits and weaknesses of these liturgical patterns for addressing issues such as HIV&AIDS.*

### LITURGY, PREACHING AND HIV&AIDS

*AfricaPraying* offers a good example of how church leaders can mainstream HIV&AIDS within their given context and how sermon guidelines can be in parallel with church liturgies and preaching calendars (2003:ix). It systematically outlines the different services that characterizes the life of the church and creatively identifies some scripture readings that could be used in the church's struggle to contain the spread of HIV&AIDS.

HIV&AIDS has infiltrated all aspects of our life. It threatens to submerge the spirit of celebration that we claimed to have. We cannot fully celebrate our children's/spouses' birthdays as we used to. We cannot celebrate Christmas, Easter, weddings, graduations or our sexuality freely because HIV&AIDS takes much of our material, physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual resources. It has taken and continues to take the soul out of our feasts. Our preaching and our liturgy have to restore and instil new meaning into these celebrations. In the spirit of Ezekiel, we have to preach over the dry bones of our celebrations so that flesh grows on them and skin covers them. We have to preach and breathe over them so that they come to life (Ezekiel 37:1-10). How can we achieve this?

The liturgy and preaching of the church has to be an expression of a welcoming church. *In a welcoming church what is preached and celebrated matters.* In the words of Keshomshahara and Veddeler (2005:36), preachers should remember that sermons influence the thinking and lives of the congregation. It is their responsibility to comfort, encourage, care for and support those who live with HIV&AIDS and those affected by it.

*In a welcoming church there is no 'us' and 'them'.* If the church is the body of Christ and we are members of that body, then its logical to say that the church, Christ's

body, is living with HIV&AIDS. Following the same logic, it does not make sense, therefore, to talk about ‘us’ and ‘them’. We are all members of Christ’s body. In fact, when one member of the body suffers, the whole body suffers (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). In light of this text, ‘us’ and ‘them’ is ‘othering’. In Module 7, *A Theology of Compassion in HIV&AIDS Context* ‘othering’ was described as irreconcilable with the character of the church (Dube 2005:59). Separating ‘us’ from ‘them’ is not only irreconcilable with the character of the church, it is theologically unacceptable. Before God every person is precious and no person is disposable (Ibid.).

## ACTIVITY 10

1. *Often when we pray or preach, we make a distinction between ‘us and them’. Explain why this is problematic, particularly in light of the fact that we are the ‘body of Christ’ (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).*
2. *Explain how this perspective has promoted HIV&AIDS stigma and discrimination.*

*In a welcoming church there are no ‘HIV&AIDS-victims’.* Identifying or labelling people with HIV or AIDS as victims suggests that such people should be seen only through the lens of their health status. Terms like ‘AIDS sufferers’, ‘AIDS orphans’, and ‘AIDS victims’ should be avoided at all costs.

*In a welcoming church there is no distinction between persons who are moral and immoral.* When scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery, Jesus reversed their attempt to ‘other’ her by asking them to reflect on who they are and what their relationship was to this woman. Jesus’ said, “Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her” (Jon 8:3-11). This passage reminds us that we are all sinners. Whoever claims to be perfect is a liar. There is, therefore, no point in condemning people as ‘sinners’. The issue of HIV&AIDS is more than just a moral issue. It is also an issue of justice and human rights.

*In a welcoming church there is a safe place for everyone.* In a welcoming church we have no reason to fear. Caught in the middle of a stormy sea, Jesus encouraged his disciples not to fear but to have faith. HIV&AIDS, a stormy sea, instils a great deal of



fear in all of us. God is renowned for exhorting God's own people not to fear (Genesis 15:1). Jesus too exhorted his disciples not to be governed by fear. He told the women who testified to his resurrection not to be afraid (Matthew 28:10). With Jesus, through the church, we have no reason to fear. In fact, the church should provide a safe place for its members when the very same church shouts words of condemnation upon them (Keshomshahara and Veddelar, 2005: 37).

Let us close this section with a telling example from Rev. Dr. Spiwo Xapile of JL Zwane Memorial Church, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Rev Dr Xapile has weaved preaching and liturgy into the most unique and effective method of responding to the HIV&AIDS context. He has adopted *a policy of not giving a sermon before a PLWHA speaks*. This, in his words, has transformed his church into a community that lives compassionately through its liturgy. PLWHA are more effective preachers than his own sermonic deliberations.

### Touching Story from Serowe Village

Below, we are going to read a story related to the liturgy and HIV&AIDS. The story took place in December 2002 in Serowe village in Botswana.

Stigma and discrimination became a great challenge for our church Community. Personally, I felt sorry for my people. There was so much fear within them, fear of God, and fear of who they were. I kept asking myself how my people could undertake the challenge of fighting against HIV&AIDS, while many of them believed that it was a God's punishment. Together with the liturgical Committee, we came up with an action-plan for the season of Advent. The event I am sharing with you took place in December, Advent 2002 in Serowe village, Botswana. The action-plan was to involve the whole congregation and to speak on the issue of stigma and discrimination in the church.

## ACTIVITY 11

1. *What can we learn from their action plan, particularly its involvement of the whole congregation?*
2. *How often do we, as ministers, involve our congregations in planning liturgy?*
3. *How often are we, as members of the congregation, involved in planning liturgy?*
4. *Do you think that congregations consider it necessary to be involved in planning liturgy in our churches? Support your answer with reasons.*



So, the first Sunday of Advent a task was assigned to a priest. I was supposed to tackle the issue of stigma and discrimination from God's point of view. My final conclusion stated that stigma and discrimination was a sin, a human attitude, which had to be considered as an act against God's will. The second Sunday, a workshop was given to the whole congregation. It focused on how to break the silence about AIDS in the family... and the community of the church. Everybody was involved and actively participated in those experiences. At the end of it, people were requested to speak, or rather to share about their personal experience with HIV&AIDS... Of course, we did not expect them to speak about

their own infection. The idea was to break the silence and speak openly, at least about relatives or friends who have been infected. Personally, I had lots of doubts whether anybody would have courage to speak openly in front of the whole congregation. It was on Wednesday, a week before... the third Sunday of Advent, I was coming back to the mission from my bicycle exercises. It was almost getting dark, a beautiful African evening. A young woman was waiting patiently for me at the mission. She welcomed me with a peaceful and sweet smile spread on her face. We sat outside. She began her story; step-by-step she made clear the point of her visit. 'Father I would like to talk about AIDS' her voice was shaking and uncertain. 'I want to do so on coming Sunday.' That is fine. I was not sure what kind of story she had in her mind... But her voice hesitated for a while, 'but I want to talk about' again moment of silence, *'I want to tell people that I am HIV/AIDS positive.'*

## ACTIVITY 12

*If you were the pastor of the young lady, how would you have responded to her? Give reasons for your answer.*

I remained quiet, not a single word came out of my mouth. She was the first person out of our community who broke the silence.... There was no sign of fear or shame in her, but rather confidence and peace. I looked at her with a great deal of appreciation and love. It was as if God's love became flesh. The mother of two children became a visible blessing and the grace of God among us, people of fear and confusion. 'I want to tell people' the smile disappeared from her face, 'I want to tell them that I am HIV/AIDS positive'.

I felt as if God's love was penetrating all parts of my body. 'He has arrived into the midst of the community of the church,' I thought. My eyes were closed; I was speechless, but full of God's love, joy and peace. It took a moment before I could respond to her. She told me a great deal of the story of her life; everything in details. She spoke about her children, the test they underwent and the results. Her smile was back on her face. Before she left we prayed together, we thanked God for his grace and love shown through her. The third Sunday of Advent arrived. Before we began the Holy Eucharist, I was determined to see her, as we had

agreed. I wanted confirmation. She came quite late, almost at the very last moment before the Mass began. She was still full of enthusiasm and willingness to carry out her dream of sharing.

After the Gospel, I made a short introduction to her performance. It was a sort of reminder.... When I was busy with the explanation, nobody in the church had any idea of what she was going to share. Surely, the speculations arose in people's minds, wondering whether she was going to speak about her friends or family member's infection or her own crises. I prayed over the congregation for the gift of the Holy Spirit. That same prayer was said over her by laying hands on her head.

She stood in front of at least 300 people. That is approximately the usual number of Sunday's attendance. The children of God looked at her with puzzled expressions on their faces; curiosity and fear seized their minds. They were still wondering whom she was going to talk about? At the very beginning, I could sense that her voice was uncertain, rather shaking, and yet very calm. The whole congregation was unusually quiet, with some expectation hanging in the air. She was more and more confident, as she progressed with her presentation.... *'I am HIV/AIDS positive'* - she glanced quickly at the congregation - *'I am sick and dying, as we know the consequences of this disease.'* It looked to me as if the whole universe stopped! Time did not count its seconds and minutes, and all [of] nature got suddenly quiet, no music from the wind and the birds. All creation smiled and gave praise to the Lord for such a grace in a manner of silence. Only the people of God did not know how to react to the grace of God, revealed in her openly made statement. For a second they looked at each other with puzzled expressions on their faces and then bowed their heads. They did not look at each other anymore. It seemed to me as if they had ran to read and feel their own reactions in their hearts. The human mind was speechless. It could not comprehend a single meaning out of that very moment of God's love.

'I am positive,' she repeated. 'Two years ago I went for a test. It happened that I am positive, dying of the HIV/AIDS virus.' She was making an enormous impression on the community. Her words touched every single heart in the church. Every word of her sharing was leading the people to the depth of their hearts...

*'I am sick and dying,' she spoke with a manner of love. 'And yet I am the beloved child of the Lord, my Lord Jesus Christ, who died for me. He died for all of us, and now I can feel his resurrection, the light and power of resurrection in my dying body. My spirit is fully alive.'* Maybe there were some people who wanted to stop her, even to accuse her of blasphemy, but fear was the rule of their hearts at that very moment. As a matter of fact, they could deprive her of many things but it was out of their capability to deprive her of the grace of being God's child.

The silence and... uncertainty that seized... [the] community reminded me of a story I heard some time ago. The story was about a catholic community that had some difficulties to accept one of its members living with HIV/AIDS. It made me scared, I was not sure how our community would finally react to her story of life. 'I am his beloved child,' she repeated, most probably trying to convince herself. 'And I will live with him with his care and love.' She carried on sharing for some more few minutes. When she finished it, we remained in silence,.... to

take the opportunity to meditate and to ‘consume’ God's grace that we just received.

## ACTIVITY 13

1. *Describe what the congregation meant in the young lady's story?*
2. *State the impact of breaking the silence on the young lady?*

We continued the Holy Eucharist with a feeling of gratitude and joy. One of the people sitting next to our young woman, who just spoke about her story of life, came up to the altar. They had a new idea of how to make the sharing of the sign of peace. ‘Do accordingly to the spirit of this moment,’ that was my only answer to her.

When the congregation was invited to share with each other the sign of peace, she walked up to the altar and stood in front of the whole community. It was an amazing view and a deep experience of what was taking place in the church. Almost everybody, men as well, walked to her. One by one they gave her a hug and kissed her; by such a manner, they shared the sign of peace with her. Tears filled almost everybody's eyes. God literally touched each heart of his children, people of the church. It was an experience that went beyond the borders of our imagination. It took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent. We still had a few days to go before entering the celebrations of Christmas. On that very Sunday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, we experienced the birth of the only Son of God, Jesus Christ.

The celebration of Christmas had begun; the joy of welcoming the Son of God overwhelmed our hearts. At that time, God chose a new place for the birth of his Son. It was not a stable for animals. It was the dying body of a young woman, the mother of two children. Her body became the precious place of God's Son's birth in the community of Serowe church. The history repeated its self, his place of birth was beyond human imagination. Surely, God could have chosen something more luxurious than the dying body of a young woman; dying of HIV/AIDS a very... unpopular...

People were not keen on approaching that body. There was a stigma; there was discrimination... Therefore, many of them missed... the opportunity of paying a visit to a new borne baby Jesus. That Sunday, in a manner of reverence, we bow our heads paying our homage to the only Son of God, Jesus Christ born in the midst of our community. She spoke, she loved, she smiled and she was there, alive. We were blessed with such a touch of God's love. God chose again something that was small and unworthy in people's eyes as his precious place of adoration and love. After the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, I walked straight to my bedroom. I closed the door and went to my knees, giving thanks to God for such a blessing and grace granted upon all of us. My fear about the capability of love in the community of the church vanished for good. I had

already experienced the... potential of love existing in the heart of the community of the church... Now I know, out of my own experience that any community of God, the church, is capable of loving and being loved because of God's love in them. Nowadays, our young woman, the mother of two children, has become a sign of God's presence among us. She is a living, walking Tabernacle of God's presence among us. God made his home in her and become flesh!! (Prud, J. 'God's touch of love' [www.svdbotswana.com/botart.htm](http://www.svdbotswana.com/botart.htm)).

## ACTIVITY 14

- 1. How did the above story inspire you? Explain how the story illustrates a liturgical event that deals with the context of the audience in the presence of Christ.*
- 2. Write a plan to motivate your congregation or your minister to draw an action plan around HIV&AIDS and a liturgical season.*

### SUMMARY

In this unit, we have learned what liturgy is. We have also learnt how liturgy and preaching relate. Preaching has an important role to play in worship. It informs liturgy and liturgy shapes the sermon. The word, which is the core of preaching, has different functions within a liturgical celebration. It creates worship, bonds us together, recalls the faithfulness of God and provides reason why we have to worship. The preached word has to have a healing effect. Our churches have to be welcoming, places of solace and refuge. Preaching and liturgy, in such churches, should be expressions of a welcoming church. We have drawn examples from Rev Dr. Xapile's church and Serowe church to show how much we can achieve by imaginatively relating liturgy to our daily lives. The story from Serowe illustrated for us how a combination of liturgy and sermon makes the presence of Christ alive for the audience.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Define liturgy in your own words.
2. In what way can preaching inform our liturgy?
3. Discuss ways in which liturgy can shape our preaching?
4. Write to your pastor and inform him/her of how our daily problems can inform liturgical patterns and preaching.
5. Describe the features of a welcoming church.
6. 'Us and them' or 'othering' is irreconcilable with the character of the Church. Explain the meaning of this statement.
7. In what way did the lady at Serowe break the silence and liberate the congregation from HIV&AIDS stigma?



### FURTHER READING

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### GLOSSARY

- Advent:** Christian season which includes the four Sundays preceding Christmas.
- Easter:** The Christian feast recalling Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

<b>Eucharist:</b>	The principal act of worship on Sunday or other feasts. In this sense, it is essentially synonymous with Mass. It can also refer to the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus.
<b>Liturgical pattern:</b>	Arrangements of various elements that make up a liturgical celebration.
<b>Liturgy:</b>	A list of related activities that are done by the assembly of believers at every public church service for the purposes of glorifying God. It is often used interchangeably with worship.
<b>Pentecost:</b>	The Christian feast celebrating the Holy Spirit's descent upon the disciples.
<b>Sermon:</b>	Address of a religious nature, usually delivered during a church service. It is often used interchangeably with preaching or homily.
<b>Synagogue:</b>	Jewish place of worship.

# UNIT 4

## FORMS OF PREACHING

### OVERVIEW

In unit 3 we have seen how preaching and liturgy should relate. In this unit we are going to look into different forms of preaching and how these forms can best serve preachers in responding to different life situations, especially HIV&AIDS. The Bible is the source for different types of preaching. Our cultures also have different ways in which messages are communicated. These resources can be used to enhance our preaching as preaching, itself, is communication. Enculturated forms are those that merge biblical and African cultural forms of communication. The strength of these forms, especially the latter, is shown in how biblical stories can be brought to bear, in the most effective manner, on our current life situations.

### OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✂ Identify different forms of preaching
- ✂ Analyse the Old and New Testament's forms of preaching
- ✂ Describe storytelling as a powerful tool in preaching
- ✂ Suggest ways of merging biblical stories and African stories to address the issue of HIV&AIDS

### TOPICS

- ✂ Forms of Preaching
- ✂ Biblical forms of Preaching
  - Preaching in the Old Testament
  - Preaching in the New Testament
- ✂ Cultural forms of Preaching
  - Preaching as Participatory
  - Storytelling
  - Storytelling and Preaching
- ✂ Enculturated forms of Preaching

## ACTIVITY 1

1. *List forms or styles of preaching that you are aware of from your experience of preaching or listening to preachers.*
2. *Make a list of 5 people who do preaching in the New Testament and give biblical references.*
3. *What word is used for preaching in your local language? What does it mean?*

### FORMS OF PREACHING

What is a form? A form is a mode or shape in which something exists or manifests itself. When we talk about forms of preaching, we are talking about the shapes in which preaching can manifest itself. In reading the Bible, we come across a variety of forms of preaching. Other forms could be crafted or adopted from our own cultural context. I wish to outline and discuss three forms of preaching: biblical, cultural and enculturated preaching.

### BIBLICAL FORMS OF PREACHING

Though we cannot say that all speeches in the Old Testament and/or New Testament are sermons, in the modern sense of the word, there are proclamations or preaching/s done by prophets, such as John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul, which are a form of sermonizing. We are going to examine some examples of preaching in the Bible to see what can be learned from them. In fact, there are a variety of forms of preaching in the Bible, as we shall see. These forms, varied as they may be, can inform our manner of preaching. Let us start with some examples from the Old Testament, especially the prophets.

#### Old Testament

Let us look at a few cases of preaching from the prophets. To start with, Isaiah's language is forthright and direct. It is a manner of preaching that does not mince words. In Isaiah 1:2-4 he says, "Listen, you heavens; earth, attend, for Yahweh is speaking, 'I have reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; Israel does not know,

my people do not understand.’” **Jeremiah** uses a varied style. He sometimes talks in poetic style using marital images, such as in 2:1-3:1-5. Both are given a task to reprimand Israel for its unfaithfulness to God but they achieve this with different styles and tones. **Ezekiel** is a visionary. He communicates God’s word as if it were a vision. **Hosea**’s preaching, modelled around his life, symbolizes God’s relationship with Israel. Hosea is thus called to love an unfaithful wife. The metaphor symbolises Yahweh’s unfailing love for Israel, even if they are disloyal to God. **Amos** is the fiery furnace that represents a roaring Yahweh. He reminds the people of their unending infidelity for which God is not prepared to relent.

## ACTIVITY 2

1. *Explain the relevance of Amos’ preaching style in the context of HIV&AIDS.*
2. *State what we can learn about the importance of context, nature of the problem and the personality of the preacher from the above prophets.*

These few examples indicate how varied the styles of preaching in the Old Testament are; preaching styles depend on, the personality, the nature of the problem and/or the audience. The personality of all these prophets is obviously different. However, the audience is similar. In all cases, the audience is Israel in different moments of its relationship with Yahweh. While these ways of talking may have been appropriate at that time, we do not wish to imply that they could be adopted as they are today. The situation has changed and problems may be more complex than they used to be. Literal blanket application of these forms may be more harmful than useful. The Old Testament, especially the prophets, show us how personality, conviction and context can help shape the portrayal of the proclamation.

### New Testament

The New Testament features John the Baptist and Jesus. In the manner that resembles some of the Old Testament personalities, John preaches repentance as something that needs to be achieved here and now or else.... (Matthew 3:3; Luke3:7). In Luke 3:7 he says, “Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution...”

Similarly, an episode between John and Herod reveals John's character. There was a sting in his words.

### ACTIVITY 3

1. *Is John the Baptist's manner of preaching to the spiritual and political leaders of his time relevant to the spiritual and political leaders of today? Show how.*
2. *In a paragraph, write what you think John the Baptist would say to the spiritual and political leaders of today.*

Jesus' way of preaching cannot be reduced to one style. The effectiveness of his message depended on his use of contextually and culturally familiar images, metaphors and parables. His persuaded listeners and followers said, "Nobody ever spoke like this Man." (Matthew 7:28). His most preferred manner of preaching was in parables. Through the parables he was able to speak to minds and hearts (Du Preez, 2000:6). One of the most outstanding sermons of Jesus is found in what is famously known as, 'The Sermon on the Mount'. It is found in Matthew chapter 5-7. Jesus apparently sat on the mountain and began to teach his disciples and the crowds that followed him. The sermon contains some of the most beloved Christian sayings, such as the beatitudes (5:1-11), the Lord's prayer (6: 7-14) and such saying as "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world" (5:13-14). It was at the end of this sermon that the "crowds were astounded, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as scribes" (7:28). Jesus' sermons were sometimes harsh and prophetic, especially when he addressed powerful public leaders of his time and when he saw them as corrupt and oppressive. One such sermon is found in Matthew 23:1-39. Rarely, however, did Jesus speak harshly to the least powerful members of society. In fact, Jesus supposedly kept company with tax collectors and sex workers in his society (Luke 7:36-50, 18:9-14, 19:1-10). When other teachers complained, Jesus stated, "Truly, I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God before you" (21:31). Perhaps, this marks the major difference between our preachers today and that of Jesus: Our preachers have hard and harsh words for the poor, thieves, sex workers, etc, without focusing their attention on the

powerful and oppressive leaders and structures of our world which make many poor people choose such professions as sex work.

Other than speaking in parables, Jesus challenged the discriminating, stigmatising and disabling circumstances in which people found themselves. The typical examples are the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11) and that of the lepers (Lk. 17:11-17).

## ACTIVITY 4

1. *If Jesus were to preach in this era of HIV&AIDS, state what he would say about PLWHA and the religious and political leadership and the people who discriminate and stigmatise PLWHA?*
2. *Write a paragraph on what we can learn from Jesus' treatment of lepers in Luke 17:11-17 in the era of HIV&AIDS.*

In John 8:2-11, Jesus not only counselled the woman and called her to complete transformation, he also challenged the manipulation of the law which oppressed the vulnerable. In Luke 17:11-17, Jesus identified with the situation of the lepers. Over and above this, his intervention restored the lepers' lost dignity and reversed the degrading and humiliating situation of being barred from the human community. Jesus' preaching and teaching not only dealt with the symptoms, he dealt with the root of the problem.

Paul is portrayed as an apostle that founded churches through his preaching. Much of the content that is found in his letters is a response to the pressing issues that confronted his churches. In his first letter to the Corinthians (1: 10), Paul says, "I appeal to you, brothers, through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you all profess the same doctrine and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same knowledge. For it has been reported to me about you....." His response starts from the context of the church which lived the experience of the dynamic word he preached to them. In light of new experiences, the word is challenged and is relived differently. Paul's preaching is contextual; in his preaching the content is determined by the context within which the word is preached.

