HIV/AIDS as Social Justice Could Motivate Black Churches

May 25, 2012

A recent study gathered 38 African-American faith leaders in Philadelphia to examine the role of faith-based institutions in HIV prevention, PLoS ONE reports. Participants were asked about barriers to engaging faith-based leaders on the topic. They were also asked for recommendations on how faith institutions can help fight the epidemic. Barriers included: concerns that promoting condom use would be tacitly endorsing extramarital sex, lack of educational information appropriate for a faith-based audience, and fear of losing congregants and revenue as a result of discussing human sexuality and HIV/AIDS from the pulpit. Participants noted that the topic of homosexuality still divides the faith community and prohibits an appropriate response to the epidemic. However, many leaders expressed a moral imperative to address the virus. Recommendations included: promote HIV testing, integrate HIV/AIDS topics into sermons, and couch HIV/AIDS in terms of social justice, human rights and public health instead of sexual risk behavior.

To read the Plos ONE article, click here.

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