



One Moment in Time

In this special issue dedicated to aging with HIV, we check in with two other folks who know a thing or two about the topic.

August 12, 2024 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#)

I was raised Roman Catholic. As a first-generation Cuban American, my religious background isn't much of a surprise. I was baptized and even confirmed, a sacrament to express a recommitment to the faith.

Growing up, I often considered becoming a priest. As someone who was struggling to accept myself as gay, my interest in pursuing that path significantly diminished over the years the more I understood what such a life would mean for me. I just couldn't do it.

Nowadays, many people from different spiritual traditions not only choose a life of religious leadership but also follow a path of living out and proud. What a blessing that must be for such individuals.

Case in point: Bishop Stacey S. Latimer. Our cover subject has been a lifelong member of many Christian denominations. He is now a bishop in the Church of the Everlasting Kingdom. His faith has helped him face being diagnosed with HIV in 1987 and Stage IV prostate cancer in 2019.

Stacey first appeared on the [cover of POZ in 2007](#). At the time, he was an HIV-positive same-gender-loving reverend who performed HIV ministerial work within the Black church. We were curious to know more. So when we heard about his current challenge with cancer, we wanted to reconnect. For more, [go here](#).

As happens with many long-term survivors, me included, health challenges in addition to HIV await us as we age. In this special issue dedicated to aging with HIV, we check in with two other folks who know a thing or two about the topic: Charles Garfield, PhD, and Hassan James Gibbs.

As the founder of the [Shanti Project](#) in San Francisco, Charles recently marked 50 years of service.

The organization was created as a volunteer-driven resource for people facing terminal illness. When the HIV epidemic began, the group expanded to help those dying of AIDS-related illness. Charles and his colleagues became quick allies. [Go here](#) to learn more.

Hassan tested HIV positive in 1985. At the time, such a diagnosis often meant impending death. He turned to drugs and alcohol to cope. When he started seeing friends and others around him die, he got angry. Not only did he become an HIV activist, but he also became a mentor for HIV-positive folks in 12-step programs. [Go here](#) for more.

As human beings, we know that someday we'll die. We just don't like to talk about it. For long-term survivors aging with HIV, however, mortality is taking center stage yet again. [Go here](#) for an essay by POZ contributing writer [Mark S. King](#) exploring this conundrum.

Women of all ages living with the virus have additional health considerations when it comes to their HIV treatment. [Go here](#) for a POZ Focus pullout on this topic.