## CULTURAL FORMS OF PREACHING

One thing that we learn from Jesus' manner of preaching, which reached the hearts and minds of people, is that it was culturally sensitive and germane. The parables were packed with illustrations and images from his culture and the culture of his listeners (Luke 13:6-9; 18-19; 20:9-19). The fig trees were indigenous to Palestine. Paul's style of preaching was adapted to the nature of the group he was preaching to (Acts 17:1-9; 22-34). To Jews, Greeks, Romans or the mixture, he would adapt accordingly. It is in this sense that he became all things to all humans (I Corinthians 9:22). This suggests that preaching that takes the culture of the people seriously is likely to have a larger impact than that which does not.

### ACTIVITY 5

- 1. Analyse Luke 20: 9-19 and identify the images from Jesus' culture and that of his listeners.*
- 2. Give examples of how you or your pastor can use images from your own culture in preaching. State the effect of culturally-informed preaching.*

The homiletics that was taught in many African Bible colleges and seminaries, that produced the majority of present church leaders, did not take the culture of Africa seriously. It did not, therefore, appreciate the depth of the mode of communication which is essentially cultural. It did not appreciate that words derive their meaning from people's underlying cultural assumptions, values and perceptions. It did not appreciate that content should be shaped with context in mind (Du Preez, 2000:10). We are going to look at some of the most common techniques that could be useful for preaching in an African context. Kurewa (2000:139-144) identifies participation and storytelling as some of the characteristics of African preaching. In the following section, I will look more closely at these two methods of communication to understand their benefits for Africa, especially in the context of HIV&AIDS.



## ACTIVITY 5

1. Go to a nearby Bible College or Seminary. Find out how many African values are incorporated into their teaching of preaching or homiletics.
2. Write to the chief pastor or rector of the college, showing him/her the importance of incorporating African values in their teaching of preaching.

### Preaching as Participatory

In unit 2, we saw that preaching is in essence a communication. Communication involves the one who communicates and the one to whom the message is communicated and the message that is communicated. For communication to take place there has to be an interplay between the speaker, the message and the listener. We have seen a number of speakers who speak because they have to speak. We have also heard a number of preachers who just preach because they have to preach. They preach whether people hear, understand or are offended; they just preach. For this type of speaking or preaching, participation or involvement of the people is not essential. We have seen in unit 2 that in Botswana people perceived preaching as *go rera* (to consult). Consultation involves seeking information or counsel from somebody. This implies participation of all parties involved in the process of communication. *Go rera* is therefore a communally informed philosophy of preaching. Historically, it captures the values of the Setswana cultures that involve participatory communication in matters of the community. The Batswana believe that in public and communal discussions *mmaulabe u bua la gagwe* (every opinion must be given a hearing). This is the philosophy contained in the use of the Setswana word, *go rera*, for preaching. Preaching as *go rera* means that the preacher does not come to tell a silent audience what they need to hear; rather, the preacher comes to facilitate a discussion and dialogue with and among those who are congregated-- *go rera*. Participation of the community for the Batswana appears to be essential to preaching. Whether or not this Setswana philosophy of delivering and generating a public message prevailed over the western way of preaching is another matter. In fact, the practice of *go rera* is maintained in African Independent Churches (AICs) where community and participatory preaching is more central than in the western founded

churches (Dube, 2000: 184-195). In her 1994 research on AICs' interpretations of the Bible, Dube wrote,

To begin with communal interpretation, it must be noted that it in most AICs, preaching is not the exclusive right of one individual during a service. Once the text of the day has been read, all are free to stand up and expound on the text in their own understanding. This communal form of interpretation is inclusive and allows the young and old, women and men to be heard in the church, if they so wish. Here communal interpretation becomes a ritual of bonding, as all members participate. Communal interpretation is supplemented with participatory interpretation through the use of songs. As a preacher is expounding on the passage, listeners contribute to the interpretation by occasionally interrupting with a song that expounds on the theme of the passage according to the way listeners understand the interpreter. Conversely the interpreter herself/himself can pause and begin a song that expresses the meaning of the passage (2000:191).

Clearly, one method of preaching that is deeply rooted in Africa is participatory preaching or dialogic preaching. As the above research attests, in a participatory form of preaching people are engaged in the preaching. Thus, the sermon becomes the product of both the preacher and those to whom the word is communicated. In this form of preaching, the listener becomes a partner in the preaching process. This preaching encounter cannot be reduced to hearing, it involves the whole person. The common way of nurturing participatory preaching is by interacting with the congregation through music, questions or drama. It is what Phillips (2003:3) refers to as a contagious conviction, named 'call and response' which connects both the preacher and the people. People participate in different ways to affirm the presence of God, through the word, that uplifts, heals and redeems. *Music*, as the above research attests, is used quite frequently in African Indigenous Churches to punctuate sermons, reflecting the point that the preacher is making.

## ACTIVITY 6

1. *How often is participatory preaching used in your church? If it is not used, what are the reasons? If it is used, what are the results as compared to other styles of preaching?*
2. *From the context of your specific culture, which form of participatory preaching would work better? Give reasons for your answer.*

In some of the more liberal and smaller mainline congregations, pastors have even gone to the extent of reading the text together with the people and asking (with questions supplied to guide them) the people to break into groups and explain what they think the message of the text is in their life situation. Alternatively, people could be asked *questions* during the course of delivering a homily. *Drama and role play* have also been used in preaching and religious education. They are most effective because they give the gospel stories a human face.

These approaches have helped the congregation to own up to the word and to feel that they too can participate in re-living God's word, not only by listening but by listening, sharing and participating in interpretation. Stigma, discrimination and injustices around HIV&AIDS can be and have been effectively challenged through drama, role play and music. When we were in Zambia for a visit we attended a service of the Uniting Church of Zambia where a group of young people, on a Sunday dedicated to HIV&AIDS, dramatized the struggles and the hopes of eventually winning the battle against HIV&AIDS. Though I can hardly remember the sermon, that skit is still vivid in my mind, even after five months. This illustrates the effectiveness of drama in communication.

### Storytelling

In various traditions and cultures, stories have played and continue to play an important role in shaping people's destiny at an individual and communitarian level. We are born in stories; thus, stories provide meaning to our lives. The stories that we tell give meaning to our lives (De la Porte 2003: 124). Stories, when used and told well, have the ability to talk to the whole person. Stories are good because they involve the listeners. They can become the listener's stories (Killinger, 1996: 35). In

that way, a story or stories are able to speak to deep needs or conditions in people's lives. In Africa, especially where oral literature abounds, stories play a significant role in teaching, healing, imparting moral education and transmitting values and traditions from one generation the next. How are storytelling and preaching related?

### Storytelling and Preaching

Storytelling in preaching is not a new thing. It has always been part of communicating God's word. Lerotholi (2004: 3) observes that there has been paradigm shift in how it is used. The stories' purpose was to illustrate an intellectual point. Stories bring to the forefront complexities and problems that underlie people's lives. Hence, the preacher who listens to people's stories has access to treasures that would otherwise not be accessible. Having access to such stories helps people identify with the story of Christian faith. Every person has a story to tell, a sad or a joyful story. Indeed, every person has a voice that enables him/her to penetrate even the most pervasive systems of silencing and oppression. Even the most stubborn hearts cannot resist the power of the voice that tells a real story (M.D. Turner & M.L.Hudson, 1999: 83). It is through these sad or joyful stories that we can talk to human situations in a manner best adapted to them. The story of the widow whose only son had died (Luke 7:13) not only Jesus was moved to compassion but also engaged those who were watching. The story of the Good Samaritan, recounted by Jesus in response to a simple question put to him by the lawyer, was more effective and engaging than any well prepared direct response. The story of the lost son in Luke 15:11-32 is also informative and effective. The story of his lost son moved the father to compassion. It moves us also as it relates experiences that confront us daily. It challenges us on the Christian nature of the choices that we feel we are obliged to take. We sometimes feel we are doing God's duty when we disown our children when they have, in our opinion, brought shame upon us. The story, however, reminds us that God never did so; he does not disown any of us, even when we deserve it. A story that is well recounted even has the ability to engage people who may read the story two thousand years down the line. We still marvel at the effectiveness of these stories.

## ACTIVITY 7

1. *Apply the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) to the situation of HIV&AIDS in your community.*
2. *How often are stories used for preaching purposes in your church? Show how effective they are as compared to other forms?*

In Module 7, *A Theology of Compassion in the HIV&AIDS Context*, Dube has punctuated her modules with stories or voices of PLWHA. This manner of communicating encourages the reader to identify with and do something about the stories of PLWHA. She further quotes a creative way which Rev. Dr. Spiwo Xapile of JL Zwane Memorial Church, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa challenges his congregation to acts of compassion. In her words, Rev. Xapile has adopted a policy of no preaching before a PLWHA speaks. The story of a PLWHA preaches more effectively than any sermon that follows the traditional structure of introduction, text, exposition, application and conclusion.

### ENCULTURATED FORMS OF PREACHING

Lerotholi advocates for what he calls enculturated forms of preaching (2004). This form of preaching reads biblical stories in parallel with oral African stories. This manner of doing theology or preaching is also supported by Healey (1996: 326), who uses adapted gospel stories to challenge local situations. For example, the parable of the Good Samaritan is told as the 'Good Maasai'. It speaks to the longstanding animosity between the Kuria and the Maasai ethnic groups. This is how the adapted story goes:

A Kuria man was once on a safari from Remagwe down to Bunchari and was attacked by local thieves. They beat and robbed him, leaving him half dead. Now the chairperson of the local village council happened to be travelling down the same road. But when he saw the injured man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, the local church catechist came to the place, saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Maasai traveller who came by on his bicycle was moved with compassion when he saw the injured man. He went up to him and put local herbal medicine on his wounds and gently bandaged them. Then he lifted him onto his bicycle, took him to a nearby

private, bedded dispensary and looked after him. The next day he took out 8,100 Tanzanian shillings (approximately \$15, which is equivalent of a month's minimum wage in Tanzania's 1995 economy), handed the money to the medical assistant and said: 'Look after him and on my way back I will pay the extra costs that you have incurred.' (Healey, 1996: 326-327).

Another example of an enculturated story was written by Sister Kay Lawlor. It was derived from her experience of working as an HIV&AIDS pastoral counsellor in Kitovu Hospital in Uganda. She has revisited the 'stations of the cross', transforming them into 'AIDS way of the cross', relating them to themes of sickness, suffering and healing. An example of the first station is as follows:

*Opening prayer:* 'We adore you, O Christ, as you carry your cross along dusty roads of Masaka, Uganda. We make the way of the cross in the homes and at the bedsides of those with AIDS. We bless you because through this suffering you have redeemed the world.'

*1<sup>st</sup> Station:* 'Jesus is stripped of his Garments.' They put her out of the house and kept her clothes saying they wouldn't fit her wasted body. They told her to go to her grandmother's to die. Once there, she was again rejected – stripped of all, even her right to belong. Juliet was returned to the hospital like an unwanted commodity (Healey, 1996: 327).

## ACTIVITY 8

*Choose one gospel story. Adapt it to the local situation (as Healey has done above) to challenge an issue around HIV&AIDS common in your own community or church.*

The dramatisation of these enculturated Christian episodes brings us face to face with the reality of discriminating, stigmatising and human rights experiences that the majority of PLWHA and the affected have to go through. It addresses these experiences in a manner that a traditional sermon would not achieve.

## SUMMARY

In this unit, we have studied different forms of preaching. We have seen that the Bible portrays different personalities using different styles of preaching. The prophets in the Old Testament spoke in different ways at different moments in the Israelite's history. In the New Testament, John the Baptist created his own style of preaching. Jesus used different styles, all of which were adapted to his local situation. It was his manner of preaching which led people to say that Jesus taught like one who has authority. His teaching made a good impression on people. Paul's manner of preaching also took the nature and the culture of the audience into consideration. To Jews, he was a Jew and to Greeks he was a Greek. We also saw that preaching, as we understand it, can borrow from cultural modes of communication, such as storytelling and dialogue. Another form of preaching is the enculturated form of preaching which adapts gospel or biblical stories to local situations in an attempt to make them real and relevant. Used well, these forms of preaching can help bring people closer to real life problems that need to be challenged.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Outline three forms of preaching and discuss one of them, illustrating it through examples.
2. Read the book of Ezekiel and state what kind of a preacher he was.
3. Jesus used different modes of preaching. Which ones would be more appealing in your local situation and why?
4. What is participatory preaching?
5. Discuss different expressions of participatory preaching.
6. What do we mean by enculturated forms of preaching?
7. Think of an oral story from your own culture and use it to communicate a Christian message.



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# UNIT 5

## FEATURES OF PREACHING IN AFRICA

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 5! In this unit, we are going to look at the features that should be included in preaching adapted to Africa. Due to its unique history, Africa deserves a preaching style that is adapted to its nature. In light of this unique history, we propose a liberative, practical and celebrative preaching. Liberative preaching is able to holistically address the problem of HIV&AIDS. It not only focuses on the consequences but also on the root cause of the problem. Practical preaching is not satisfied with interpretation alone. It goes further by putting into concrete action the propositions found in the interpretation. We will also discuss preaching as celebrative, in line with the African view of celebrating life in its different moments.

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✂ Describe the unique history of Africa
- ✂ Identify the three important features of preaching in Africa
- ✂ Analyse the HIV&AIDS issues from which we need to be liberated
- ✂ Transform our unique situation by practical and concrete actions of love
- ✂ Inspire our congregation to appreciate preaching as a celebration

## TOPICS

- ⌘ Features of Preaching in Africa
- ⌘ Preaching as Liberative
  - Dynamic of Liberative Preaching
- ⌘ Preaching as Practical
  - Stories of Alienation
    - The Prodigal Son
    - The Discarded Wife
- ⌘ Preaching as Celebrative

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Reading, Glossary

## FEATURES OF PREACHING IN AFRICA

Africa, like any other continent, is blessed with beautiful hills, mountains, rivers, deserts, trees, seas, caves and valleys. Africa enjoyed its riches and the immaculate nature of its sceneries. There were rains and the land produced enough for its own peoples. Colonization deeply affected the original social, political, and economic structures in Africa. The struggle for political liberation of Africa has been a very long and arduous journey. Just when we were preparing to celebrate our independence and liberation, another oppressor struck, this time in the form of HIV&AIDS. We are back in the battlefield to fight for our dear lives (Dube 2003: 84-85). Because of its unique history, Africa has to devise a preaching method that will become a survival instrument designed to identify and restore hope to a people whose history is characterised by pain and despair. Like Phillips (2001), I suggest that this preaching has to be liberative, practical, and celebrative.

### ACTIVITY 1

*In a paragraph, write down the consequences of some of the painful experiences that your country had to go through as a result of colonialism.*

## PREACHING AS LIBERATIVE

The term liberation, as understood here, means *the action or process that frees those who have been traditionally powerless in society and voiceless in the church* (Gonzalez & Gonzalez, 1980:11). As a result of powerlessness and voicelessness, they are not able to negotiate their freedom and liberation from the clutches of the powerful. HIV&AIDS has exposed the social injustices, economic imbalances, political ineptitude, religious and cultural insensitivities that characterise our own societies. Because all of these issues fuel the spread of HIV&AIDS, they have to be identified, labelled as an enemy and fought with all we have. It is in this sense that a multi-sectoral approach has been identified as the best strategy in the struggle against the epidemic. Preaching is one instrument that has been used and that can still be used to liberate us from oppression by HIV&AIDS and the factors that contribute toward it. Before we talk about preaching as liberative, we need to look into what the concept of liberation in preaching entails. This we call the dynamics of liberative preaching.

### ACTIVITY 2

1. *Write down groups which, in your opinion, are powerless in your society. Who makes them powerless? How can the church help?*
2. *Write down groups or individuals which are voiceless in your church. What or who makes them powerless? What can be done to restore their voice?*

### Dynamics of Liberative Preaching

Liberation is a process that presupposes a relationship of power, gender, race, ethnicity, religion and politics. When somebody is oppressed or denied freedom, there is always an issue of power that is not shared equally; there is always the issue of gender, class, race, ethnicity religion or politics being used to justify the reason for oppressing another. In the Bible, David has Uriah killed and marries Bathsheba. He was using his power to oppress who were powerless. David abuses his power to oppress the powerless. When in USA and in South Africa blacks were denied equal rights compared to their white counterparts, it was because they belonged to a

different racial group. In Europe, when Christians burnt dissenters on stakes they thought they were doing God's job. However, they were discriminative on the basis of religion. When members from opposition parties are denied services, employment and educational opportunities by ruling party, this is oppression. When women are denied their human rights on the basis of their gender this is oppression.

### ACTIVITY 3

1. *In a paragraph, explain gender roles in your community that are oppressive to women.*
2. *In a paragraph, discuss the relationship of power in your church and society that oppresses others.*

Therefore, when a white preacher in the USA or in apartheid South Africa said to a black congregation. 'be content with what you have. Do not be greedy for greed is a sin,' a radically different message was being communicated. The message of a woman who preaches to a congregation that is male dominated would be shaped by the relations of power and gender in that community. The manner in which that community treats women will be reflected in the reception of the message. In the act of preaching, therefore, the social and political situation of the speaker and listener are part of the context that gives meaning to the words that are spoken (Gonzalez & Gonzalez, 1980:95).

In situations where these relations of power are not well balanced, there is bound to be alienation, anxiety, fear, uncertainty, mistrust, anger, depression and suffering. This was the experience of the Israelites in Egypt. Their need to worship God was limited by the conditions of slavery. They cried out for help, recognition and liberation (Exodus 2:23-25). God heard their cry and took notice.

## ACTIVITY 4

*We often use the Bible to support our own selfish ends. Write down two texts that are used by one group to oppress another, be it on the basis of gender, race, health, or ethnicity.*

PLWHA and those affected by HIV&AIDS experience more or less the psychosocial deprivation experienced by the Israelites in Egypt. Their lives were characterised by fear, alienation, oppression, suffering, uncertainty and depression. Trying to counsel them out of this situation without first dealing with their socio-political situation would be counterproductive. Their need to worship God was dependent upon their liberation from the socio-political situation which oppressed them. It was useless to condemn the Israelites for not worshipping God when the situation was not conducive to worship. We always condemn PLWHA as sinners when the socio-political situation, social injustice, poverty, economic oppression and gender inequality are to blame. It is important, therefore, that our preaching address the context of structural oppression.

For our preaching to be liberative in situations of HIV&AIDS, it has to emphasise the need to fight oppressive socio-political structures, not those oppressed by the unjust structures and the powerful members of the society. The voices of the prophets, such as Amos, Hosea and Habakkuk, in denouncing injustice and corruption are so firm that they can only be emulated. Martin Luther King Jr., Bishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Hurley, Itumeleng Mosala and others stand out as examples of preachers who never wavered in denouncing the evils of racial discrimination. Poverty and desperation encourage many poor people to engage in risky behaviour. We need to have preachers who can preach with the same fervour and passion in denouncing poverty as an abominable assault on human dignity (Maluleke, 2004: 223). We need to preach not only to others but to ourselves to discourage tolerance of structural injustice in our countries; for example, for failing to pay just wages to church workers and for failing to take a prophetic role against our corrupt national governments (P. Dibeela, 2004: 220). We need to own up to the gender injustices that we have promoted by commission and by omission. Jesus, especially in the gospel of Luke, accords equal treatment to both male and females. Often times we disregard

this insight because of our desire to maintain the status quo, which we are happy about (C. Dibeela, 2004: 227).

## ACTIVITY 6

*List some two prominent Christian figures in your region, country or locality who are remembered for their heroic actions in fighting oppression and unjust structures.*

### PREACHING AS PRACTICAL

What do we mean when we say that preaching is practical? We mean that preaching is oriented towards action. Preaching, by necessity, has to move people to action. Preaching that does not move people to action is a ‘Lord, Lord’ type of preaching. It is not the type of preaching that moves people to do the will of the father.

Interpretation is not the main objective of reading the Bible. The main objective is to understand in view of doing something. We acknowledge the importance of interpretation. But interpretation without action remains just that. The question is, “what meaning does the gospel shed on the human condition of suffering through a particular text to be preached” (Phillips 2001: 3). Preaching that does not move people to action lacks in an essential quality. When people discriminate against each other because of their HIV status, when widows are chased out of their houses because their husbands are now dead, when children are discriminated and stigmatised against in schools because they are HIV positive this calls for a preaching that moves people into concrete action of love and compassion. Preaching must address the relationship between the word and life (theory and practice). This is what we mean when we say that the Bible, which is God’s word, is practical.

## ACTIVITY 7

*Imagine that five women in your local church have been chased away by their families because they are HIV positive. Think of a concrete action/s that could be done.*

The method adopted by Dube in *AfricaPraying* is an attempt to show how the word finds fulfilment in action. She proposes a seven step method: 1) What can we learn from the text? 2) What do we confess? 3) What can we be thankful for? 4) What can we pray for? 5) What can we feel? 6) What can we be? 7) What can we do? In her words, the structure of these sermon guidelines seeks to assist the preacher in delivering a sermon that will enable the audience to translate the ideals of its Christian faith into liberating and healing action (2003:vii-viii). Indeed, Jesus' way of preaching linked theory and practice (action). After responding to a lawyer with a story about neighbourliness (Luke, 10: 29-37), Jesus committed him to action in this words, "go and do (action) the same" (v.37). Being a neighbour is not something that can be explained in words, it is something that can only be demonstrated through action.

### Stories of Alienation

We are going to take two stories that have a common feature of alienation which is quite common in HIV&AIDS contexts. Our interest in these stories is that they require action and not mere words. The first such story is the biblical story of the Prodigal Son. The second story we shall call the story of the discarded wife.

### Story of the Prodigal Son

One biblical story that is very practical, especially in contexts of HIV&AIDS, is that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). It is a story about alienation, so common in situations of HIV&AIDS. The three characters in the story, the father, the younger son and the elder son, are alienated one from the other as a result of what appears to have been a legitimate demand made by the younger son. The younger son comes back miserable and destitute. "If we were to modernize this story, the younger son could have come back, not only destitute and hungry, but also HIV positive" (Maluleke 2004: 142). The attitude of the elder son reflects real experiences of PLWHA.

## ACTIVITY 8

1. *Read the story of the Prodigal son very closely. List ways in which the story reflects experiences of PLWHA.*
2. *What can we learn from the attitude of the father?*

### The Story of a Discarded Woman

The following story is quoted by Dube in Module 7, *A Theology of Compassion of Compassion in the HIV&AIDS Era*:

They took my blood for an HIV test without my consent. After I delivered, they tested the child too. Then the doctor just told me that they had taken our blood and the results for both of us were positive. When I broke the news to my husband, he left me that very same night, after calling me names .... I confided my HIV status to my sister, a nurse. Because of stigmatization and discrimination, she told me not to tell anyone else. I kept quiet but felt as if everybody knew that I was HIV positive (SAFAIDS & WHO 1995:24).

## ACTIVITY 9

1. *What is your reaction to the manner in which the woman was treated by the hospital personnel?*
2. *Write down your opinion about her sister's remark.*

The above story reflects the alienation between the wife and husband and the alienation between PLWHA and their community because of stigma discrimination and imposed silence. Many people have gone through the same experience; they have not only lost human friendship, they have been made to feel that they do not even deserve God's friendship. It is against such alienation, which is totally uncalled for, that we have to prophetically preach and practice and ask people to do the same.



## PREACHING AS CELEBRATIVE

In Africa life is not described, defined or explained, it is lived. Religion is not only life. Producing it is life. This corresponds to the following features of African culture:

- Community oriented
- Relationally oriented
- Religion and life are inseparable
- Cycles of life are for celebrating

For Africans everything has to be seen in light of both the ethnic group and the community of both the living and the living dead. This is the community without which I cannot be defined. Any celebration that we do is a reflection of this important relationship. The separation between the sacred and the profane is out of place in Africa. We pray as we play and we play and we pray. Religion is life as much as life is religion. Mathema (1999: 182), quoting John Mbiti, referred to Africans as notoriously religious. There is therefore nothing outside religion because religion is life. In Africa, life is celebrated. We celebrate every stage of life from birth to death. Even the most painful human experiences are celebrated, they are danced away and they are ritualised.

Moreover, preaching is not just an isolated event in worship. It is an essential part of the process of celebrating life which is expressed through life cycles. There is birth, there is incorporation into family, there is circumcision, there is marriage, there are new children born, there is death. All these events are celebrated in ritual and word. Preaching in Africa has to take this attention to detail into consideration if it is to be relevant. Western forms of preaching do not appreciate this emotional detail. Dancing and ululating have been condemned by the missionary and described by words such as 'orgy' and 'erotic'.

This reminds me of an experience of preaching in Italy. I had always thought that relating an amusing story would make people appreciate and remember what was talked about in church. To my disappointment, nobody was amused and nobody seemed to remember what I said. Why? I only learned afterwards that I should have

been direct, logical and use rational explanations. Just as celebration informs preaching, preaching has to be an expression of a life that is celebrated.

Preaching in the African context is not an interruption of life throughout the week. It is a climax of religious activity, which is life. African preaching has to reflect all these cycles of life which are celebrated. Normally, what is celebrated is hardly forgotten. A sermon that is related and connected to celebration cannot be easily forgotten.

## ACTIVITY 10

*Religion is life as much as life is religion. Show how this is or is not the case in your own culture.*

This marriage between preaching and celebration is highlighted in the structure of *AfricaPraying*. It underlines preaching as an essential part of worship which consists of a cycle of events, such as The birth of a new children, celebrating our birthdays, marriages, the celebration of life as a gift from God. We commit ourselves to valuing and protecting it. We thank and acknowledge in gratitude those who care for one's wellbeing ---parents, friends, God and national leaders (Dube 2004: 5). But when we die, we know through faith that there is life beyond death and that the experience of resurrection is alive in our communities today. There are experiences of people who do everything to 'stay alive', who embrace people living with AIDS and who devote their life to stopping the spread of AIDS (P. Dibeela 2004: 36). Through these experiences life is brought to those who are spiritually dead and life is celebrated as individuals, communities, institutions and groups minister to each other in the most trying of times, time of HIV&AIDS.

### SUMMARY

In this unit we have learned that:

- Preaching in Africa is unique and has to have certain features
- Preaching in Africa should be liberative. It should address not only the consequences of suffering but most importantly the root cause. In the case of

HIV&AIDS, it should attack the social conditions of gender inequity, poverty, violence, economic imbalances and human rights abuses

- Preaching in Africa should be practical. Preaching should be aimed at transforming society through concrete action of love and compassion
- The stories of a Prodigal Son and the Discarded Woman challenge us to concrete action of love
- Preaching in Africa should be an expression of celebration as much as celebration is a form of preaching

## SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. List three features of preaching adapted for Africa.
2. Liberative preaching does not only deal with the consequences but it deals with the root cause of the problem. Discuss the meaning of this statement.
3. Liberation presupposes power and gender. Read the story of David and Bathsheba. How does abuse of power and gender inequity feature in the way in which Uriah and Bathsheba are treated by David?
4. Explain what it means to say that preaching is practical.
5. Alienation is common with PLWHA. How does the story of the Prodigal Son help us to deal with situations of alienation, especially the alienation that results from HIV&AIDS.
6. If you were the sister of the discarded woman, what advice would you give to your HIV positive sister, chased away by her husband? Give reasons for your answer.
7. In an African context, it is not strange to understand preaching as an expression of celebration and celebration as a form of preaching. Explain how this is possible.



## FURTHER READING

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## GLOSSARY

- Liberation:** An action or process that frees those who are socially powerless in society and voiceless in the church.
- PLWHA:** People Living With HIV&AIDS.
- Alienation:** It is estrangement, power deprivation and depersonalising of an individual.

# ASSIGNMENT: UNIT 1-5

Before you proceed to Unit 6-10, please do the assignment below. It covers unit 1-5. It will examine how much you have understood in the area of preaching and lirturgy. Remember, if you cannot answer the question, please find the relevant unit and re-read.

## ASSIGNMENT

**Answer 4 questions only**

### QUESTION 1

- a) Discuss how ignorance, silence and stigma can affect the spread of HIV&AIDS.
- b) Outline and explain how at least two different types of silence function.
- c) The Church has also been silent on issues of HIV&AIDS. How do we account for such silence in the church?

### QUESTION 2

- a) Define preaching.
- b) What foundations does preaching have in the New Testament?
- c) Discuss how the three elements of the sermon are related.

### QUESTION 3

- a) Identify and analyse words in your language that refer to preaching.
- b) Outline and discuss any two functions of preaching in liturgy.
- c) Define liturgy in your own words.

### QUESTIONS 4

- a) Describe John the Baptist's preaching in terms of:
  - i) His personality
  - ii) Content
  - iii) Context
- b) What is preaching from your own cultural way of communicating?
- c) Prepare a sermon based on a story or incidence from your own culture.

**QUESTION 5**

- a) What does it mean to say preaching is liberative?
- b) How does liberative preaching help in contexts such as HIV&AIDS?
- c) What does it mean to say preaching is practical?
- d) What does it mean to say preaching is celebrative.

# UNIT 6

## PREACHING AND LITURGY THAT EMBODY PLWHA

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 6! In units 1-5 we laid the foundation for preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS. I have selected six principles from these units that we will apply in this unit and the rest of the units (7-10), to prepare sermons and liturgies in the context of HIV&AIDS. These six principles are context, participation, liturgy and preaching, worship, liberation and action. In this unit you will learn about preaching and liturgy that embodies PLWHA. Preaching and liturgy that embodies PLWHA creates opportunities for the voices of PLWHA to be heard. It is preaching and liturgy with PLWHA. Many PLWHA have experienced exclusion and marginalization in their churches. Their experiences present a theological crisis that challenges the church to transform its theology, preaching and liturgy. We will prepare four sermons that will exemplify ways of transforming our theology, preaching and liturgy. The first two sermons will focus on God's compassion, love and forgiveness and the other two sermons will be on a compassionate church and the church as the body of Christ. You will be asked to prepare liturgies and sermons on these themes.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ✝ Prepare transformative sermons
- ✝ Describe the six principles for preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS
- ✝ Describe the challenge of transforming theology, preaching and liturgy in the church
- ✝ Prepare sermons on God's compassion, love and forgiveness
- ✝ Prepare sermons on a compassionate church and the church as the body of Christ

## TOPICS

- ⌘ Principles of Preaching and Liturgy in the Context of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Preaching and Liturgy in the Context of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Transformation of Theology through Preaching and Liturgy
- ⌘ Sermons One: God is Compassion (Mark 1:40-45)
- ⌘ Sermon Two: God is Loving and Forgiving (Luke 15:1-6)
- ⌘ Sermon Three: The Compassionate Church (Matthew 25:31-46)
- ⌘ Sermon Four: The Church is the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Readings, Glossary

## PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING AND LITURGY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&AIDS

In units 1-5, you learnt about the challenges of HIV&AIDS, preaching, liturgy and different methods of preaching from the Bible and the African context. I have chosen six principles from these units that will transform our methods of preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS. These principles are: context, participation, liturgy and preaching, worship, liberation and action. We will now discuss each of these principles in turn.

### Context

The principle of 'context' refers to the centrality of the HIV&AIDS context in our preaching and liturgy. Our preaching and liturgy will start with a description of the HIV & AIDS context, including the voices/testimonies of PLWHA and the affected. It is important that our preaching and liturgy responds to the experiences and realities of PLWHA and the affected.



# ACTIVITY 1

*Explain in your own words the importance of context in sermons and liturgy*

## Participation

The principle of ‘participation’ refers to preaching and liturgy that provides opportunities for participation by PLWHA and the congregation. For example, we learned about a model of participation of PLWHA from Reverend Dr Xapile. In his church, PLWHA are given fifteen minutes to share their testimonies/stories/experiences before the sermon is preached. Another model of participation that we learned about was taken from the *go rera* method based on the Setswana definition of preaching. *Go rera* provides us with a model of participation that includes the whole congregation in discussions and reflections on the sermon and liturgy. We will apply Zwane’s model and *go rera* model of participation in our sermon preparation by *incorporating the voices/stories of PLWHA and the affected* at the beginning of the sermon and using the activity *questions* to stimulate and encourage discussions with the congregation throughout the sermon. Our liturgy preparations will also be participatory.

## Preaching and liturgy

The principle of ‘preaching and liturgy’ refers to the relationship between the sermon and the liturgy. In unit two you learned that preaching and liturgy are interdependent. This means that we need to ensure that our liturgy and sermon support and strengthen each other. We will apply this principle by selecting a theme for the sermon and preparing liturgy that supports the theme.

## ACTIVITY 2

*Explain how the principles of participation challenge ways of preaching in your church. Suggest ways in which your church can apply Zwane's model and 'go rera'.*

### Worship

The principle of 'worship' refers to the *purpose* of preaching and liturgy (which means to worship God). Our sermons and liturgy need to be *God-centred* and inspire the congregation to worship God. In unit 2 and 3 you learned that the purpose of preaching and liturgy is to inspire the congregation to worship God. We will apply this principle by keeping God central in our sermons and liturgy.

### Liberation

The principle of 'liberation' refers to the *goal* of preaching and liturgy. Liberation from all forms of oppression and fullness of life are the goals of preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS. In unit 5 we learned that the purpose of preaching and liturgy is liberation. PLWHA and the affected experience oppression in every area of their lives - mentally, physically, socially, economically and spiritually. The root cause of HIV&AIDS lies in social and economic injustice. We will apply the principle of liberation in all our sermons under the heading 'Application in the HIV&AIDS Context'.

### Action

The principle of 'action' refers to the *application* of what we preach in order to bring about *transformation*. In unit 5 we learned about the importance of action. Our preaching needs to lead the congregation to concrete acts that will transform the situation of HIV&AIDS. We will apply this principle of action in all our sermon and liturgy preparations.

## ACTIVITY 3

*Explain in your own words the importance of worship, liberation and action in sermons and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS.*

We will now apply these principles in the four sermons that we will prepare.

We will begin our sermon preparation with a description of the HIV&AIDS context of preaching and liturgy. We will include the voices of PLWHA. This context will apply to all of the four sermons that we will prepare in this unit. This is because all four sermons are a response to the challenge of transforming our theology through preaching and liturgy in order to empower PLWHA and the affected.

### Preaching and Liturgy in the Context of HIV&AIDS

We will begin with a quote from a person living with HIV&AIDS: “The way the priest talks about HIV&AIDS, I don’t think I will ever disclose” (PACSA 2004:23). We can see from this quote that the sermons preached in church have led this person to feel that they could not disclose their HIV status to their priest and/or congregation. Many PLWHA share similar experiences of being stigmatized, judged and condemned as sinners by sermons preached in their churches. Sermons that stigmatize PLWHA present a theological crisis because they present God and the church as unloving, unforgiving and lacking in compassion. This misrepresentation of God and the church is a challenge to the church to transform its theology through preaching and liturgy.

## ACTIVITY 4

*In your own words, explain why the experiences of PLWHA in the church represent a theological crisis. Give examples from sermons on HIV&AIDS that you have heard.*

## TRANSFORMATION OF THEOLOGY THROUGH PREACHING AND LITURGY

The transformation of theology and preaching requires the church to re-examine its beliefs and practices in the context of HIV&AIDS. According to Tinyiko S. Maluleke, “AIDS raises deep challenges about the meaning of life, our concepts of God, our understanding of church, human interdependence, human frailty, human failure, human sinfulness and human community” (2004:66). Maluleke presents us with a list of theological issues that the church needs to re-examine in order to transform its theology in the context of HIV&AIDS. We will focus on two of these issues, namely, ‘concepts of God’ and ‘our understanding of the church’. Concepts of God refer to our beliefs about God and ‘understanding of the church’ refers to our beliefs about the purpose and mission of the church. We will prepare two sermons on concepts of God and two sermons on the church. These sermons will point us towards transforming our theology and churches so that we can truly embody PLWHA and the affected. The sermons are theological practicals for you as church leader, worker or member.

### ACTIVITY 5

*Give two reasons why we need to re-examine our concepts of God and the church in the context of HIV&AIDS. Give examples from your own context.*

### SERMON ONE: GOD IS COMPASSIONATE (MARK 1:40-45)

Our sermon on the compassion of God is a response to the misrepresentation of God through sermons that stigmatize PLWHA. The compassion of God challenges the church to become a place where PLWHA can experience compassion, acceptance and love. The Hebrew Bible affirms that God is compassionate in word and deed (Exodus 3:7-10; Psalm 103:7-10). In the New Testament, God’s compassion is revealed through the ministry of Jesus and the early church. In Mark 1:40-45 we see God’s compassion revealed in Jesus’ response to the leper. Leprosy and HIV&AIDS have many similarities, which is why we are focusing on this story. The ‘activity questions’ can also be used as discussion questions to encourage participation by your

congregation during or after your sermon. As we go through this sermon together, have your notebook so that you can write down songs, poems, prayers that can be used in preparing a liturgy for the sermon. We will begin with a testimony from PLWHA. All our sermons will begin with the voices of PLWHA and/or the affected.

### *Sermon Outline*

Testimony/sharing from PLWHA or the affected

Definition of Compassion

Leprosy and Lepers

Jesus' response

Application in the HIV&AIDS context

Liturgy

### *Definition of Compassion*

Compassion is defined as “reaching out to those who are suffering, as entering of their places of pain, their brokenness and the active search for ways of changing of their situation. Compassion is transformative” (Dube 2004:96). From this definition we learn that compassion is:

An active response to suffering – compassion is not passive

Relational, based on relationships with those who suffer

Hard work, requiring tireless commitment to working for change

Transformational, i.e. it changes the social structures that cause suffering.

## ACTIVITY 6

*Give examples of proverbs and teachings in your culture that encourage compassion.*

## *Leprosy and lepers*

During the time of Jesus there was no disease regarded with more terror, fear and pity than leprosy. According to William Barclay, there were different types of leprosy. There was nodular leprosy which severely disfigured the face so that the leper lost their appearance and became unrecognizable; anesthetic leprosy caused the body to lose its ability to feel pain and eventually led to the loss of fingers, toes, hands and feet; leprosy that combined both nodular and anesthetic leprosy and leprosy that referred to different kinds of skin diseases, ranging from deadly and incurable to non-fatal and harmless (1975:43-44).

### ACTIVITY 7

*Explain in a paragraph why leprosy was regarded with terror, fear and pity.*

Leprosy was also a dreaded and feared disease because it had social and religious implications. Lepers were expelled from their communities because of fear of contamination and so they were forced to live outside villages and cities (Dambala et al 2005:88). Lepers were feared, stigmatized and discriminated against. They were also religiously 'unclean' and excluded from participating in religious activities. Everyone who came into contact with lepers became unclean. This was in accordance with the purity laws found in Leviticus 13:45-46: "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp." Only the priests could certify someone as either clean or unclean.

### ACTIVITY 8

*Compare leprosy to HIV&AIDS and describe similarities and differences.*

## *Jesus' Response*

The leper asked Jesus to make him clean. This was an act of courage by the leper because by approaching and speaking to Jesus he was breaking the laws that prohibited him from having contact with other people. His request to be made clean expressed his desire to be restored back to his community. In response Jesus:

*Intentionally broke the laws* that created stigma and touched the leper. Jesus chose to be compassionate and upheld justice and mercy over the law. To help us understand the relationship between Jesus and the law, I will quote Dube. In her book, *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, she states, "Jesus could not tolerate any injustice legitimized by saying 'It is written in the Scriptures.' Rather, he had the courage to say prophetically, 'But I say to you'. He was ready to say that if what is written has come to support corruption, injustice and oppression, then it must go" (2003:52-53). As this quote indicates, we learn that Jesus reinterpreted the scriptures to uphold justice. Justice is an important aspect of compassion because it results in actions that bring transformation. Jesus' actions brought transformation to the law and the life of the leper. Jesus' actions brought liberation to the leper and challenged religious prejudice. This is true worship of God, spirituality and action.

### ACTIVITY 9

*Give examples of how you can apply Jesus' principles in your context.*

Jesus healed him and told him to go to the priest so that he could be certified as clean and publicly restored to his family and community. Jesus, in this case, followed the law because it provided an opportunity to publicly declare the man clean and restore him to his community. Jesus, therefore, upheld those laws that promoted the wellbeing of people. By restoring the leper back to his community, Jesus linked healing to restoration of relationships. This understanding of healing is similar to that of African Indigenous

Religion/s (AIRs), in which the restoration of relationships is a central part of healing. Jesus' compassionate response to the leper is a cause for praise and worship.

## ACTIVITY 10

*Explain healing and restoration of relationships in your culture Describe ways in which you can apply these beliefs in the HIV&AIDS context.*

### *Application in HIV&AIDS context*

In this section, we will apply the message of the story for liberation and action. The experience of lepers is similar in many ways to that of PLWHA today. Like leprosy, HIV is a dreaded and feared disease that has social and religious implications. PLWHA have similar experiences to lepers as they also experience stigma, exclusion and discrimination. Jesus' response to the leper sets the standard for our response to PLWHA. Jesus challenges us to *break the 'unwritten rules'* that sustain stigma and exclusion of PLWHA in our churches and communities. Below are examples of some of these 'unwritten laws' and possibilities for change.

<b>'Unwritten laws'</b>	<b>How to break these laws in the church</b>
Don't touch or have physical contact with PLWHA	Touch and hug PLWHA in the church. For example, when someone discloses that they have HIV, the minister and leaders need to set an example by reaching out, hugging, touching and developing appropriate liturgy.
Don't talk about HIV, sexuality and other HIV related topics	Break the silence and speak freely about HIV and integrate HIV education and topics in the liturgy and preaching. Invite PLWHA to preach, share testimony and lead services.



## ACTIVITY 11

*Describe three practical steps that your church can take to break these stigma 'laws'.*

*Support and provide counselling that will enable PLWHA to be reconciled and stored to their families, communities and churches. HIV&AIDS stigma often results in broken relationships. Healing involves the restoration of broken relationships. Obed Maua Dambala reminds us that, "As followers of Jesus we do not have the power to say to those living with HIV and AIDS: 'Be clean!' in the sense of 'Be healed physically!', but we can say: 'Be clean!' in the sense of: 'You belong – socially, spiritually and physically – to the community of the believers!'" (2005:89).*

Liturgy

## ACTIVITY 12

- 1. Use the notes that you have made to design an appropriate liturgy for the theme of the sermon. Use the participatory method to generate appropriate liturgy.*
- 2. Prepare a sermon using the guidelines in Mark 5: 25-24*

### SERMON TWO: GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING LUKE 15:1-6

Our second sermon is on God's love and forgiveness which extends to all. Due to rampant stigma, many PLWHA have felt excluded from God's love and forgiveness. This is a liberating sermon. We will follow the same guidelines as in the previous sermon. We will start with the voices of PLWHA.

## Sermon Outline

Testimony/sharing about spiritual journey from PLWHA or the affected

Context of the parable

Jesus' response

Application in the HIV&AIDS context

### *Participation of PLWHA*

In preparation call a meeting with PLWHA and design an appropriate liturgy for the service. This may include a testimony by a PLWHA or by the affected.

### *Context of the parable*

The context of this text was a discussion between Jesus and the religious leaders. The religious leaders were criticizing Jesus because he was in the company of tax collectors and 'sinners'. The term 'sinners' was used to describe groups that were rejected by religious leaders and communities, such as lepers and sex workers. Religious people and the community did not socialize with these groups because they wanted to remain 'pure'. Jesus, on the other hand, spent most of his time with people from these groups. For the religious leaders, being righteous meant having nothing to do with 'sinners'. For Jesus, righteousness required reaching out and being with marginalized and despised groups.

## ACTIVITY 13

*Name the groups of people in your community that the church does not engage?*

### *Jesus' Response*

In response to their criticism, Jesus did not argue with the religious leaders but instead told them a parable about God's love and forgiveness. Jesus wanted the religious leaders to understand that his actions were motivated by God's love and forgiveness.

In his parable Jesus compared God's love and forgiveness to a shepherd who had one hundred sheep but lost one sheep. The shepherd did not abandon his lost sheep but searched until he found it. The actions of the shepherd reflect God's love. God's love seeks out those who are excluded from their communities and feel alone and outside of God's love. God reaches out to them, not in condemnation but in love. Through love, God offers forgiveness and the restoration of relationships with God and their community. Forgiveness restores broken relationships and fellowship. When people are forgiven there is a celebration in heaven! Once again, we see that Jesus' response is a cause for worship and praise.

## ACTIVITY 14

*Whom does your church identify with in this story – the religious leaders or Jesus?  
Give reasons for your answer. Explain ways in which your church can identify more  
with Jesus.*

### *Application in the HIV&AIDS Context*

Jesus' example challenges us to examine religious beliefs that cause/allow us to avoid associating with certain groups of people. The HIV&AIDS context has exposed the religious prejudice that prevented the church from reaching out to PLWHA. HIV has affected many people from all sectors of society but it has also affected people who are rejected by religious people such as sex workers, homosexual men and unmarried sexually active young people. These prejudices have prevented many religious people from reaching out in compassion to minister and serve PLWHA from these groups. Jesus provides liberation from these prejudices and encourages the church to engage in compassionate action and ministry towards marginalized groups. Jesus' teaching and life provide liberation for marginalized groups because he showed that God's unconditional love and forgiveness was for everyone. Jesus set an example and challenges the church to:

Go into our communities and search marginalized groups in love. Many of us are afraid of reaching out to these marginalized groups. We are afraid that we may

lose our reputation. Jesus challenges us to lose our reputation and gain a new reputation as a community that loves and serves all people without discrimination.

Celebrate in a special way, through liturgy, the presence and restoration into the church and community of members of marginalized groups as a tribute to God's love and forgiveness.

Jesus' actions and teachings, once again, inspire us to praise and worship God.

## ACTIVITY 15

*1. List three actions that your church can undertake to build a reputation as a welcoming and inclusive community, just as Jesus did.*

*2. Design a liturgy in the form of a song or prayer that welcomes marginalized groups in your church.*

### SERMON THREE: THE CHURCH AS A COMPASSIONATE CHURCH

We will now prepare two sermons that direct the church towards self-transformation, encouraging them to become a compassionate and inclusive community in which PLWHA and the affected are accepted. The sermons are practical examples, among many other messages and ways of becoming a transforming and transformed church. These two sermons will be titled 'The Compassionate Church' and 'The Church is the Body of Christ'. We will apply the same principles used in previous sermons and begin with a testimony from PLWHA or the affected.

Text: Matthew 25:31-46

#### Sermon Outline

- Testimony/sharing about spiritual journey from PLWHA or the affected
- Context of the text
- Compassion and judgement
- Application in the HIV&AIDS context
- Liturgy

### *Participation of PLWHA*

In preparation, call a meeting with PLWA and design an appropriate liturgy for the service and the particular text. This may include a testimony by a PLWHA or by the affected.

### *Context of the Text*

This text is part of the last teachings of Jesus before his trial, crucifixion and resurrection. These teachings focus on the end times, which start in Chapter 23 and end with this parable in Matthew. This parable is also part of three parables told by Jesus that focus specifically on preparation for the return of Jesus and judgement day. The other two parables are in regard to the ten virgins (25:1-13) and the talents (25:14-30). All these parables show that on judgement day there will be two groups, those who will enter the kingdom of God and those who will not.

### *Compassion and Judgement*

In this parable (Matthew 25:31-46), Jesus clearly defined the criteria that will be used for judgement. The criteria will be compassion expressed in concrete actions towards alleviating the suffering of the poor, needy and marginalized. In other words, we will be judged on our response to the poor and needy during our lifetime. The significance of these actions is shown in Jesus' identification with the poor, needy and marginalized. Jesus is present among these groups; serving them is serving Jesus. This is a radical understanding of Jesus and the poor. Jesus is saying that if we want to serve him, we need to go to those in our communities who are poor, needy and marginalized because that is where he is! If we fail to do this, we will not enter the kingdom of God.

## ACTIVITY 15

*Compare the priorities of your church with Jesus' priorities. Write down similarities and differences. Describe how your church can adopt Jesus' priorities in the context of HIV&AIDS.*

## *Application in the HIV&AIDS Context*

In this section, we will apply the principles of liberation and action. Jesus challenges the church to engage in actions that liberate the marginalized and oppressed. According to Dube, “Jesus makes perhaps the most compelling case for the Christian church to be compassionate. Jesus calls upon all his followers to see him in the faces of those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked, sick and imprisoned. He identifies himself with them. Serving these or failing to serve them is tantamount to doing it to Jesus” (2004:96). In the HIV&AIDS context, in which the poor, sex workers, the elderly, women and children are most vulnerable, the church is called to be compassionate and engage in concrete actions and ministries that will alleviate the suffering of those affected by HIV&AIDS. Some examples of concrete acts of compassion are: cultivating gardens with families of PLWHA, making the church premises available for after-school care for orphans as a way of sharing the burden of care with grandparents, and training every member of the church in counselling skills so that they can reach out to PLWHA and the affected.

### ACTIVITY 16

*Make a list of three practical actions that your church can do for and with PLWHA.*

## *Liturgy*

### ACTIVITY 17

- 1. Use the notes that you have made to design an appropriate liturgy for the theme of the sermon.*
- 2. Prepare a sermon using the guidelines in James 2:14-17.*

## SERMON FOUR: THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Our next sermon addresses the divisions in the church caused by HIV&AIDS. The experience of stigma and exclusion of PLWHA in the church are examples of divisions in the church. There is a wall of separation between PLWHA and the rest of the congregation. This sermon addresses these divisions in the church today by looking at the experiences of the church in Corinth and Paul's message of unity in the church. The church is the body of Christ. Unity in diversity is what defines the church. There is no room for division in the church. We will use the same guidelines as in previous sermons and will start with a testimony from PLWHA or the affected. We will examine the context of the passage before we look at the meaning of the passage and its application.

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

### *Sermon Outline*

Testimony/sharing about spiritual journey from PLWHA or the affected

Context of the text

The church is the body of Christ

Application in the HIV&AIDS context

### *Participation of PLWHA*

In preparation, call a meeting with PLWA and design an appropriate liturgy for the service and the particular text. This may include a testimony from a PLWHA or the affected.

### *Context of the text*

The church in Corinth was one of the churches that Paul planted (Acts 18:1-22). He wrote this letter in response to several issues that were causing conflict and division in the church. Corinth was a city with a diverse population. This diversity was reflected in the church and caused divisions and conflicts. According to Jonas Balami et. al., these divisions were caused, in part, by social imbalance, different convictions about how Christians should live and behave, and support for different preachers (2005:100). Paul wrote this letter to restore unity in the church.

## ACTIVITY 18

*Describe the issues that divide your local church and how these affect relationships.*

### *The Church is the Body of Christ*

Paul used the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ to teach about equality, diversity, interdependence and unity in the church. The body has different parts, each part is unique and all parts work together as a whole. In the same way, the church is comprised of members who have different gifts and roles. The church is defined by unity in diversity. This is the basis of harmonious relationships within the church. Diversity creates interdependence and community and should not be used to create division and conflict. The human body is an example of unity in diversity. For example, to exclude other members and cut them off from fellowship is similar to cutting off a part of one's body! Members of the church are bound together so that if one member suffers all suffer together. The health of the church depends on harmonious relationships and unity. For example:

The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' and the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you'! (Acts 18:21)

But God has combined the members of the body and given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other; if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. (Acts 18:24b-25)

### *Application in the HIV&AIDS Context*

HIV&AIDS has divided the church and brought conflict within the church. Some PLWHA have been cut off from the church. Paul's message is relevant to the church today. The church is divided on many issues that relate to HIV&AIDS, such as



sexuality, use of condoms, inclusion of PLWHA in the church and justice/advocacy issues. These divisions have caused conflicts and broken relationships. The image of the church as the body of Christ offers a healing way of restoring relationships and unity in the church. Differences of opinion provide opportunities for dialogue and prophetic conversations. Prophetic conversations enable groups to challenge and confront each other, thus enabling parties to remain true to shared faith traditions. PLWHA provide an opportunity for the church to identify with PLWHA and accept that if one member has HIV, the church has HIV. As the church heals its own divisions it will become a place of healing for PLWHA and the affected.

### *Liturgy*

## ACTIVITY 19

- 1. Use the notes that you have made to design an appropriate liturgy for the theme of the sermon.*
- 2. Prepare a sermon based on Philippians 2:1-11, using the for mentioned guidelines.*

### SUMMARY

In this unit you learnt about the six principles drawn from units 1-5 which can help to point you and the church towards transformative preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS. These principles are context, participation, preaching and liturgy, worship, liberation and action. These principles enable us to prepare sermons and liturgy that empower PLWHA. The church should attempt to live out the gospel which calls us to be one with PLWHA, as a compassionate church and one body of Christ that suffers with all that suffer. This is important because many PLWHA have experienced condemnation and stigma in the church through sermons. These sermons have presented God and the church as unloving, unforgiving and lacking in compassion. This has resulted in a theological crisis that challenges the church to transform its theology, preaching and liturgy. In response to this challenge to transform our theology, preaching and liturgy, we prepared four sermons based on the six principles. Two sermons focused on transforming our theology about God,

addressing God’s compassion, love and forgiveness. The other two sermons focused on transforming the church, addressing the compassionate church and the church as the body of Christ. You were also encouraged to design liturgies that were connected to the themes of the sermons. Both the sermons and the liturgies encouraged participation of PLWHA and the congregation. The context of HIV&AIDS provides us with an opportunity to transform our preaching and liturgy to be more inclusive and participatory. Transformative theology and liturgy will nurture a transformative church in the HIV&AIDS era. Such a church will be compassionate and a healing balm to the stigmatized, discriminated and hurting members of our society.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Describe the six principles of preaching and liturgy
2. Explain the experiences of preaching and liturgy by PLWHA.
3. Describe the theological crisis that is a result of the experiences of PLWHA.
4. Explain the compassion of God and relate it to Jesus’ healing of the leper.
5. Explain the love and forgiveness of God as it relates to the parable of the lost sheep.
6. Describe the criteria for judgement, developed by Jesus in Matthew 25, and apply it to the church.
7. Describe the church as the body of Christ and apply it to the challenge of being a healing community in the context of HIV&AIDS.



## FURTHER READING

Dambala, Obed Maua et al.2005. “Embracing, not Excluding – Mark 1:40-45” pp. 87-90. In United Evangelical Mission *God Breaks the Silence. Preaching in Times of AIDS*. Basel:United Evangelical Mission

Dube, Musa W. 2004. “Compassion” pp.96-100. In Musa W. Dube (Ed.), *AfricaPraying. A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*. Geneva: WCC.

Dube, Musa W. 2004. "The Prophetic Method in the New Testament" pp. 43-58. In *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programme* Geneva:WCC.

Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam. 2004. "Towards an HIV/AIDS-Sensitive Curriculum" pp.59-76. In Dube, Musa W. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. Geneva:WCC.

## GLOSSARY

- Embody** means to identify with and to represent in a visible way.
- Misrepresentation** is an untrue statement of fact.
- Compassion** is identifying with those who suffer and working with them to eradicate their suffering.
- Cred** refers to any system of principles or beliefs.
- Healing** is the restoration of health and wellbeing in all areas of life.

# UNIT 7

## PREACHING WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&AIDS

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 7! In unit 6 you learned about the six principles of preaching and liturgy and applied these principles in preaching and liturgy that empowered PLWHA. In this unit, we will apply the same principles in preaching and liturgy to groups that are vulnerable to HIV&AIDS. The three groups that we will focus on are youth, orphans and widows. We will prepare examples of sermons based on some of the key challenges that these groups face in the context of HIV&AIDS. The themes for these sermons are: sexuality for the youth, rejection and acceptance for orphans, and challenges to customary inheritance laws for widows. These sermons can be used for special services which are prepared and planned with these groups. The key is to prepare sermons and liturgy with these groups so that their voices are heard. These services provide opportunities for the church to break the silence and stigma around HIV&AIDS and raise awareness of the challenges that each of these groups faces in the context of HIV&AIDS.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ✘ Apply the six principles of preaching and liturgy to sermons with youth, orphans and widows
- ✘ Prepare sermons that respond to the challenges of HIV&AIDS for youth, orphans and widows
- ✘ Help the church identifying with orphans and widows in the HIV&AIDS era

## TOPICS

- ⌘ Application of the Six Principles of Preaching and Liturgy
- ⌘ Context of the Sermons
- ⌘ Sermon One: Preaching with Youth in the Context of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Sermon Two: Preaching with Orphans in the Context of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Sermon Three: Preaching with Widows in the Context of HIV&AIDS

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Readings, Glossary

## APPLICATION OF THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING AND LITURGY

*In unit 6 we discussed the six principles of preaching and liturgy. We will apply these principles in our sermon preparation with and for youth, orphans and widows. The chart below shows us how we will apply these principles in this unit.*

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Application in this Unit</b>
Context	Our sermons will begin with a description of the HIV&AIDS context and the voices/testimonies/stories of youth, orphans and widows
Participation	Our goal is to prepare sermons and liturgy with youth, orphans and widows. The sermons in this unit provide you with guidelines for preparing your own sermons in your local church with youth, orphans and widows. The activity questions in the sermon are meant to stimulate discussion with the congregation during and after the sermon.
Preaching and liturgy	The sermons in this unit are designed to provide information and stimulate discussions. These are participatory 'go rer' sermons! At the end of each sermon you will be asked to prepare sermons and liturgies with our focus groups and apply these six principles.
Worship	Worship is linked to justice; we worship when we include the voices of those who suffer and are marginalized, such as widows, youth and orphans.
Liberation	The injustices experienced by these groups necessitate that faith communities act for the liberation for these vulnerable groups. Our messages must include liberation from all forms of oppression.
Action	The sermons challenge faith communities to act in response to the needs of these vulnerable group.

## Context of our Sermons and Liturgies

The sermons and liturgies that we will prepare in this unit are for services that will focus exclusively on each of these groups, for example, a ‘Youth Service’ for youth, a ‘Vulnerable Children’s Service’ for orphans, and a ‘Widows Service’ for widows. These services provide opportunities for the church to break the silence and stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS and reach out to local communities. It is important that these services be driven by members of these groups so that the service becomes an expression of the voices, experiences and challenges of HIV&AIDS.

### ACTIVITY 1

*Outline the steps and planning that you need to take to initiate a special service with members of these groups.*

The topics that we will prepare with, for and about these groups are examples of themes that are based on some of the challenges of the HIV&AIDS context. The sermon with, for and about the *youth* is on sexuality because many of our youth are sexually active and vulnerable to HIV&AIDS. In the context of HIV&AIDS the church’s teachings on sexuality has tended to focus on abstinence, faithfulness and debates about condoms. There is a need for the church to engage with the realities of sexuality in our communities, especially with youth.

The sermon with, for and about *orphans* will focus on the theme of rejection and hope. Rejection, emanating from stigma, significant material needs and a lack of parental/guardian protection, often leads to psycho-social complications. These are the challenges experienced by orphans in the context of HIV&AIDS. The voices of orphans and their plight needs to be heard in the church because the care of orphans is linked to the practice of true religion (James 1:27).

The sermon for, with and about *widows* will focus on customary inheritance laws that have caused destitution, poverty and vulnerability to HIV&AIDS among widows in Africa. These sermons are not meant to answer all questions but to provide a context for discussions, dialogue and debates. Above all, they direct us towards becoming a transformative church that makes a difference to the groups that are the most affected and vulnerable, such as orphans, widows and youth. The ‘activity questions,’ in the text, are meant to promote discussions and participation. At the end of each sermon, you will be asked to prepare a sermon and liturgy with the groups from your own context, using these same principles.

## SERMON ONE: PREACHING WITH YOUTH

Topic: Holistic Sexuality In The Context Of HIV & AIDS

Text: Genesis 1:26-31

*Sermon Outline*

Testimony/sharing/drama from youth and young PLWHA and parents about sex

Sexuality

Holistic Sexuality in the context of HIV&AIDS (Genesis 1:26-31)

Liturgy

*Testimony*

In preparation, choose a theme with the youth; ask the youth to identify a youth to give a testimony and to prepare a drama that illustrates the challenges of youth in the HIV&AIDS context and its link to sexuality. The testimony and the drama will be presented before the delivery of sermon of their chosen theme.

*Sexuality*

Sexuality is a term that is used to refer to all aspects of sex, such as the sexual nature of human beings, biological sex or intercourse, gender and sexual orientation, and power relations involved at all levels. Our youth are constantly getting messages from the media on all these aspects of sex. This is a quote from a nine year old child: “‘Have sex, take drugs.’ Television and music make having sex and taking drugs look carefree and fun” (CINDI, 2001:11). These words describe the highly sexualized



world that our youth live in today. The media portrays sexual intercourse as carefree and without any consequences or responsibilities, fun and for pleasure only, and as a right (sex is a right that must be fulfilled at all cost). Many young people have become sexually active because of these messages from the media. Unfortunately, many lives have been devastated because of a single sexual encounter by consequences such as teenage pregnancies, rape, sexually transmitted infections and HIV&AIDS. The highest rate of HIV infection is among young people between the ages of 18-25. In sub-Saharan Africa, 76% of young people who are HIV positive are young women. The vulnerability of young people, especially young women, to HIV&AIDS is a challenge to the church to engage with the youth and together develop an alternative and holistic vision of sexuality.

## ACTIVITY 2

*Give examples from your local media of programs, magazines, films, and music that promotes carefree and duty free sex for the youth.*

### Holistic Sexuality

Genesis 1:26-31 provides us with some principles for an alternative vision of holistic sexuality. In this section, we will focus on four principles: sexuality is a gift from God, gender equality, exclusive relationships and economic justice.

#### *Sexuality is a Gift from God*

Holistic sexuality begins with a positive affirmation of the sexual nature of human beings. God created human beings as sexual beings. God created the human body, including our sexual organs, urges and desires. Sex, therefore, originates from God and is a gift from God. The media, television, movies, society and culture did not invent sex. As recipients of God's gift of sexuality, it is our responsibility to learn more about this gift and the conditions set by God for us to enjoy and celebrate our sexuality. Human beings are not only sexual beings but are created in the image of God. This means that all human beings are of equal value and dignity. Therefore, we

must confront all sexual activities that violate the dignity of other human beings, such as violence, rape, abuse, exploitation and oppression. We need to affirm sexuality as a gift from God. Unfortunately, the message from the church about sexuality has not been positive. Khathide explains this view of the church. He states that, “the reason why the church finds it difficult to handle sex and sexuality-related issues is because we have considered sex as belonging to a domain outside the sovereignty of God”. He goes on to say that the church regards “sex as belonging to the devil – something that is associated with darkness, evil and wickedness” (2004:5). This text challenges the church to transform its attitude towards sex.

### ACTIVITY 3

*Do you agree or disagree with the statement from Khathide. Give reasons for your answer. Explain how your church can present sex as a gift from God.*

#### *Gender Equality*

Holistic sexuality is based on gender equality. Gender describes the social and cultural interpretations of what it means to be male or female. For example, there are different expectations for men and women. Men are expected to lead and exercise authority in and outside of the home. Women are expected to be led by men in and outside the home. The problem with gender construction is that it empowers one gender at the expense of the other. More specifically, it empowers men and disempowers women (Dube 2004:88). Gender inequality is at the root of women’s oppression, marginalization, poverty, abuse and vulnerability to HIV&AIDS. Genesis 1:26-31 has a radical message: it tells us that God created male and female in God’s image as equals and gave them equal responsibility to rule and be in charge of the world. Women and men were created to be equal partners in building homes, societies, cultures, economies and politics. This means equality in and outside the home. Equality means that there is justice in relationships between women and men. In such relationships there is no domination, abuse of power, exploitation or oppression. Many young people are not familiar with this model of equality in

relationships because it is not the norm in our communities, families, media and the church. Young people need alternative models of gender relationships that reflect equality, mutuality, respect, love and compassion.

## ACTIVITY 4

*Give examples of proverbs and sayings in your culture and church that can be used to promote gender equality. How can these teachings be applied by the youth?*

### *Exclusive Relationships*

Holistic sexuality is based on sexual relationships within an exclusive relationship. In the church we believe that marriage is a public declaration of an exclusive relationship between a man and a woman. The marriage vows represent a commitment by a couple to a relationship of faithfulness, mutuality, love and respect. However, these vows can be broken when there is abuse, violence and unfaithfulness. In the HIV&AIDS context, the highest rate of infection is among women who are married and faithful to their husbands. Gender inequality is at the root of this problem because some of our cultures and societies set different sexual norms for men and women. Men are allowed to have multiple partners while women cannot. Married women are supposed to stay faithful and accept their husband's infidelity. Holistic sexuality promotes sexual norms that are equal for both men and women and require both to be faithful and accountable to each other.

### *Economic Justice*

Holistic sexuality is connected to all areas of life. Sexuality is a part of life and is dependent on other areas of life such as material well being, physical health, community relationships and the wider socio-political issues. Many young people in our communities are unemployed and struggling for survival. Sex becomes a way of forgetting problems. For some, it becomes a way of survival. The root problem is not the young people but the economic and social systems that fail to address poverty among the youth. Genesis 1:26-31 states that God created the world with resources to

meet the needs of human beings. According to Dube, this means that no one should be poor and that “poverty is a violation of God’s will for all people” (2004:88). At the root of poverty are unjust economic systems that concentrate the resources of the world in the hands of the few and leave millions in poverty and destitution. Young people need to understand some of the causes of poverty so that they can join others in confronting these problems and finding solutions. Poverty has been recognized as the key contributing factor to HIV&AIDS. Confronting poverty is critical to reducing the vulnerability of the poor, many of whom are youth, to HIV&AIDS.

### ACTIVITY 5

- 1. Explain in your own words the link between holistic sexuality and economic justice.*
- 2. Prepare a sermon and liturgy on sexuality with the youth in your church.*

### SERMON TWO: PREACHING WITH ORPHANS

Our next sermon is with orphans. This sermon is an example of issues that affect orphans in the context of HIV&AIDS. As already mentioned, you need to prepare the sermon and liturgy with orphans in order to allow their voices to be heard. If there are self-identified orphans, call a preparatory meeting and choose a theme with them. For liturgy, ask how they want to participate. They could explore presenting a testimony, a poem, a story, or a drama about the life experiences of orphans in the HIV&AIDS context. Let us begin with the HIV&AIDS context and testimonies from orphans.

Text: 1 Samuel 1-3

#### Sermon Outline

Voices of orphans/testimonies

Context of HIV&AIDS

The story of Samuel

The story of Nkosi Johnson

Voices of Orphans/Testimonies

We will read a quote from an 11 year old orphan living with HIV&AIDS

The people whom I live with discriminate against me because I am infected with HIV. They do not want to share their lives with me anymore; they do not even want to share anything with me. Some people have said that I must be killed so that I will not spread AIDS to their children. At school some of the students are not prepared to be in class with me. Sometimes the teachers gossip about me. Life is very difficult for me to live because when I go to some churches they do not want me to worship with them (CINDI 2001:4).

These words reflect the extent of rejection that is part of the everyday experience of this orphan. She experiences rejection in her home from the people that she is living with, in school from her school mates and teachers, in her community and in the church. Her experiences are shared by many children living with HIV&AIDS and orphans whose parents have died of HIV&AIDS.

## ACTIVITY 6

*Write down a story from your country about the experience of orphans.*

### Context of HIV&AIDS

HIV&AIDS have created an orphan crisis in all communities in Africa and other infected regions of the world. It is estimated that there are 15 million children that have been orphaned by HIV&AIDS. 95% of these children live in Africa. Children have been hardest hit by HIV&AIDS as they face multiple losses, the deaths of parent/s and relatives and the loss of security and homes. The stigma and shame connected with HIV&AIDS has further traumatized orphans. Orphans experience stigma as a result of their parent/s dying of AIDS and, in some cases, of being HIV positive. Younger children, especially girl children, have the responsibility of caring for their siblings. Poverty worsens their plight and leaves them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse. The plight of orphans is of special concern to God. Throughout the Bible, care for widows and orphans is linked to true religion and

worship. For example, James 1:27 reads, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after *orphans* and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” This verse indicates that church cannot ignore orphans and claim to be following God.

### The Story of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-3)

Samuel was not an orphan but he grew up without his parents and in the care of a priestly family, headed by Eli. Samuel’s mother brought him to the temple and dedicated his life to serve God. Some of Samuel’s experiences are similar to those of orphans in the context of HIV&AIDS. Samuel was left in the care of a family that his mother trusted. As a priestly family, this family was expected to provide a safe and secure environment in which Samuel would be brought up with good morals. This was not the case. The text tells us that Eli’s sons were corrupt, immoral and disobedient to their father. In 1 Samuel 2:12 we read that “Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord”. They also “slept with the women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting” (v. 22). This was the environment in which Samuel grow up. Samuel was probably mistreated and rejected. It was not easy for Samuel to grow up in an environment without the love and care of his parents and family. Many orphans live in environments similar to Samuel, in which families and communities that should love and nurture them fail to do so and they are left alone to fend for themselves.

## ACTIVITY 7

*Describe how your church responded to the needs of orphans.*

Nevertheless, Samuel’s story is a story of hope. Despite growing up in a corrupt environment, Samuel “continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with people” (2:26). Samuel was able to withstand the bad influence in his environment through his faith in God. His story provides hope for orphans because it

teaches about the parenthood of God. God special concern for orphans is a cause for praise and worship and a challenge to the church.

Orphans need role models who share similar experiences that can provide inspiration and hope. This is the reason why we will tell the story of Nkosi Johnson, an orphan who died of AIDS.

### The Story of Nkosi Johnson

The story of Nkosi Johnson is the story of an African child who was diagnosed as HIV positive at the age of two and lived with HIV until he died at the age of 11. He became one of the youngest HIV&AIDS activists in the world. He challenged people around the world to embrace and accept people living with HIV&AIDS. After his death a foundation was named after him, which builds homes for mothers and their children who are living with HIV&AIDS. He only lived for eleven years and the last year of his life he suffered from advanced AIDS. Yet he was able to make a difference in the world and in his community. We will end with a quote from a speech that he gave at the 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa:

When I grow up, I want to lecture to more and more people about AIDS- and if mommy Gail will let me, around the whole country. I want people to understand about AIDS- to be careful and respect AIDS- you can't get AIDS if you touch, hug, kiss, hold hands with someone who is infected. Care for us and accept us- we are all human beings. We are normal. We have hands. We have feet. We can walk, we can talk, we have needs just like everyone else- don't be afraid of us- we are all the same!

(<http://www.simplytaty.com/bios/nkosi.htm>)

## ACTIVITY 8

*Prepare a sermon and liturgy with orphans based on James 1:27*

SERMON THREE:  
PREACHING WITH WIDOWS ON CUSTOMARY  
INHERITANCE LAWS.

Our last sermon is with, for and about widows. In preparation, the preacher will meet with self-identified widows and choose a theme that represents their concerns. Widows will be asked to participate liturgically by choosing songs, giving testimonies and stories of their experiences. As you may know, HIV&AIDS has worsened the situation of widows; many widows are sick, stigmatized and dispossessed. The stigma and shame attached to HIV&AIDS has silenced the voices of many women widowed through HIV&AIDS. The plight of widows, like that of orphans, is of special concern to God. Care for widows is equated with the practice of true religion (James 1:27). The plight of widows provides the church with an opportunity to practice true religion, which is pleasing to God—being a compassionate church that travels with widows. The oppression of widows through customary inheritance laws is an example of a practical area of liberation that the church can be involved in. Below, we will assume that this is an issue that widows would wish to see tackled in preaching and liturgy. In this sermon, we will explore God's response to oppressive inheritance laws.

Sermon Title: Let your voices be heard!

Text Numbers 27:1-11

Sermon Outline

Testimony/presentation by widows

Context of HIV&AIDS

Context of the Text

Mahlah and her sisters challenge the law

Application in the context of HIV&AIDS

*Presentation of Widows*

Widows present testimonies of their experiences, before a theme of their concern is explored in the context of a sermon.



## *Context of HIV&AIDS*

HIV&AIDS has worsened the plight of widows in Africa. The number of widows is increasing due to AIDS related deaths. The situation of widows is worsened by customary inheritance laws that deny them inheritance of the property that they and their husbands worked for. Traditionally a widow was to be remarried within the family or be cared for by her son/s, if they were of adult age. In the context of HIV&AIDS and as a result of other social factors that have led to changes in this practice, there are many cases in which women want to take the property of her deceased husband. HIV&AIDS, in itself, means that people are increasingly unwilling to inherit widows; however, they are still interested in her property. This has sometimes led to witchcraft accusation that serves to 'legitimately' evict widows from their homes, dispossess them of their property and, sometimes, of their children. After the death of their husband, relatives come to claim all the property and throw the widow and her children outside the family home. Left with nothing, widows become homeless and destitute. This forces some to turn to sex work in order to survive and care for their children. The stigma of HIV&AIDS causes many widows to be silent about their plight. Who will speak for widows in the HIV&AIDS context? Our sermon is based on God's response to unjust customary laws in Numbers 27:1-27 and is a challenge to the church to act in solidarity with widows in their struggle for justice.

## *Context of the Text*

Now let us look at the context of our text. The law in Israel only allowed sons to inherit the property of their parents. Widows had no inheritance and were looked after by their sons. If a man died without leaving a son, his widow had to marry her husband's brother or the nearest male of kin, as in the case of Ruth. We will read these regulations from Deuteronomy 25:5-6:

If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

These laws are similar to customary inheritance laws in some African communities. From this passage we can see the importance of sons; they were the only ones who had the right to inherit and carry the family's name. This was the law that was being challenged by Mahlah and her sisters.

### *Numbers 27:1-27: Challenge by Mahlah and Her Sisters*

Mahlah's father Zelophehad died leaving five daughters and no sons. We are not told whether his wife survived him but it would seem that he was a widower. His daughters decided to challenge the above law which was given by God to Moses. They wanted the law changed so that they could inherit their father's property. This action by Mahlah and her sisters was bold and courageous because in their society women did not have much power. Laws were maintained and applied by men. Moses referred their case to God and God ruled in favour of the sisters and issued a new law that enabled Mahlah and her sisters to inherit their father's property. God upheld justice over the law. In unit 6 we saw that Jesus did the same. It was a partial victory for women because they could only inherit if there were no sons. However, it was turning point for women in Israel.

## ACTIVITY 9

*Write down three lessons that you have learned from Mahlah and her sisters.  
How can you can apply these lessons to the struggle for justice in the  
HIV&AIDS context.*

### Application in the Context of HIV&AIDS

The actions of Mahlah and her sisters are an inspiration to widows to take ownership of their struggle for justice and to stand up for themselves. Their actions also provide a valuable lesson for widows in their struggle for justice. God stood in solidarity with these sisters. This story provides the church with a model for standing in solidarity with widows as they fight for their property rights. The lessons of this story are as follow:

- *The importance of mobilizing for a common cause.* Mahlah and her sisters came together and spoke with one voice. Widows need to form groups where they can mobilize and unite against their oppression.
- *The importance of knowledge.* Mahlah and her sisters knew the law and were able to argue against the law based on their experience. Widows need to know both customary and civil law and interpret these laws through their own experiences.
- *Confront all of society with their grievances.* Mahlah and her sisters confronted the legal, religious, tribal leaders and the whole community with their demand for justice. Widows can use the media, approach the law makers and work together to raise public awareness of their plight.
- *Clear agenda and goals.* Mahlah and her sisters were clear about what they wanted; widows need to make sure their demands are clear.

## ACTIVITY 10

*1. Describe ways in which your church could support widows in their struggle for justice. 2. Prepare sermons with widows in your congregation based on either the story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth) or the story of Tamar (Genesis 38).*

### SUMMARY

In this unit, you learned that the first step in sermon preparation for groups that are vulnerable to HIV&AIDS is to build relationships using three principles: seeking, listening and identifying challenges. Sermon preparation must actually include the concerned groups, namely youth, orphans and widows. It is important to understand the context of the groups before preparing a sermon so that the sermon addresses their needs. We learned about preparing sermons for youth on sexuality, orphans on God's love and widows on standing up for their rights. We also learned about preparing sermons about these groups in order to educate the rest of the congregation about the challenges that these groups face in the HIV&AIDS context.



## FURTHER READING

Dube, Musa W. 2004. "Life," pp 84-91. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *AfricaPraying. A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*. Geneva: WCC.

Dube, Musa W. 2004. "Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Understanding and Acting on the Issues," pp. 84-100. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *HIV/AIDS Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes* Geneva: WCC.

Khathide, Agrippa G. 2004. "Teaching and Talking about Our Sexuality: A Means of Combating HIV/AIDS," pp. 1-9. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. Geneva: WCC.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Sexuality</b>	refers to the sexual nature of human beings. Sexuality also refers to sexual practices, gender and sexual orientation.
<b>Gender equality</b>	refers to people receiving equal opportunities to take part in social, economic, cultural and political activities and benefiting equally from these irrespective of gender.
<b>Gender inequality</b>	refers to discrimination and the lack of equal opportunities in society because of one's gender.
<b>Customary inheritance laws</b>	refer to the laws of a particular cultural group that govern inheritance.
<b>Multiple losses is</b>	experiencing many losses within a short period of time.

# UNIT 8

## PREACHING AS PROPHECY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&AIDS

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 8! In unit 7 you learned about preaching with and for different groups that are vulnerable to HIV&AIDS. You learned about the injustices that are the root causes of HIV&AIDS. In this unit you will learn about preaching as prophecy in the context of HIV&AIDS. Prophetic preaching confronts and challenges injustice. The basis of prophetic preaching is the tradition of prophecy in the Bible which confronted injustice. You will learn about prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and in the church. We will then prepare examples of prophetic sermons that will challenge injustice in the context of HIV&AIDS and empower the church to take action. These sermons are examples of the kind of sermons that the church and its leaders can give in their prophetic role in the HIV&AIDS era. Given that HIV&AIDS is a social injustice-driven epidemic, the role of prophecy is vital. We will focus on three injustices, poverty, lack of access to treatment and gender inequality. In our sermon preparation we will apply the six principles of preaching and liturgy from unit 6. This unit seeks to empower you, as a church leader, worker or member, with the basic knowledge of some of the issues of injustice at the root of HIV&AIDS and to inspire you to engage in prophetic preaching.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ✂ Describe the application of the six principles
- ✂ Explain the importance of prophecy in the context of HIV&AIDS
- ✂ Describe prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and the church
- ✂ Explain the injustice at the root of poverty, lack of access to treatment and gender inequality in the context of HIV&AIDS and prepare sermons to confront these injustices

## TOPICS

- ⌘ Application of the Six Principles of Preaching and Liturgy
  - ⌘ Prophecy in the Context of HIV&AIDS
  - ⌘ Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible
  - ⌘ Prophecy in the New Testament
  - ⌘ Prophecy in the Church
  - ⌘ Sermon One: Prophetic Sermons Against Poverty
  - ⌘ Sermon Two: Prophetic Sermons Against Lack of Access to Treatment
  - ⌘ Sermon Three: Prophetic Sermons Against Gender Inequality
- Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Readings and Glossary

## APPLICATION OF THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING AND LITURGY

In unit 6, we discussed the six principles of preaching and liturgy. We will apply these principles to our sermon preparations focused on three social issues: poverty, lack of access to treatment and gender inequality. The chart below shows us how we will apply these principles in this unit.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Application in this Unit</b>
Context	We will begin this unit with an overview of prophecy in the Bible so that you are clear about how prophecy was used to address social injustice. For each of the three areas of injustice, we will begin with a basic overview of the facts in the context of HIV&AIDS and through the voices of PLWHA.
Participation	Our sermons begin with a testimony from PLWHA. The activity questions are designed to promote discussion during the sermon.

Preaching Liturgy	The sermons are educational and have a lot of factual information that needs to be communicated to the congregation so that they too can understand the issues of social injustice at the root of HIV&AIDS. It is important to use the in-text questions to dialogue with the congregation and ensure that they understand the basic facts. At the end of each sermon, you will be asked to prepare sermons and liturgies that challenge you to apply these principles in your local context.
Worship	Our emphasis throughout the unit is on God's commitment to justice, as shown through prophecy in both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. This commitment teaches us that worship cannot be separated from justice.
Liberation	Prophecy confronts injustice and struggle to bring liberation. The message of liberation is contained in the 'Prophetic Message or Challenge' found in each sermon.
Action	At the end of each sermon there is a section entitled 'Prophetic Action' which focuses on action that needs to be taken to address injustice.

The topics in this unit on prophecy in the Bible and the three areas of injustice can be taught as a series to educate the congregation about social injustice at the root of HIV&AIDS and to challenge the often held belief that 'religion and politics do not mix'. We will start by looking at why there is a need for prophetic preaching in the context of HIV&AIDS.

## PROPHECY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&AIDS

HIV&AIDS is fuelled by injustice. The central role of injustice in HIV&AIDS is described by Dube in the following way: "HIV/AIDS works through social injustice. It is an epidemic within other social epidemics of injustice. Thus where there is poverty, gender inequality, human-rights violation, child abuse, racism, ageism, sex-based discrimination, HIV thrives" (2004: vii). All of the mentioned areas of injustice lie at the root of HIV&AIDS. We need to include these areas in all our discussions

about HIV&AIDS. We will focus on three of the areas mentioned, namely poverty, gender inequality and the lack of access to treatment, a violation of human rights. We will now learn about the biblical basis of prophetic ministry in the context of HIV&AIDS.

## PROPHECY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Prophecy is central to the Hebrew Bible. It plays an important role in the history of the Hebrew nation. Seventeen books in the Hebrew Bible were written by prophets. We will learn about the definition of a prophet and their message.

### Definition of a Prophet

A prophet was a man or woman who was called by God to speak on God's behalf in their context. Prophets were messengers sent by God to address social injustice in the Hebrew nation. They were also called 'seers' because they were able to see the injustices in their context as well as see into the future. Prophets were different from priests. Priests were born into the profession whereas prophets were called from outside the priesthood. Prophets came from different backgrounds, for example Amos was a shepherd, Daniel was a government official and Jeremiah was called at an early age to be a prophet. Although prophets were active throughout the history of the Hebrew nation, they became prominent during the period of the monarchy and after the building of the temple. The period of the monarchy was the time when the Hebrew nation was ruled by kings (1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles). The temple was built during this period by Solomon (1 Kings 5, 6). This was a time of political, social, religious and economic transformation. The Hebrew nation moved from being an egalitarian farming community into being a kingdom state. This period was also characterized by a widening gap between the rich and the poor, economic exploitation and injustice. The priests were busy with their duties in the temple, the kings and the ruling class were maintaining the status quo and there was no one to address these injustices. It was in this context that God called many of the prophets. In God's eyes, the presence of injustice and exploitation of the poor in the Hebrew nation was a national crisis that called for a prophetic response. This clear commitment by God to justice is the basis and inspiration for our worship.



## ACTIVITY 1

*Compare God's commitment to justice and the plight of the poor with your commitment and the commitment of your church.*

### The Message of the Prophets

The prophets delivered messages from God that addressed their immediate context and the future. Their messages focused on social injustice. It was not easy to be a prophet. Prophets were persecuted, imprisoned and some were killed for proclaiming God's message. They proclaimed their messages at great personal cost. The content and context of their messages were as follows:

*Judgment:* Prophetic judgment was directed at social injustice. They proclaimed God's judgment against social injustice such as: *economic injustice* that exploited the poor. For example, Amos 5:11a reads, "You trample on the poor and force them to give you grain"; *injustice in the law courts*. This can be seen in Amos 5:12b: "you deprive the poor of justice in the courts"; *violence and bloodshed*. Micah 6:12 reads, "Her rich men are violent, her people are liars and their tongues speak deceitfully"; *false prophets and corrupt priests* who did not confront injustice, exploitation and violence in their communities. Let us look at Jeremiah 6:13b-14 which says, "prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace"; and *kings for their injustice*. Micah 3:9 reads, "Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right."

## ACTIVITY 2

*Write down a list of people that the prophets addressed and apply it to your context.*

*Relationship with Yahweh (God):* The message of the prophets was that worship without the pursuit of justice in society was unacceptable to God. For example, Amos

5:21 says, “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river.” In other words, spirituality and worship cannot be separated from confronting injustice.

### ACTIVITY 3

*Write down three reasons why true worship of God is linked with establishing justice.*

*Repentance:* the prophets always followed their message of judgment with calls for repentance and transformation. The goal of prophetic judgment was to bring transformation through repentance. For example, after his message of judgment, the prophet Joel called for repentance, say, “‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Render your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity’” (2:12-14). Other references include Isaiah 1:18-20.

### ACTIVITY 4

*Explain why our messages of judgment needs to include God’s love and compassion.*

*Consequences:* the prophets made it clear that the nation’s failure to repent from social injustice and exploitation of the poor would result in judgment. Israel and Judah did not heed the warnings of the prophets and did not repent. Because of their failure to repent, they were conquered and captured by the nations of Assyria and Babylon. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 reads, “The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words

and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.” There are some people who believe that HIV&AIDS is always a consequence of individual sin. Understanding social injustice reveals that the root cause of HIV and vulnerability to HIV&AIDS are rooted in social injustices such as poverty and gender inequality. HIV&AIDS is a consequence of injustice. Unfortunately, most of our church leaders simplistically focus on HIV&AIDS as a consequence of individual sin, thus condemning our most vulnerable members of society (widows, youth, orphans, wives of unfaithful spouses and survivors of war and sexual violence, PLWHA) as sinners, who must repent or face God’s sure wrath. This is a major divergence from biblical prophets and their practice of focusing on unjust social structures and their leaders, which is what makes these powerless groups vulnerable to what is often called ‘individual sin’. Prophecy and prophets, in other words, must have the capacity to know, identify and attack structural sin and its architects in our societies.

*Hope and Restoration:* The prophets brought messages of hope and restoration during times when the people were in exile as a consequence of their failure to repent and change. In the midst of their helplessness and hopelessness, the prophets gave messages of hope. For example, Isaiah 54:11-14 reads, “O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires... In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you.” Their messages of hope were addressed to the future in this life and the coming kingdom which God.

## ACTIVITY 5

*Describe some of the factors that contribute to the hopelessness of HIV&AIDS in your community. How can the church apply the prophetic message of hope and restoration?*

*Confront surrounding nations:* the prophetic message was not just for the nation of Israel/Judah but included surrounding nations. Prophets were national and international messengers of God. For example, Jonah was sent to proclaim God’s judgment on Nineveh (Jonah 1:2).

*Different forms of communication:* Prophets used different means to communicate their message. For example, sometimes they proclaimed their message and sometimes they acted out the message (e.g. Ezekiel acted out how Jerusalem would be captured (4:1-3)).

## PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Prophecy is also central to the New Testament and represents a continuation of the prophetic tradition from the Hebrew Bible. Here are some examples of prophets and their messages.

<b>Prophets</b>	<b>Message</b>
Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:28-38)	Both prophets prophesied over the life of Jesus and revealed that he was the promised Messiah for Israel and the Gentiles.
John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-12) (Luke 3:1-22)	Judgment: he confronted religious and public leaders for their corruption (Matthew 3:7-8) and called them to repent and change - “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8)  He called the community to repent (Luke 3:3)  He announced the arrival of Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 3:15-16) (Dube 2004:47-48)  He was beheaded because of his message (Dube 2004:48)
Jesus (Luke 4:18-19) (Luke 22-23)	His agenda for his mission was taken from Isaiah 61:1-2. His mission was a continuation of the prophetic tradition.  Jesus as a prophet addressed social injustice and identified with groups that were discriminated against (e.g. tax collectors, lepers, women).  He forgave sins and brought love and forgiveness.  He questioned oppressive scriptures, confronted religious leaders and imperial rulers and was finally crucified for his message (Dube 2004:53-55).

## ACTIVITY 6

*Write down similarities between prophecy in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.*

### PROPHECY IN THE CHURCH

The mission of the church is drawn from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Prophecy is central to both and it needs to be central to the church. Throughout its history, the church has been both faithful and unfaithful to its prophetic role in the world. In regards to issues of justice, the church is often divided. For example, in South Africa the church was divided with regards to apartheid and injustice. There were churches that supported the state and churches that fought against apartheid and injustice. Despite the mixed messages that the church often sends out, the prophetic call to justice seems to always prevail. This is a source of hope for the church and the world!

## ACTIVITY 7

*Write down the different messages that churches are sending out in the context of HIV&AIDS. Give examples from your context.*

### SERMON ONE: POVERTY AND HIV&AIDS

Our sermon will begin with the context of HIV&AIDS and a testimony on poverty. If it is possible, ask a sex worker to testify about surviving in poverty. Other groups that could effectively testify include 'illegal immigrants/workers' from economically challenged countries.

## Context: Poverty and HIV&AIDS

Poverty lies at the root of HIV&AIDS. It has been estimated that 95% of the global number of People Living with HIV&AIDS live in poor countries. Most live in sub-Saharan Africa. HIV&AIDS is spreading quickly in countries where there is poverty, poor health care systems and limited resources for prevention and care. Anybody can contract HIV, as it does not discriminate between rich or poor, women or men, young or old, heterosexual or homosexual. However, the high prevalence of HIV cases in poor countries and communities indicates that poverty creates vulnerability to HIV&AIDS. Poverty is also rooted in unjust economic policies and practices. Unjust economic policies combined with other factors, such as bad governance, corruption, wars, mismanagement of national resources and oppression, create poverty. Our focus will be on unjust economic policies and their impact on poor countries. We will specifically look at Structural Adjustment Programs or SAPs. These are economic policies prescribed to poor countries by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

### ACTIVITY 9

*Describe the connection between poverty and HIV&AIDS. Use examples in your community.*

## Economic Injustice: Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS)

We will base our analysis of SAPs on the story of a worker from South Africa.

My name is Rosemary Van dyk. I am a woman of mixed descent, known in South Africa as Cape Coloured. I worked in a clothing textile company for nine years, but the company was closed down because it could not compete with the international textiles that are being imported into South Africa. The Cut and Trim company in Khaye Litsha sometimes call me when they have contracts from local clothing companies. In my previous job, I had a permanent position as a tailor, I had medical benefits, a pension fund and contributions to an unemployment insurance fund. Now I am a casual labourer, I work for long hours and I am paid very little. I just wait to be called when there's work to be done. Work has ceased to be meaningful, and there are many people competing for few jobs (LenkaBula 2004: )

We will now relate Rosemary's experience to the three economic policies that are the basis of SAPs. Rosemary worked in a local textile company that had to close down because it could not compete with cheaper products which were imported from outside South Africa. According to Puleng Lenkabule, SAPs are based on three economic policies, namely trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation (2004:4). Liberalization allows goods, services and money to move easily between countries. This is the policy that led to the closure of the factory where Rosemary worked. Liberalization opens local markets to cheap imported goods which lead to the closure of local industries. Privatization requires governments to sell their social service institutions, such as those that deliver water, electricity, education, transport and housing. This policy has led to job losses and higher prices of basic services, increasing poverty. This policy means that Rosemary will become poorer as she has to pay for more basic services. Deregulation refers to the removal of government subsidies and the removal of state regulations on labour laws in order to attract foreign companies (2004:5). These companies are looking for cheap labour in order to maximize their profits. The removal of labour laws has led to lower wages and the system of casual labour. Casual labour increases profits for companies because they do not have to pay pension, medical aid and other employee benefits. Rosemary had become a casual labourer on a lower wage with no benefits. Rosemary's life has been changed by unjust economic systems.

## ACTIVITY 10

*Write down similarities between the experience of Rosemary and workers in your country or in the congregation.*

Prophetic Message: The Cry of the Worker (James 5:1-6)

Our prophetic role requires us to address these economic systems because these systems are made by human beings and can be changed. Puleng Lenkabula, quoting the Catholic Bishops Conference, states that those who are in favour of this economic

system argue that “the existence of poverty and unemployment, and the inequitable distribution of wealth, are the result of inescapable economic laws and must be accepted as such” (2005:6). In other words, we are expected to accept poverty, injustice and unemployment as part of life. We are expected to accept that nothing can be done to change this situation. Our prophetic message must reject this statement and confront the injustice that lies at the root of our economic systems. We need to remember that human beings shape and determine economic practice and therefore there is always room for change (2004:7). Our prophetic message from this text targets the wealthy, whose riches have been gained through exploiting the poor and depriving them of their rightful wages. The warning is clear –God is a witness of injustice and is not neutral. God is not against wealth or the rich but he is against wealth and riches that are gained through exploitation and defrauding labourers of their rightful wages. James 5:4 reads, “Look the wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed our fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty”.

## ACTIVITY 11

*Prepare a sermon and liturgy on James 5:1-6 based on your local context.*

### Prophetic Action

We need to add our prophetic voice to the voices of community organizations that are struggling against economic injustice, such as the Jubilee 2000 network which targets the IMF and World Bank. Local churches need to network amongst themselves and speak against economic injustice in their communities and countries. Networking needs to expand and include national and international churches and organizations. Together these networks need to develop an alternative vision of economic justice that will be based on justice and an equitable distribution of wealth.



## ACTIVITY 12

*Write down an action plan that will enable you to develop networks with other churches and community organizations to challenge economic injustice in your context.*

### SERMON TWO: LACK OF ACCESS TO TREATMENT

#### Testimony

For an appropriate liturgy, you could collect written and published stories on the effectiveness of ARVs. One could also use the stories of care givers in contexts in which there are no ARVs or even basic pain killers.

#### Lack of Access to Treatment in the Context of HIV&AIDS

In the last section we learned that 95% of PLWHA are living in poor countries. PLWHA require good health care systems that can diagnose and treat opportunistic infections as well as to provide a constant supply of Anti-retroviral (ARVs). ARVs do not treat HIV but enable PLWHA to live longer and continue working. Most poor countries do not have adequate health care systems that can diagnose and treat opportunistic infections and they cannot afford ARVs. There are two issues of global injustice that are connected to these issues: debt repayment and international trade policies. According to the Jubilee Network, poor countries spend a high proportion of their income on paying debts to rich countries. For example, they spend four times more on debt repayment than on health budgets. International trade laws protect pharmaceutical companies' rights to set prices for ARVs and prevent the production of cheaper generic medications that would make ARVs accessible to the poor as well as allow poor countries to produce ARVs. The unavailability of ARVs for PLWHA in poor countries is a violation of their right to life and health and requires a prophetic response and action.

Sermon Title:

Neighbours in a Global Village in the Context of HIV&AIDS

Text: Luke 10:25-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan)

This parable challenges international relations and responsibilities. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in response to the question “who is my neighbour” (Luke 10:29). The central characters in the story were the man who was robbed and beaten up, the religious leaders who saw him and passed by, and the Samaritan who helped the man. The hero of the story was the Samaritan. The man who was beaten up was a Jew and the person who helped him was a Samaritan. There was enmity and hatred between these two groups. Jesus’ parable had a radical message. It challenged prejudice in his society and presented a vision of relationships based on compassion and mutual responsibility. In a context of need, there was no room for prejudice and discrimination, those with the resources helped those in need. Jesus extended the definition of neighbours, going beyond people from our own race, country, religion, class, gender and age to include anyone who was in need. The assistance that the Samaritan gave went above what was normally expected. The Samaritan shared his resources and provided for the man in need. This teaching on practical love and compassion by Jesus inspires us to praise and worship God, but also to take up our prophetic role as church leaders, works and members.

## ACTIVITY 13

*Describe the characters in this parable and relate them to people in your community.*

Prophetic Challenge: Call for Neighbourly International Relationships

At the root of the lack of access to treatment is the lack of neighbourly international relationships. HIV&AIDS has beaten and robbed poor countries of their citizens. Health care systems are unable to offer quality care. Debt repayment has robbed poor countries of resources and expensive ARVs are out of reach. The international community is aware of these challenges. Our prophetic message appeals to the values of the global community. As we saw in the last sermon, international trade policies

and debt issues are created by human beings and can therefore be changed by human beings. Our prophetic call challenges rich countries and pharmaceutical companies to fulfil their ‘Samaritan Call’ and share their resources with poor countries in order to address the root causes of HIV&AIDS. This includes changing trade policies, cancelling debts and providing practical assistance until these countries can stand on their feet.

### Prophetic Action

Prophetic action is similar to the one in the previous sermon on poverty.

## ACTIVITY 14

*Write down an action plan that will enable you to search for organizations and churches that are working on debt issues and access to treatment.*

*Explore ways of networking with these organizations and churches.*

*Prepare a sermon and liturgy on Luke 10:25-27 and relate it to specific issues in your local context.*

### Sermon Three: Gender Inequality

Text: Galatians 6:2

We have already discussed gender inequality in unit 7. We will now be more specific, challenging men in the church. We will begin with the HIV&AIDS context and need also to include the voices of PLWHA, both men and women.

### Gender Inequality in the Context of HIV&AIDS

Gender inequality is an injustice that is accepted by many societies, religions and cultures. According to Dube, gender inequality in the context of HIV&AIDS is:

Fertile soil upon which the virus thrives. Women who have been constructed as powerless cannot insist on safe sex. They can hardly abstain, nor does faithfulness to their partners help. Men, who have been constructed to be fearless, brave and sometimes reckless, think it is manly when they refuse to admit that unprotected sex can lead to HIV/AIDS infection. Working within some cultures' allowance of extra marital affairs, many men continue to be unfaithful. In the end, no one wins. We all die; those with power and those without power. So what is the point of keeping such a gender construct? Who gains by it? It's unfair distribution of power is the poison in our plate. (2004:88)

## ACTIVITY 15

*Drawing on the above quote, write three reasons why gender is 'poison in our plate'.*

In addition to being unable to protect themselves from HIV, women bear the burden of care. They care for the sick and dying as well as the orphans. As a result, many are unable to participate in economic activities that can enhance their lives. Girl children miss out on education because they are caring for siblings. HIV&AIDS is a heavy burden on women and is supported by gender inequality.

### Prophetic Message

Our prophetic message is addressed to the patriarchal culture. It is a call for men to play their role in eradicating gender inequality and lifting the burden of HIV&AIDS from women. Our message is for men and the society in the church. The Bible says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). In this text, Paul, like the prophets, draws a connection between sharing burdens with us and faithfulness to Christ. Paul is challenging those who are in a position of strength and power to take upon themselves the burdens of those who have less power. This has radical implications in the context of HIV&AIDS. In this context, women are the ones who are burdened and men are the ones being called to relieve women of their burdens. By doing this, men will be fulfilling the law of Christ. Failure to carry out these instructions is failure to obey Christ.

## Prophetic Action

In the past few years, church leaders have met at several conferences and signed agreements that bound them to agreements. We will read an example of a statement on gender from a document which was signed by church leaders in Africa. This document is entitled *Plan of Action: The Ecumenical Response to HIV/AIDS in Africa*. The following quotation is taken from this document.

We will challenge the traditional gender roles and power relations within our churches and church institutions which have contributed to the disempowerment of women, and consequently to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

We will combat sexual violence, abuse and rape in homes, communities, schools and conflict/war situations.

We will address gender roles and relations in families that contribute to the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection.

We will support organizations that help young women to negotiate safer sexual relationships.

### ACTIVITY 16

*Choose one of the above commitments and write three things that you can do to introduce the message of gender justice to your church.*

*Prepare a sermon and liturgy based on one of these commitments to challenge the men in your church.*

## SUMMARY

In this unit you learned how to apply the six principles of preaching and liturgy in the context of prophetic preaching. Prophetic preaching addresses injustice and is necessary in the HIV&AIDS context because injustice is the root cause of HIV&AIDS. You learned that the basis of prophecy is God's commitment to justice as revealed in the message of prophets throughout the Bible. We focused on three

areas of injustice in the context of HIV&AIDS and applied a prophetic message to each of them. The three areas were poverty, lack of access to treatment and gender inequality. You were also challenged to prepare sermons on these topics from your local context. Through prophetic preaching and liturgy the church will contribute to the fight against HIV&AIDS because it is a social injustice driven epidemic.

## . SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Explain the importance of prophecy in the context of HIV&AIDS
2. Describe prophets and their messages in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.
3. Describe the prophetic ministry of Jesus.
4. Explain the relationship between poverty and HIV&AIDS.
5. Describe the impact of Structural Adjustment Programs on poverty in Africa.
6. Explain the key issues of injustice related to lack of access to treatment.
7. Describe the impact of HIV&AIDS on women and men.
8. Prepare prophetic sermons and liturgies that address all three areas of injustice that we discussed in this unit.



### FURTHER READING

Dube, Musa W. 2004. "The Prophetic Method in the New Testament," pp 43-58. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. Geneva: WCC.

Dube, Musa W. 2004. "Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Understanding and Acting on the Issues" pp 43-58. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. Geneva: WCC.

Masenya (ngwana' Mphahlele), Madipoane. 2003. "Prophecy as a Method of Speaking about the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Southern Africa" pp. 43-58. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. Geneva: WCC.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Prophets:</b>	Men and women who were called by God to proclaim God's message for the present and future.
<b>Prophecy:</b>	The terms used for the messages of the prophets. It is also challenging social injustice, especially its impact on powerless members of society.
<b>Egalitarian:</b>	A society without formalized differences in the access to power, influence, and wealth.
<b>Ageism:</b>	Discrimination based on age, both for young and elderly.
<b>Anti-retroviral drugs:</b>	Medicines that strengthen the immune system and prolong and improve the life of a person living with HIV. These medicines do not cure HIV but allow a person to live a normal and productive life.
<b>Pharmaceutical companies:</b>	Companies that manufacture drugs and medicines.
<b>International Monetary Fund (IMF):</b>	An organization comprised of 184 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment, sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty.
<b>World Bank:</b>	A sister organization to the IMF, this organization lends funds at commercial rates and provides technical assistance in order to facilitate economic development in its poorer member states.

# UNIT 9

## PREACHING IN NON-TRADITIONAL WAYS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV&AIDS

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 9! In our last three units we applied six principles of preaching and liturgy, transforming our methods of preaching and liturgy in response to the challenges of HIV&AIDS. These methods introduced us to non-traditional methods of preaching. In this unit we will learn more about non-traditional ways of preaching in the context of HIV&AIDS. Our sources for non-traditional ways of preaching are the media and family/community events. We will use some methods of communication from the media, such as interviews and panel discussions. We will also learn how to prepare sermons for popular media, such as television and radio. Lastly, we will use community and family events, such as birthdays, unveiling of tombstones and World AIDS Day, to preach about HIV&AIDS. Our aim in using non-traditional ways of preaching is to break the silence around HIV&AIDS, eradicate stigma and transform attitudes towards HIV&AIDS in the wider community.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ⌘ Describe non-traditional ways of preaching using methods from the media, such as interviews and panel discussions in the church
- ⌘ Explain and apply the basic principles of preparing a sermon for television and radio
- ⌘ Prepare sermons on HIV&AIDS for family and community gatherings for preaching about HIV&AIDS, such as birthday celebrations, unveiling of tombstones and World AIDS Day



## TOPICS

- ⌘ Non-traditional Ways of Preaching
- ⌘ Basic Principles for Preparing a Sermon for Television or Radio
- ⌘ Preaching at Family and Community Occasions
- ⌘ Preparing a Sermon on the Birthday of a Child
- ⌘ Preparing a Sermon for Unveiling of Tombstones
- ⌘ Preparing a Sermon for World AIDS Day

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Reading, Glossary

### Non-Traditional Ways of Preaching

The six principles of preaching and liturgy that we discussed in the last three units transformed the traditional method of preaching. Preaching became participatory and inclusive, contrary to traditional methods of preaching in which the preacher is the only one who speaks while the congregation listens. Traditional preaching alone is inadequate in addressing the multiple challenges of HIV&AIDS. There is a need for different ways of communication that will: break the silence around HIV&AIDS, allow the voices of PLWHA and the affected to be heard, eradicate stigma, confront misinformation, fear and ignorance, promote the dignity and the rights of PLWHA, and address the injustice at the root of HIV&AIDS. In this unit, we will build on the six principles and explore more ways of communicating about HIV&AIDS. We will 'borrow' two methods of communication from the media. These two methods are interviews and panel discussions. We will apply the *Zwane* and *go rera* models to our interviews and panel discussions. Our interviews and panel discussions will begin with testimony/stories from PLWHA and will be structured to promote dialogue, interaction, discussions, questions, worship, liberation and action.

## ACTIVITY 1

*Write a paragraph on the importance of using non-traditional methods of preaching in the context of HIV&AIDS. Use examples from your context.*

## Interviews

Our interviews must start with a testimony/story from PLWHA. Interviews are effective ways of communicating information in a personal and non-threatening way. Traditionally, interviews are between two people. We will use the traditional part of the interview to provide the initial input or information. Then we will open the discussions to the audience/congregation. Interviews are very effective in communicating information about HIV&AIDS. For example, interviews with doctors, PLWHA and home-care advisors provide opportunities for members of the congregation to be better informed and participate in discussions during which they can ask questions and participate in a communal process of seeking solutions/alternatives or action planning. Interviews also provide an opportunity for theological reflection on the topic being discussed. This is important because it empowers the congregation to apply their faith in the context of HIV&AIDS. Below are some guidelines for organizing an interview in your church that will be informative, inclusive and participatory.

- Select a topic, biblical theme and speakers with PLWHA, the affected and the congregation. Invite PLWHA to share a testimony/story before the interview starts. Design a liturgy for the event that will link the topic to biblical themes. For example, if your topic is 'How HIV affects the body', you will need to invite a doctor and PLWHA. An example of a biblical text for this topic is the healing of the leper in Mark 1:40-45. Your liturgical reading could be Psalm 31 and you could leave time for praying for the sick.
- Ask the congregation to submit questions on the topic and compile a list of questions based on those submitted.
- Make an appointment with the speakers (e.g. doctor, PLWHA or homecare advisor) and share the list of questions with them so they can prepare.
- Set a date and advertise the service/program in your local community.

## ACTIVITY 2

*Prepare for an interview in your church by choosing a topic, date and speakers. State your reason for choosing this particular topic.*

### Panel Discussion

Our panel discussion must begin with a testimony/story from PLWHA.

A panel discussion is a method of communication that involves three or more speakers. Each give a short presentation on the topic being discussed. The presentations are followed by questions from the audience. For example, a panel presentation on the topic 'Responding to Orphans in our Community' can have a panel of speakers comprising of a government official from the department that deals with children's issues, a child psychologist or social worker who works with children, an orphan, a grandparent looking after orphans, PLWHA and a representative from an NGO which works with orphans. You can see from this panel that each speaker will bring a different perspective on the topic. Together they provide a better understanding of the topic. When organizing a panel discussion aim to use speakers from your local community as it makes it easier to address local problems. The tasks for organizing a panel discussion in your church are similar to those for organizing interviews. The only differences are that you will have more speakers to invite, that the speakers will be presenting from different perspectives and that it may not be practical to prepare questions for them beforehand. However, it is important to inform your congregation that there will be time to ask questions so that they can prepare questions beforehand or during the session.

## ACTIVITY 3

*Apply the above steps in planning a panel discussion in your church on any aspect of HIV&AIDS.*

## Basic Principles for Preparing a Sermon for Television/Radio

Preparing a sermon for television or radio is an example of a non-traditional way of preaching outside of the church. Preaching through television and radio provides the church with an opportunity to reach a wider audience and influence public thinking. This is critical in the context of HIV&AIDS because of the silence, stigma and misinformation about HIV&AIDS among the general public. This form of sermonizing is also an opportunity for the voices of PLWHA to be heard. Therefore, these sermons need to include testimonies/stories of PLWHA. Below are some guidelines for preparing sermons for television and radio.

### Topic

Choose a topic with PLWHA based on their experiences or based on an issue that is in the news and is generating a lot of discussion in the community. Many issues that make the headlines are related to events in communities. For example, a few years ago in South Africa a woman publicly admitted that she was HIV positive and was beaten to death by her community. This kind of HIV&AIDS related incident provides opportunities for PLWHA to be heard and for us to preach sermons that will challenge the public's perceptions of HIV&AIDS.

### Biblical Text

Choose a biblical theme, story or teaching that relates to the issue that you have chosen. For example, a biblical story that would be relevant to a sermon responding to the killing of the HIV positive woman is the story of the woman who had committed adultery (John 8:1-11). Many communities believe that HIV is contracted through sexual immorality and promiscuity. Both women were accused of sexual immorality and both communities wanted to kill the women. One community succeeded and the other did not. In the biblical story, Jesus confronted the community with their own sins and this prevented the woman from being killed. Jesus then forgave the woman and gave her a second chance.

## Application

Choose clear principles or lessons from the biblical text that confront beliefs, attitudes and values. For example, in the story of the woman who was killed by her community, the beliefs, attitudes and values that drove the community to kill her need to be confronted and named. We also need to teach alternative beliefs, attitudes and values that promote compassion and strengthen community support for PLWHA. Jesus' response is an example of prophetic compassion.

## Language Use

Lastly, remember to avoid 'Christian language' when preparing sermons for the general public. Christian language refers to terms and phrases that are used and understood by Christians in your local church but which may not be understood by the general public. Examples include: 'sanctified', 'anointed', 'rapture', etc. Use plain language and terms that are easily understood. Avoid criticizing other churches, groups and individuals. If you have to use Christian language, please be sure to explain the meaning thoroughly.

## ACTIVITY 4

*Describe an HIV&AIDS related incident in your community and apply the above guidelines to prepare a sermon for your local radio or television station.*

## Preaching at Family and Community Occasions in the Context of HIV&AIDS

We will now prepare sermons for community and family events. In many communities in Africa, religious leaders are often invited to preach at community and family events. These events provide opportunities for the church to break the silence around HIV&AIDS. These occasions are a challenge because there is an expectation of the traditional method of preaching. The method of storytelling can also be used to bring to life the voices of PLWHA. Storytelling can be done in two ways, either by inviting PLWHA to share their stories or by the preacher telling stories about the experiences of PLWHA. Equally important, the audience must participate. This can

be done through asking questions and initiating dialogue throughout the sermon. The sermons that we will prepare have activity questions which can be used to initiate discussions. Our first sermon is for birthday celebrations of a child. We will begin by looking at the HIV&AIDS context.

Sermon One: Preaching on the Occasion of the Birthday of a Child

Topic: Standing up for our children

Text: Exodus 1:1- 2:1-10

Sermon Outline

Children in the context of HIV&AIDS

Context of the birth of Moses

The survival of Moses

Application in the HIV&AIDS context

Liturgy

Children in the Context of HIV&AIDS

The birth of a child is a sign of hope, the beginning of a new life and a cause for celebration. This is true for some but is not true for all. In our context, the birth of many children is not met with such celebration and wonder. HIV&AIDS have robbed many children of families. Some contract HIV at birth and die early. It is not only HIV&AIDS that threatens the lives of our children. There are other threats, such as child abuse, rape, violence, and poverty that threaten the lives of our children. Our society has become an unsafe place for all children and we, as adults and communities, need to stand up for our children. The lives of our children are under threat. The story of the birth of Moses is similar to our context today. Moses was born in a context where his life was under threat. It was only because a few women saved his life, that he was able to survive and save their nation.

## ACTIVITY 5

*Are our children under threat? What are some of the threats to their lives?*

## Context of the Birth of Moses

Someone once said that “every time a child is born it means that God has not given up on the world”. This quote applies to every child. In this text it applies to Moses. Moses was born into a slave family. His nation, the Hebrews, was enslaved by the Egyptians. At the time that Moses was born, the king of Egypt (Pharaoh) had passed a law that all male babies born by Hebrew slaves were to be killed. Moses was born into an environment that threatened his right to life. He had no chance of survival. The situation appeared hopeless.

### ACTIVITY 6

*Describe the threat of HIV & AIDS. What makes the situation appear hopeless?*

## The Survival of Moses

instructions to kill male babies (Exodus 1:17). *Moses' mother* refused to allow Moses. The survival of Moses was due to the acts of courage and resistance of a few women. These women were the midwives *Shiphrah and Puah* who, out of fear of God, defied Pharaoh's to be thrown into the Nile to drown and die. Instead, in an act of courage and faith, she made a basket and put Moses into it and let him float on the Nile. *Pharaoh's daughter* defied her father's law and saved Moses' life from death. The plans of one of the greatest empires in the world were challenged by the courageous acts of a few women. Their actions not only ensured the survival of Moses but the liberation of their nation!

### ACTIVITY 7

*Narrate a story of recent or historical acts of courage from your community.*

## Application in the HIV&AIDS Context

HIV&AIDS is one of the most serious threats to the lives of children in Africa.

According to Dube:

[HIV&AIDS have] particularly added to the vulnerability of children as powerless members of their societies. Many are orphaned, grieved and left with no parental guidance or provision, hence open to sexual abuse, labour exploitation, uncertain futures, stigma, discrimination, rape and poverty. We now have child-headed homes, where the children's chances of going to school successfully are often very slim. They become school drop outs; they fall to teenage pregnancy, and face a high chance of HIV/AIDS infection.

The challenges that our children face because of HIV&AIDS seem overwhelming and hopeless. But the story of the women who saved Moses' life shows us that it is through small acts of courage that big problems are resolved. The actions of these women send us a liberating message of hope that challenges everyone to act in response to the dangers to the lives of our children in the context of HIV&AIDS. Everyone is affected by HIV&AIDS; therefore, everyone needs to act, for the sake of all our children and the future of our nations.

### ACTIVITY 8

- 1. Read the quote from Dube and challenge the audience to make a commitment to an action in response to the needs of children affected by HIV&AIDS.*
- 2. Prepare a sermon for a birthday based on the challenges of HIV&AIDS.*
- 3. Write a participatory prayer for your sermon.*

## Sermon Two: Preaching at the Unveiling of a Tombstone

Our next sermon is tailored to a specific event, the unveiling of a tombstone of someone who died of AIDS. Stigma, silence and shame often prevent families from mourning or speaking openly about the death and life of person who dies of AIDS. Sermons during these occasions need to break the silence around HIV&AIDS and



create safe spaces for family members to share their feelings and make peace with the death of their family member from AIDS.

Topic: The Triumph of God's grace, love and forgiveness

Text: Mark 9:2-4

Sermon Outline

Testimonies

Context of HIV&AIDS

Context of the text

The presence of Moses and Elijah

Application in the HIV&AIDS context

Liturgy

Testimonies

Family members breaking the silence and admitting their relative/s dies of AIDS.

Context of HIV&AIDS

Tombstone unveiling is a ritual that honours the dead and creates a permanent remembrance by erecting a tombstone. Tombstone unveiling ceremonies are often held a year after the date of the funeral. The times differ from culture to culture. It is a ceremony that enables the family of the deceased to complete their mourning period and celebrate the passing on of their loved ones into the next life. For Christians, it is an occasion to celebrate the triumph of life over death and the assurance that the deceased has passed on to a new life and lives in the presence of God. These beliefs are a source of encouragement to the family because they know that they will be reunited with their loved one in the next life (Chitando 2004:40). However, the ceremony for persons who have die from an AIDS related illness are usually affected by stigma. Often at the funeral of PLWHA, the cause of death is not openly discussed. There is secrecy and shame. The tombstone unveiling is also shrouded with secrecy and shame. Instead of providing healing and closure, the ritual brings back painful memories and shame—which the family is trying to put behind them. The unveiling of a tombstone for someone who died of AIDS provides an opportunity for the church to offer a special ministry of healing for the surviving relatives. Healing is a process; however, it can begin with a sermon that de-stigmatizes HIV&AIDS and emphasizes

hope in God's grace and forgiveness. The text for our sermon will teach about God's grace and forgiveness as a source of hope for this life and the next. Our text is focused on the transfiguration of Jesus.

## ACTIVITY 9

*Explain the importance of the unveiling of tombstones in your culture and community.*

### Context of the Text

The text is preceded by three of Jesus' teachings that relate to death and resurrection. The first was Jesus' prediction of his own death and resurrection in Mark 8:31. The second teaching was on the cost of following Jesus (Mark 8:34-38). Notably, the text reads, "but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35b). Lastly, Jesus promised that some of his disciples would see the kingdom of God in Mark 9:1. From this context, we can see that the transfiguration was a window that enabled the disciples to see the kingdom of God. Jesus' body was transformed into a new body and he was seen speaking to Moses and Elijah.

### The Presence of Moses and Elijah

Moses and Elijah died thousands of years ago and yet in this text we see that they were alive and living in God's kingdom. The lives of Moses and Elijah are examples of the triumph of God's grace, love and forgiveness. Moses committed murder and ran away from the law (Exodus 2:11-15). After forty years, God called Moses to liberate his people from slavery. God's grace, love and forgiveness prevailed in Moses' life. Elijah's life was also not perfect, he too had weaknesses. At one time, when his life was being threatened by Jezebel, queen of Israel, he was gripped with fear, hopelessness and helplessness. He wanted to die and prayed that God would take his life (1 Kings 19:1-9). As with Moses, God's grace, love and forgiveness prevailed in his life. God's actions towards human failure inspires hope and causes us to worship and praise.

## ACTIVITY 10

*Describe how the failures of heroes in the Bible can be a source of hope.*

### Application in the HIV&AIDS Context

The presence of Moses and Elijah in the kingdom of God is a liberating message of hope. Here are three ways in which this hope can be a source of healing for relatives at the unveiling of a tombstone of someone who died of HIV&AIDS:

- Some still believe that HIV is a curse sent for one's sin of immorality. This is not necessarily true; many children are born with HIV&AIDS, many faithful wives are infected by their spouse and some poor widows and women have to work as sex workers to feed their families. Even in cases of sin, we see God's forgiveness and restoration extended, in this case, to Moses and Elijah. HIV is a virus not a sin. The actions that brought the virus into the life of the deceased are not known to us and so we can not judge. However, if those actions were immoral, there is still hope because God's grace, love and forgiveness prevails over all sin. Since God forgives, we are called to forgive.
- Forgiveness frees us and allows us to remember the life of the deceased, to speak about our memories and to openly mourn their death. This will bring healing and reconciliation in the family.
- God's grace, love and forgiveness are the source of hope for this life and the next. The deceased is assured of life after death in the presence of God. Those left behind are assured of being re-united with their loved ones in the future. It is this hope that inspires all of us to follow Jesus and to act in obedience to his commandments.

## ACTIVITY 11

*Explain the source of hope that comes from God's grace, love and forgiveness in the context of HIV&AIDS.*

## Sermon Three: Preparing a Sermon For World's AIDS Day

Our last sermon preparation is for a community and national event, namely World AIDS Day. This is an occasion to admit that we are an HIV&AIDS positive world. We therefore need to own our HIV&AIDS status and struggle together to reverse the disease.

Topic: God Sees, Listens and Acts

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:7-10

Sermon Outline

Context of HIV&AIDS

Context of the text

God saw, listened and acted

Application in the context of HIV&AIDS

Liturgy

### Context of HIV&AIDS

World's AIDS Day is an internationally recognized day set aside to remember PLWHA and to encourage the world to re-commit itself to the struggle against HIV&AIDS. It is an opportunity for the voices of PLWHA to be heard. This should be a day when PLWHA are in the driving seat, setting the agenda, defining the issues and telling their stories. There is nothing wrong with programs that raise issues around HIV&AIDS. These should be encouraged. However, I feel that this day should belong to PLWHA and the affected. Simultaneously, the world community generally is also challenged to take up their role of accountable solidarity. The church can set an example by dedicating the day to PLWHA. This means that the agenda for that day is set by PLWHA. It is an opportunity for the church to listen to PLWHA and reflect together with PLWHA on God's call to the church in the context of HIV&AIDS. The text for today reminds of the importance of listening, solidarity and compassion. We learn that God listens before God acts.

### Context of the Text

The context of this text was the slavery of the Hebrew nation in Israel and the response of God. God's response was to liberate the nation from slavery and bring

them to the promised land, to live in freedom. God's plan was not just liberation from oppression but fullness of life.

### God Saw, Listened and Acted

The text describes the order of God's intervention. God saw, listened and acted. In 3:7-8a,

The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them.'

Then God acts by calling Moses. The central character in this text is God. We see that God is concerned about suffering and calls people to be partners in addressing suffering.

## ACTIVITY 13

*Describe the actions of God in response to oppression and suffering and the lessons for your church in the context of HIV&AIDS.*

### Application in the Context of HIV&AIDS

Many of us have seen the suffering caused by HIV&AIDS in our families, communities and all over the world. World AIDS Day calls us to take the next step and listen to the cries of pain, suffering and victories of PLWHA. Through listening, we will develop compassion and restore relationships. Together we will respond to God's call to be partners in confronting the oppressive structures that sustain HIV&AIDS and create new structures that will promote fullness of life for all.

## ACTIVITY 14

*Choose an appropriate text and develop a sermon focusing on the theme of this year's World AIDS Day, ensuring that PLWHA are in the driving seat of all aspects of planning the sermon and liturgy.*

## SUMMARY

In this unit you learned about methods and principles of non-traditional ways of preaching using the media both inside and outside of the church, based on the six principles of preaching and liturgy. We discussed the use of interviews and panel discussions in the church and also the basic principles for preparing for sermons on television and radio. You also learned about preparing sermons for community and family events outside of the church. In our sermon preparation we applied the six principles of preaching and liturgy in order to ensure the inclusion of the voices of HIV&AIDS and participation by the audience. We prepared sermons for a child's birthday, unveiling of a tombstone and for World AIDS Day. All these liturgical and preaching occasions are opportunities for the church to break the silence around HIV&AIDS, create spaces for the voices of PLWHA to be heard and transform public perceptions on HIV&AIDS. Above all, they are occasions for the church to assist our devastated individuals, families, communities, countries and world to remember and experience Emmanuel, the God with us, as a God who tabernacles and journeys with us, even during the HIV&AIDS era.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Describe non-traditional methods of preaching and link the discussions in this unit with those of previous units.
2. Explain and apply the guidelines for preparing for an interview and panel discussion.
3. Prepare a sermon for your local radio station based on the principles you learned.
4. Describe how you would use the following family, community and national occasions to preach about HIV&AIDS:
  - Birthday of a small child
  - Unveiling of a tombstone of someone who died of AIDS
  - World AIDS Day



## FURTHER READING

Byamugisha, Canon Gideon. 2004. "World AIDS Day" pp. 77-81. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *AfricaPraying A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive SermonGuidelines and Liturgy* Geneva: WCC.

Chitando, Ezra. 2004. "Tomb Unveiling" pp. 40-42. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *AfricaPraying A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive SermonGuidelines and Liturgy*. Geneva: WCC.

Dube, Musa. W. 2004. "Services For/By/On Children" pp. 151-157. In Dube, Musa W. (Ed.) *AfricaPraying A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive SermonGuidelines and Liturgy*. Geneva: WCC.

Musopule, Augustine C. 2004. "Birthdays" pp. 9-12. In Dube, Musa W. ed. *AfricaPraying A Handbook of HIV/AIDS Sensitive SermonGuidelines and Liturgy* Geneva: WCC.

## GLOSSARY

**Popular Media,**

also known as mass media, is designed to reach a very large audience. Examples of popular media include television, radio and newspapers.

**Tombstone unveiling**

is a ritual of remembering a deceased person, marked with the erection of a tombstone in their honour

**World AIDS Day is**

the international day of action on HIV and AIDS which takes place every year on 1 December.

**Transfiguration**

refers to the mysterious change that occurred to Jesus on the mount in Matthew 17:1-2.

# UNIT 10

## PREACHING AS GROUP COUNSELLING

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to unit 10! This is the last unit of this module. I hope that you have been challenged and inspired to transform preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS by what you have learned. In this unit, we will use preaching as a counselling tool in our congregation because everyone has been affected by HIV&AIDS. HIV&AIDS have invaded and traumatized our communities. Silence and stigma have isolated people from each other and are responsible for the breakdown in community and family support systems. Our counselling systems will be based on the four stages of HIV&AIDS and the counselling needs for each stage. The four stages are: the initial stage, living with HIV, fully developed AIDS and death. The counselling needs that correspond with these stages are: crisis counselling, supportive counselling, grief counselling and bereavement counselling. Our sermon and liturgy preparations will be based on these stages and counselling needs. Preaching as group counselling aims to transform the church into a healing and healed community, in which people can share their stories and receive unconditional love, support and acceptance.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ⌘ Describe group counselling and preaching as group counselling
- ⌘ Describe the four stages of HIV&AIDS and the counselling needs for each
- ⌘ Prepare a sermon and liturgy for crisis counselling in the initial stage of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Prepare a sermon and liturgy for supportive counselling
- ⌘ Prepare a sermon and liturgy for grief counselling for dying from AIDS
- ⌘ Prepare a sermon and liturgy for bereavement counselling



## TOPICS

- ⌘ Group Counselling
- ⌘ Preaching as Group Counselling
- ⌘ Four Stages of HIV&AIDS
- ⌘ Sermon One: Initial Stage - Crisis Counselling
- ⌘ Sermon Two: Living with HIV&AIDS – Supportive Counselling
- ⌘ Sermon Three: Full Developed AIDS - Grief Counselling
- ⌘ Sermon Four: Death and Bereavement Counselling

Summary, Self-Assessment Activity, Further Readings, Glossary

## GROUP COUNSELLING

Group counselling is a method of counselling that involves a group of people with the same problem/s and one or two group counsellors who are trained in the problem being discussed. In group counselling members are encouraged to share their experiences and to interact with each other. For example, they receive and provide feedback and maintain group confidentiality (i.e. they do not share information about group members outside of the group). The role of the group counsellors is to create a safe environment where group members feel free to share their experiences, facilitate group interaction and provide professional feedback to the group. In the context of HIV&AIDS in which entire communities are affected, traumatized, broken hearted insecure and locked in silence due to stigma, group counselling is an effective tool for ensuring that everyone has access to counselling and support. There are support groups for PLWHA in many communities where group counselling is practiced. However, stigma and fear prevent many from being part of these groups. Preaching as group counselling can fill this gap and provide counselling for many.

# ACTIVITY 1

*Describe group counselling and its potential in the HIV&AIDS context.*

## PREACHING AS GROUP COUNSELLING

Preaching as group counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS needs to incorporate the goals and practices of group counselling. The congregation constitutes the 'group' because we believe that everyone has been affected by HIV&AIDS. HIV&AIDS is a challenge that faces everyone in the congregation. The pastor/minister assumes the duties of the group counsellor and is responsible for creating an environment where there is sharing, story-telling, confidentiality, support and interaction. Such a context breaks the silence and stigma and brings healing and restoration. The church becomes a place of healing, restoration and unconditional love, support and compassion. To achieve this goal, we will go through all of the stages of living with HIV&AIDS, including death. We will address the counselling needs for each stage. Our sermons will integrate the six principles that we discussed in unit 6. We will integrate stories and experiences of PLWHA and the affected into our sermons and liturgy. The questions in the sermons can be used as discussion questions to ensure that there is participation and sharing in and by the congregation. At the end of each sermon you will be asked to prepare a sermon and liturgy. We will begin with a chart that sets out the four stages of HIV&AIDS and defining the counselling needs for each stage. It is important that the congregation understands these stages so that they can deal with the challenges in their own lives and so that they are also able to understand and support members of their communities. We want to counsel the congregation and encourage them to be counsellors in their own communities, homes and work places.

## FOUR STAGES OF HIV&AIDS

The chart below sets out the four stages of HIV&AIDS and the types of counselling needed in each of these stages. It is important that we begin with this chart so that everyone has an understanding of the larger context of HIV&AIDS. This chart is a reference point for all of sermon activities.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Type Of Counselling</b>
Initial – when one learns of their HIV positive status or the positive status of a family member	Emotional, social and spiritual crisis	Crisis counselling
Living with HIV	Maintaining a healthy lifestyle	Supportive counselling
Fully developed AIDS – terminal (dying) stage	Preparing for death – practical and spiritual preparation. Confronting fear	Grief counselling
Death	Coping with death	Bereavement counselling

We will now prepare a sermon on the first stage of HIV&AIDS and the needed counselling. We will begin with the context of HIV&AIDS and a testimony/story from PLWHA.

## SERMON ONE: INITIAL STAGE – CRISIS COUNSELLING

### Testimony/story from PLWHA

Either find a story from the papers, describing the initial crisis of those who have been diagnosed as positive, or find a PLWHA who is willing to share their experience.

### Context of HIV&AIDS: Initial Stage

The initial stage of HIV&AIDS is when one contracts the virus. Unfortunately, we cannot immediately tell that HIV has entered our bodies. It is only through testing that we know whether we have HIV. We can live with the virus without knowing that we have it in our bodies. Therefore, it is important for all of us to be tested. We can get tested at a local clinic or any other health centre. Many people find out about their HIV status involuntarily, for example when they are required to take a blood test for insurance purposes or when they are admitted into the hospital for an operation. Either way, whether voluntary or involuntary, finding out that one has HIV is a crisis for the individual and the affected. Crisis counselling is needed at this stage.

## Crisis Counselling

Crisis counselling is a method of counselling that empowers people to manage and resolve crisis situations in their lives. A crisis is an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty. A crisis affects a person emotionally, spiritually, socially and physically. HIV&AIDS is a crisis because it is a condition that is associated with death, fear, sin and judgment. PLWHA and the affected are stigmatized and discriminated against. Crisis counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS addresses the emotional crisis by encouraging honest sharing of emotions and providing support for confronting and resolving the emotional crisis.

### ACTIVITY 2

*Describe an event in your life that led to a personal crisis. What lessons from your experience can help you to identify with PLWHA and the affected.*

*Ask PLWHA to share their experiences.*

## Biblical Text: Lament Psalms

The biblical texts that we will use to address emotional issues in this initial stage of HIV&AIDS are lament psalms. The word 'lament' means 'to cry out in pain'. When someone is told that they have HIV, they experience emotional pain that causes them suffering and anguish. Often, it is difficult to express some of the emotions. The psalms of lament are a fearless and bold expression of the language of pain. The language of the lament psalms is strong, bold and aggressive. It is a language of protest and bold faith. The psalmists protested against their suffering and called for justice from those responsible for their suffering (Aligawea *et al*, 2005:70). They complained against God and were not afraid to express their emotions. Therefore, these psalms provide us with an alternative and healing way of dealing with pain and suffering. These psalms encourage us to boldly express our emotions, describe our pain and pray for justice and deliverance from God. The psalmists teach us that honesty with God produces true faith and hope. We will be referring to the psalms throughout our discussions.

## ACTIVITY 3

*Read Psalm 3 and make a list of the emotions that the psalmist felt and how they related their emotions and experiences to their faith in God.*

We will now look at some of the emotions experienced during this initial stage of HIV&AIDS and relate these experiences to lament psalms. The emotions that we will look at are shock, anger, fear and guilt.

### Shock

Shock is one of the emotions that is experienced when a person is informed that they are HIV positive. Shock is a natural response to a crisis and is often accompanied by feelings of disorientation, dizziness and denial. Shock affects the body, mind and spirit. The same feelings of shock are experienced by the affected. Denial usually follows shock. Denial occurs when a person is unable to believe and accept that they are HIV positive. Denial is also a natural initial reaction to a crisis. Without stigma and discrimination, we could expect those who are dealing with these emotions to seek private counselling. Often this does not happen due to HIV&AIDS stigma. The affected also experience denial. They think that HIV&AIDS will not happen to them, hence they are reluctant to be tested. They deny that they stigmatize people due to fear of facing helplessness and death. Although shock and denial are healthy emotions, these emotions can become unhealthy when we do not deal with them. Acceptance of one's HIV status and the status of a family member is a sign that both the individual and the affected have moved beyond shock and denial. Stigma makes acceptance of HIV a difficult process. As a result of stigma, PLWHA and the affected are afraid of sharing their emotions with others and with God. The lament psalms provide examples of language that expresses these emotions before God. Psalm 69, which was written by David in the midst of a personal crisis, is an example.

Come near and rescue me; redeem me because of my foes. You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you. Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none... The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people. (Psalm 69: 18-19,33)

## ACTIVITY 4

*Describe a personal crisis in which you experienced shock and denial. How can you use your experience to reach out to PLWHA and the affected.*

*Relate your experience to Psalm 69.*

### Anger

Anger is an emotion that is experienced together with shock and denial. Anger is a natural reaction to injustice, injury or something that we feel we do not deserve. A person with HIV may feel angry at themselves for getting infected, at the person who infected them or at God. The affected may feel angry at the person with HIV for being infected and bringing stigma and shame upon them. Anger needs to be expressed in non-destructive ways, such as speaking to someone you trust, crying, praying, sleeping, doing something physical like gardening, walking, digging the fields, etc. Anger is destructive when it leads to reckless behaviour, such as excessive alcohol consumption and high risk sexual activities. The affected also need to find healthy ways of dealing with their anger. Shouting, threats, abuse and rejection are destructive ways of handling anger and are harmful. Anger needs to be expressed and managed in healthy ways or it will be destructive to all involved. There are examples of expressions of anger in the lament psalms that lead to hope and trust. We will read a few verses from Psalm 22. Notably, Jesus quoted from this psalm in Matthew 27:46.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? (22:1)

All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads; (22:7)

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. (22:11)

For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. (22:24)

## Fear

Fear is a natural reaction to a perceived threat. It affects the body, mind and spirit. Fear of HIV&AIDS exist in all communities. HIV&AIDS are associated with death, stigma, sin and judgment. PLWHA and the affected experience multiple losses, such as the loss of employment, friends, ambitions, self-esteem, reputation, health, faith and life. These losses cause fear. The affected also experience similar fears, including the fear of their loved ones dying. Spouses that know of their HIV status and those who do not are afraid of infecting each other or being infected by their partner. Children fear the loss of their parent/s and the prospect of an uncertain future. Children need to be given opportunities to express their fears so that they too can deal with fear. Fear can lead to helplessness and hopelessness. Preaching as group counselling can help people confront their fears and seek appropriate help. The psalmists also faced fear and feelings of despair. They expressed their emotions and provided us with words that can help us express our fears and find faith and hope in God. We will read a few verses from Psalm 31: 9-13.

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress, my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction and my bones grow weak. Because of my enemies I am the utter contempt of my neighbours; I am a dread to my friends – those who see me on the street flee from me. I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become broken pottery.

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God'. My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.

(31: 14-15).

## ACTIVITY 5

*Describe ways in which you manage anger and fear in your life. What lessons can you share with others, especially PLWHA and the affected?*

### Guilt

Guilt is a natural response of remorse or sorrow when one has done something wrong. It is a normal reaction to actions that violate one's moral codes. Guilt is resolved through confession and making amends. Guilt is a complex issue in the context of HIV&AIDS. It is important to distinguish between 'real guilt' and 'false guilt'. Real guilt, as for mentioned, comes from sorrow over actions that violate one's moral codes, for example adultery. 'False guilt' is guilt imposed by society. For example, because of the association between HIV and sexual promiscuity, PLWHA feel guilty for contracting HIV, regardless of the circumstances. In the HIV&AIDS context, sin has been reduced to sex. All other sins have been forgotten. As noted in the Bible, all persons sin. In the eyes of God, are sins are equal. Real guilt is an issue for all of us. When using preaching as group counselling, it helps church members to recognize both forms of guilt and how to deal with them. The psalmists also struggled with guilt and the confession of sin. We will read verses from Psalm 32:3-5

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity, I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' and you forgave the guilt of my sin.



## ACTIVITY 6

*Explain the difference between real guilt and false guilt. Support your answer with examples.*

### SERMON TWO: LIVING WITH HIV&AIDS (SUPPORTIVE COUNSELLING)

Our next sermon is on the second stage of HIV&AIDS, living with HIV. Some people believe that HIV&AIDS is a death sentence. Fear has gripped both the infected and the affected. This fear remains largely unspoken. Preaching can help us deal with fear of infection and helplessness and can enable us to confront death in the HIV&AIDS contexts by centring people on the resurrection hope of Christ. It is important to show that people with HIV can continue to live healthy and normal lives. Our goal in this sermon is to provide information and knowledge on living with HIV&AIDS to promote healthy living among PLWHA and in our communities. It is important to include testimonies of PLWHA and the affected at the beginning and throughout the sermon. You could also invite a medical professional to contribute to the discussions and help to correct misinformation about HIV&AIDS.

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:14*

*Testimony/story from PLWHA*

Either find a suitable story from the news or ask a PLWHA, who is comfortable with their status, to testify about the power of supportive groups.

*Supportive Counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS*

According to Paul Leshota in Module 9, supportive counselling is “a process aimed at empowering HIV positive clients and those affected by it to live positively. Living positively means living as normal as possible and looking after one’s physical, psychological and spiritual health and wellbeing” (2005:67). The goal of supportive counselling is to empower PLWHA and the affected with information and skills that will promote healthy living in all areas of life. The chart below is a summary of how to maintain health in all areas of life.

## Physical Health

- healthy and nutritious **diet** (grow your own vegetables)
- regular **exercise** - walk as much as possible
- regular medical **check ups**
- treatment of **opportunistic infections**
- good **hygiene**
- responsible sex** – don't infect anyone; use condoms
- antiretroviral treatment (**ARV**)

## Psychological health

- build up a strong **support system** consisting of family members and friends who love and accept you
- join a support group or start one with **other PLWHA** and the affected
- look for opportunities in your community where you can **volunteer** and reach out to others
- self-care and nurture** – take time to be alone and do one or two things that you enjoy

## Spiritual Health

- join a **church** that supports PLWHA and the affected
- join a weekly prayer or Bible study **group**
- participate in **church activities** and bring awareness of HIV & AIDS
- visit and pray for families** affected by HIV&AIDS in your community
- maintain **spiritual disciplines** of prayer, compassion, confession, giving and service

## ACTIVITY 7

*Select one item from each area of life and describe how your church  
Would work with PLWHA and the affected in implementing these goals.*

Text: Philippians 2:14

From the above chart it is clear that maintaining good health while living with HIV requires support from family, community and the church. Philippians 2:14 instructs us to take active interest in the lives of others. Let us read the text together: “Each of you should look not only to *your own interests*, but also to the *interests of others*.” We are challenged to actively support each other in the midst of HIV&AIDS. In unit 6 we learned that the church is the body of Christ and that when one member suffers, all suffer. There is no ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the church; we are all one body and are called to care and support each other. HIV&AIDS provide numerous opportunities for creative support in the church. For example, sports groups can be formed to encourage exercise; gardening projects to ensure that all families grow their own food and can maintain a healthy and nutritious diet; visitation groups that visit and comfort people in their homes; and children’s clubs that include orphans in all of their programs.

## ACTIVITY 8

*Referring to the above chart, brainstorm about ministries that will  
support PLWHA.*

*Prepare a sermon on this stage of HIV&AIDS and supportive counselling based on  
John 13:1-15*

## SERMON THREE: FULL BLOWN AIDS – GRIEF COUNSELLING

Our next sermon will be on the third stage of HIV&AIDS. This is the dying stage (in the absence of ARVs, which is often case in many African countries), which requires grief counselling. Many PLWHA that have fully developed AIDS are being cared for in their homes by their relatives. Our sermon needs to: provide information on this stage, explain the process of grieving and prepare PLWHA and the affected for death. We will use different biblical texts to address these different counselling needs. The voices/testimonies/stories of PLWHA and care givers are essential and must be included throughout the presentation of this sermon.

### *Testimony from PLWHA, the affected and care givers*

Ask a care giver to tell the story of AIDS, care giving or someone who recovered from flown blown AIDS through ARVs medication to testify before such a sermon.

### *Full Blown AIDS*

The term ‘full blown AIDS’ is used to describe the terminal stage of AIDS (i.e. the dying stage). At this stage, PLWHA suffer from serious diseases, some of which are seldom found in HIV-negative people. These diseases include lung infection, infections of the brain, severe diarrhoea, profound weight loss and cancers. Dying of AIDS is a painful experience. Persons lose control over their bodies and become completely dependent on their care givers. AIDS can affect a patient’s behaviour. This can be distressing for the family who may not know what is happening and need to be informed that the person cannot help their behaviour (SAT, 2004:11). This stage is traumatic for the affected, especially children who have to watch their parent/s die. Fear is a dominant emotion during this time. The dying person needs to be prepared for death and the affected need grief counselling. We will begin with grief counselling. Lament psalms are effective in helping people to express their grief and find hope (e.g. Psalms 3, 6 and 22).

## Grief Counselling in the Context of HIV&AIDS

Grief is an emotional response to the loss of something or someone significant. For example, grief is experienced when a loved one dies. In the context of HIV&AIDS, grieving may start as early as the initial stage and will probably intensify during the full blown stage. This is called anticipatory grief, grieving in anticipation of the death of a loved one. It is a healthy response that prepares the family for the death of their family member. Emotions experienced during this time include fear, anxiety and sadness (SAT 2004:6). These feelings are normal. It is important to include children in the grieving process. This story illustrates the importance of including children.

When my husband began to get very ill, I was concerned to let my children be with him. I didn't know what to say to them. My counsellor was right when she told me that maybe they know just what is going on. When I was brave enough to talk to them about their dad's illness they shocked me by what they had seen and knew. Now we can talk together, even with my husband. He loves to have my youngest child playing in the room where he is and she loves to spend time there. They are so close. Maybe I was more frightened than she was (SAT 2004:5)

### ACTIVITY 9

*What lessons have you learnt from the above testimony that you can use to encourage families to include children in the grieving process.*

Unfortunately, stigma and shame have stifled the grieving process in the context of HIV&AIDS. Our churches need to be places where families of PLWHA can grieve, share their stories and receive support. This sermon provides an opportunity for grieving families, including children, to share their stories and receive support from the congregation. We will now address the needs of PLWHA. The most important counselling need for PLWHA during this terminal stage is guidance in preparation for death. Facing death is a frightening experience. Many people facing death have questions and anxieties about what will happen to their survivors and themselves after

they die. It is important to prepare PLWHA and their families for death. We will discuss spiritual and practical preparation for death.

### Spiritual Preparation

Spiritual preparation for death deals with the fear of dying and helps to prepare the person to face death without fear. Spiritual preparation guides PLWHA and their families through a process that brings reconciliation with God, self and within families. Resources that can be used for this process are: biblical texts focusing on forgiveness, love, mercy, reconciliation and assurance of life after death with God (Psalm 51, 1 John 1:9, 4:1-9, John 14:1-4, Luke 23:40-41 and Revelation 21:1-4), prayer, practical preparation, and reconciliation with family members. HIV&AIDS often brings conflict within families. Many PLWHA feel rejected by God due to social stigma that equates HIV&AIDS with individual sin and curses from God. Reconciliation is an essential element of spiritual preparation for death.

## ACTIVITY 10

*Choose one of the biblical references and explain how you would use it to prepare PLWHA and their families for death.*

### Practical Preparation

We will read a testimony from a man dying of AIDS and how he prepared.

I had lived with HIV for many years, but it was when I started really getting ill that I realized I needed help to make sure my family could be prepared for my death. What worried me most was members of my extended family causing problems for my wife and kids once I was gone. Counselling has helped me to make plans and sort out some problems in advance. What feels good for me is that I can still make a difference in my family's future even though I will not be around for much longer. I have made a will and this should make sure that everyone is clear about what I want to happen.

This has also given me a chance to discuss difficult issues like my death with my brothers and other relatives. It has been hard, but I think we have made progress (SAT 2004:9).

## ACTIVITY 11

*Describe the practical preparations that were done by this man. How can your church assist PLWHA to write wills before they die?*

*Prepare a sermon on this stage of HIV&AIDS. You can use any of the biblical texts mentioned in this sermon.*

### SERMON FOUR: DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

Our last sermon is for the surviving members of the family, the congregation and our communities who witness death on a daily basis because of HIV&AIDS. It is important to understand the process of bereavement so that we can relate to their experiences and support others. HIV&AIDS has caused widespread death in our communities which makes bereavement a daily experience. In the midst of so much death, our communities need messages of hope. What is even worse is that stigma and discrimination has sometimes denied people the right to mourn the loss of their loved ones, since they have to keep secrets about their loved ones.

#### Testimony from the Affected

Either read a story of bereavement or get a caregiver, orphan, widow, friend or member of a bereaved family to share their journey of sorrow.

## Bereavement Counselling (Psalm 55:5-11)

Bereavement is an experience of grief over the death of a loved one. It is a healthy response to loss. Bereavement affects the body, mind and spirit. According to *Counselling Guidelines on Palliative Care and Bereavement* by SAT these are some of the experiences of bereavement:

<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Physical/body</b>	<b>Spiritual</b>
Numbness (i.e. being unable to feel anything, fear, denial, sadness, anxiety, despair)	Crying, being unable to eat or sleep, headaches, loss of breath	Blaming God, questioning, loss of meaning in life, desire to also die (2004:14)

Psalm 55:5-11 expresses some of the emotions of bereavement and can be used as a prayer.

### ACTIVITY 12

*Read Psalm 55:5-11 and relate it to the experience of bereavement.*

*Write a prayer based on these verses.*

The experience of bereavement is a long term process that continues a long time after the death of a loved one. The grieving period depends on the relationship between the deceased and the person. Children in particular need to be provided with opportunities for grieving. It is important for families to develop a story about what happened so that children can understand and cope with questions from their friends (SAT 2004:15).

This is a difficult challenge in the context of HIV&AIDS because often the cause of death is not openly discussed; there is secrecy and silence. This prevents people from grieving naturally. Another complication that has arisen out of the HIV&AIDS context is the number of deaths that occur over a short period of time. For example, families and communities experience multiple deaths within a short space of time. Experiencing



multiple deaths in a family and/or community can overwhelm the grieving capacity of people. Since most HIV&AIDS related deaths affect the younger generation and, in many cases, the sole breadwinner or parent, the survivors are left with many problems and challenges to deal with. Their plight is made worse by the death of their loved one. Hopelessness and helplessness threaten the lives of many surviving family members and communities. Bereavement counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS requires a special ministry of hope for the surviving family and their communities. Hope must be connected to practical ministries and the ongoing struggle for justice for PLWHA. Some texts that can be used to bring hope are Ezekiel 34:1-14, Psalm 27 and Isaiah 40.

## ACTIVITY 11

*Describe bereavement and the challenges of HIV&AIDS. How can your church respond to these challenges?*

*Prepare a sermon and liturgy on hope based on any of the above texts.*

### SUMMARY

In this unit you have learned about group counselling and how we can apply the principles of group counselling in preaching as group counselling. The church collectively is affected by HIV&AIDS because communities witness death on a daily basis. Preaching as group counselling provides an opportunity for the church to be transformed into a place where silence and stigma around HIV&AIDS are broken and where people feel free to share their stories and receive support and healing. Through sermons focusing on the stages of HIV&AIDS, counselling needs and participation of PLWHA and the congregation, the church will be able to provide counselling and to empower congregations to support their communities facing the challenges of HIV&AIDS. Through group counselling, the church can become a place of hope for communities in the context of HIV&AIDS.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

1. Describe group counselling and how the principles of group counselling can be applied in the church.
2. Describe the four stages of HIV&AIDS and the counselling needs for each.
3. Describe lament psalms and how they can be used in crisis counselling.
4. Briefly explain the four emotions that PLWHA and the affected experience.
5. Describe supportive counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS.
6. Describe grief counselling and the experience of grief in the context of HIV&AIDS.
7. Describe spiritual and practical preparation for death for PLWHA.
8. Describe bereavement and the challenges in the context of HIV&AIDS

### FINAL TEST AND EXAMINATION

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS  
MODULE.

Your last assignments are a test and examination.

May God be with you as you apply the lessons that you have learned in this module.



## FURTHER READING

Aligawesa, Godfrey, et. al. 2005. “Crying to God in Despair – A Cry for Hope of a Woman with Aids – Psalm 55” pp. 69-73. In United Evangelical Mission God *breaks the Silence: Preaching In Times Of Aids*. Basel: United Evangelical Mission.

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Southern African AIDS Trust. 2004. *Counselling Guidelines on Palliative Care and Bereavement*. Harare: SAT (copies of this publication can be obtained from: SAT, P.O. Box 390 Kopje, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa. Email: [info@satregional.org](mailto:info@satregional.org) or download from: [www.satregional.org](http://www.satregional.org)

## Glossary

<b>Group counselling</b>	a method of counselling a group of people who share the same problem. Counsellors provide guidance and expertise for the group to address their problems.
<b>Crisis counselling</b>	short term counselling, aimed at empowering the person to confront and resolve the crisis situation that they are facing.
<b>Supportive counselling</b>	counselling aimed at empowering HIV positive clients and those affected to live positively through looking after their physical, mental, psychological and spiritual health.
<b>Full blown AIDS</b>	refers to the stage where someone is dying of AIDS. At this stage PLWHA suffer from serious diseases, some of which are seldom found in HIV-negative people. Some of these diseases include lung infection, infections of the brain, severe diarrhoea and profound weight loss and cancers.
<b>Grief</b>	an emotional response to a loss of something or someone significant.

**Anticipatory grief**

grief in anticipation of the imminent death of a loved one.

**Grief counselling**

counselling that empowers persons who are grieving to go through the natural grieving process.

**Bereavement**

grieving over the death of a loved one.

# ASSIGNMENT, TEST AND EXAMINATION

CONGRATULATIONS!  
YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS MODULE!

In the following pages are two exams, one that covers the material in unit 6-10 and one that covers the material from the entire module. May God be with you as you apply the lessons that you have learned in this module, assignment, test and examination.

## TEST

This test has forty-five (45) questions. Answer all questions with short answers. The purpose of this test is to see whether you have understood unit 6-10 and to prepare you for your final exam. Anything that you cannot answer, please go back to the relevant unit and re-read.

1. Give an example of how preaching can prevent PLWHA from disclosing their status in the church?
2. List the six principles of preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS.
3. Why is the experience of PLWHA a theological crisis for the church?
4. How can the church respond to this theological crisis?
5. What does the story of the healing of the leper teach us about God and how can you apply this teaching in the HIV&AIDS context?
6. What does the parable of the lost sheep teach us about God and how can you apply this teaching in the HIV&AIDS context?
7. Explain the criteria for judgment that Jesus said will be used during the last judgment.
8. How does this criteria challenge the church in the context of HIV&AIDS?
9. Why did Paul use the image of the church as the body of Christ to deal with conflict and divisions in the church in Corinth?
10. How can we apply the principles that Paul taught to the church in the context of HIV&AIDS.

11. Name and describe in one sentence the four principles of holistic sexuality.
12. Describe two ways in which the story of Samuel can be used to preach to orphans.
13. Why are many widows in Africa destitute and poor?
14. How does the story of Mahlah and her sisters empower widows to stand up for their rights.
15. Name three characteristics of a prophet.
16. List the seven aspects of a prophetic message – one sentence for each aspect.
17. Give an example of prophecy in the New Testament.
18. Describe the three economic policies of structural adjustment programs that create poverty in poor countries.
19. Explain how you would use James 5:1-6 as a prophetic message to confront economic injustice.
20. Explain the importance of the story of the Good Samaritan in addressing the lack of access to treatment.
21. Explain how you would apply Galatians 6:2 to encourage men in your church to take responsibility for standing up against gender inequality.
22. Why do we need to use non-traditional methods of preaching in the HIV&AIDS context?
23. List the steps that you need to take to organise an interview in your church.
24. List the guidelines for preaching through popular media.
25. How would you use the story of the birth of Moses to educate your community about the threat of HIV&AIDS to the lives of children?
26. What are the challenges for the family, community, and congregation in the process of a tombstone unveiling ceremony for someone who has died of AIDS?
27. How would you use the story of Jesus' transfiguration to bring healing to the family?
28. What is group counselling?
29. Name three ways in which group counselling can be applied to preaching as group counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS.
30. What is the purpose of crisis counselling in the context of HIV&AIDS?
31. Describe in one sentence each of the four emotions that are experienced at the initial stage of HIV&AIDS.

32. Give three reasons why lament psalms are spiritual resources in the context of HIV&AIDS.
33. What is supportive counselling?
34. Give an example of how you can support PLWHA physically, psychologically and spiritually.
35. What is full blown AIDS?
36. What is grief?
37. What is anticipatory grief?
38. What is the goal of grief counselling?
39. Give an example of spiritual preparation for death.
40. Give an example of practical preparation for death.
41. What is bereavement?
42. Give examples of how bereavement affects emotions, spirit and body.
43. Name two ways in which children can be helped in grieving and bereavement.
44. Name two challenges of HIV&AIDS in bereavement.
45. Why is preaching as group counselling important in the context of HIV&AIDS?

# FINAL EXAMINATION

This examination is made up of two (2) sections. Section A and Section B.

Section A has fifteen (15) questions. You must answer ten (10) questions.

Each question has 10 marks. Total marks: 100

Section B focuses on sermon and liturgy preparation for family and community occasions. There are five (5) occasions. Choose two (2) occasions and prepare sermons and liturgies for each. Questions are worth 50 marks. Total marks: 100

## SECTION A

### **Answer 10 (ten) questions**

1. Explain the role of ignorance, silence and stigma in the spread of HIV&AIDS and make reference to the role of the church.
2. Describe the three elements of preaching and explain the foundation of preaching from the New Testament.
3. Define liturgy and describe the two functions of preaching in liturgy.
4. Describe the preaching of John the Baptist and compare this with your cultural understanding of preaching.
5. Explain these three aspects of preaching in the context of HIV&AIDS: liberative, practical and celebrative.
6. Name and describe the six principles of preaching and liturgy in the context of HIV&AIDS.
7. Why is the experience of PLWHA a theological crisis for the church and how can the church respond to this crisis?
8. Describe the content of the message of prophets in the Hebrew Bible.
9. Describe the prophetic ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist in the New Testament.
10. Using an example, explain the steps that you would take to plan either an interview or panel discussion in your church.
11. Describe group counselling and relate it to preaching as group counselling.



12. Name the four stages of HIV&AIDS and the corresponding counselling methods/needs.
13. Describe lament psalms and how they can be applied in the HIV&AIDS context.
14. Give an example of how PLWHA can maintain physical, psychological and spiritual health.
15. Describe ways in which children can be helped through the grieving and bereavement process.

## SECTION B

Select TWO (2) occasions from the list of FIVE (5) occasions in the chart below.  
Prepare a sermon AND liturgy for each of the TWO occasions that you chose.  
Apply the principles of preaching and liturgy that you learned in this module. Use examples from your culture and context.

LIST OF OCCASIONS – SELECT TWO
World AIDS Day
Unveiling of a tombstone of a young person who died of AIDS
Birthday of a child
Television sermon in response to the lack of antiretroviral drugs in local clinics
Women and the HIV&AIDS forum in your local community

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