



# **Engaging the Faith Community in Anti-HIV/AIDS Work: A Framework for Considering Public/Private Partnerships in Ghana**

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# Outline

- The problem of HIV/AIDS in Ghana
- Breakdown of faith community in Ghana
- Common concerns regarding engaging FBO's
- Types of HIV/AIDS services needed
- Examples of work being done by FBO's
- Criteria for considering roles of FBO's
- Concluding remarks

# HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Sub-Saharan Africa has slightly over 10% of the World's population but is home to more than 60% of all people living with HIV/AIDS.
- As of 2005, the U.N estimated that 25.8 million adults and children living in sub-Saharan Africa are infected with HIV/AIDS.
- In 2005, an estimated 3.2 million people in the region were newly infected and 2.4 million adults and children died of AIDS
- Among young people 15-24 years, prevalence is estimated at 4.6% for women and 1.7% for men.

AIDS Epidemic Update, UNAIDS December 2005

# HIV/AIDS in Ghana: An Overview

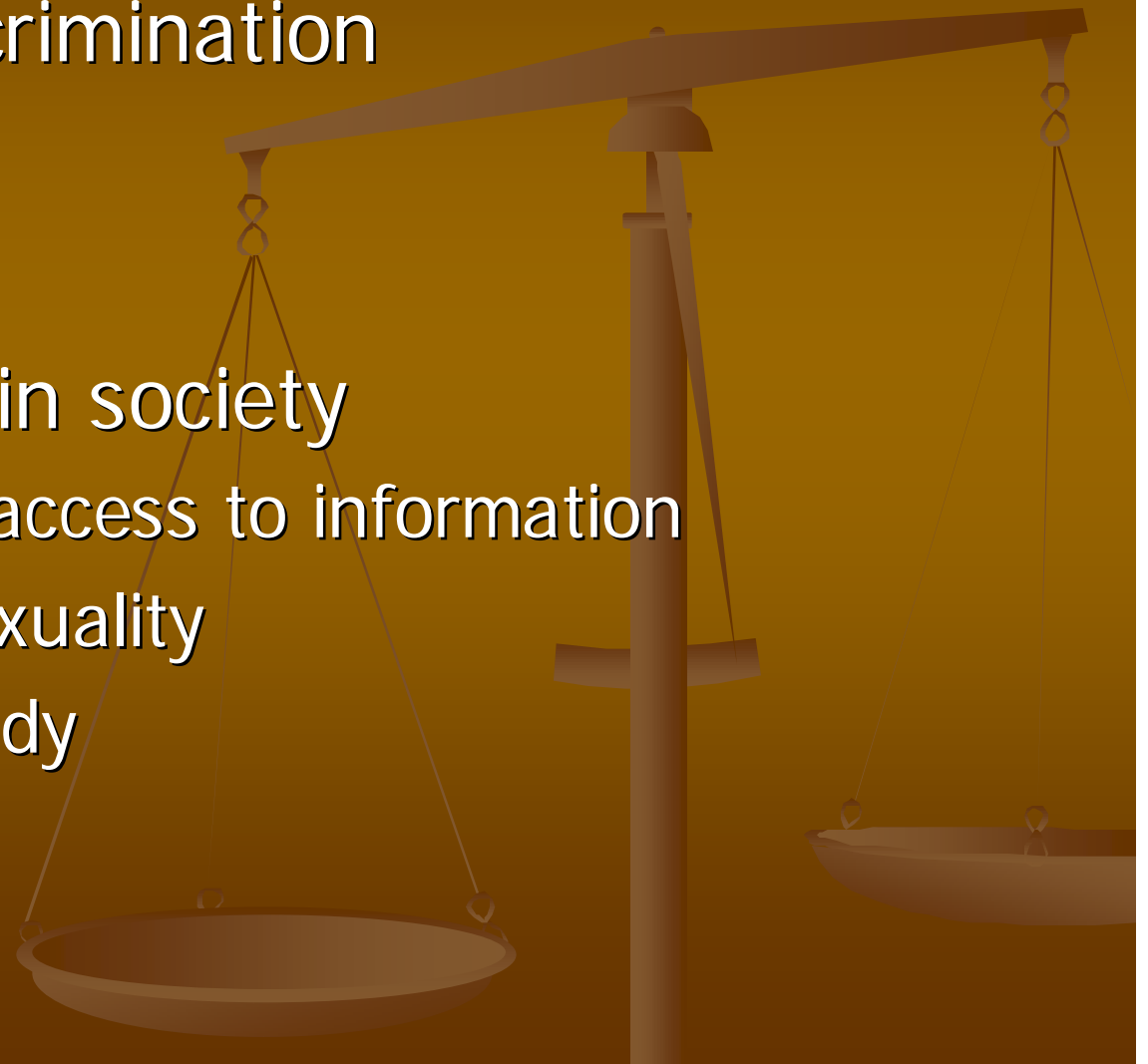


- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that in 2005, the percent of Ghana's adult population living with HIV/AIDS was 3.1%.
- Annually, an average number of 30,000 deaths in the country are due to HIV/AIDS.
- Young people aged 15 – 24 years constitute up to 34.2% of all reported HIV cases.
- Low income young women make up the most vulnerable population at risk of getting infected.

AIDS Epidemic Update, UNAIDS July 2004

# Possible Contributing Factors

- Stigma and discrimination
- Denial
- Poverty
- Role of women in society
  - Education and access to information
  - Control over sexuality
  - Control over body



# Religion in Ghana

- An estimated 98% of Ghanaians profess belonging to a religious denomination with about 82% reporting regular church attendance.
- The breakdown by religion is as follows:
  - Christianity 63%
  - Islam 16%
  - Indigenous beliefs 21%

CIA World Fact Book (2001)

# Concerns About FBO's Involvement

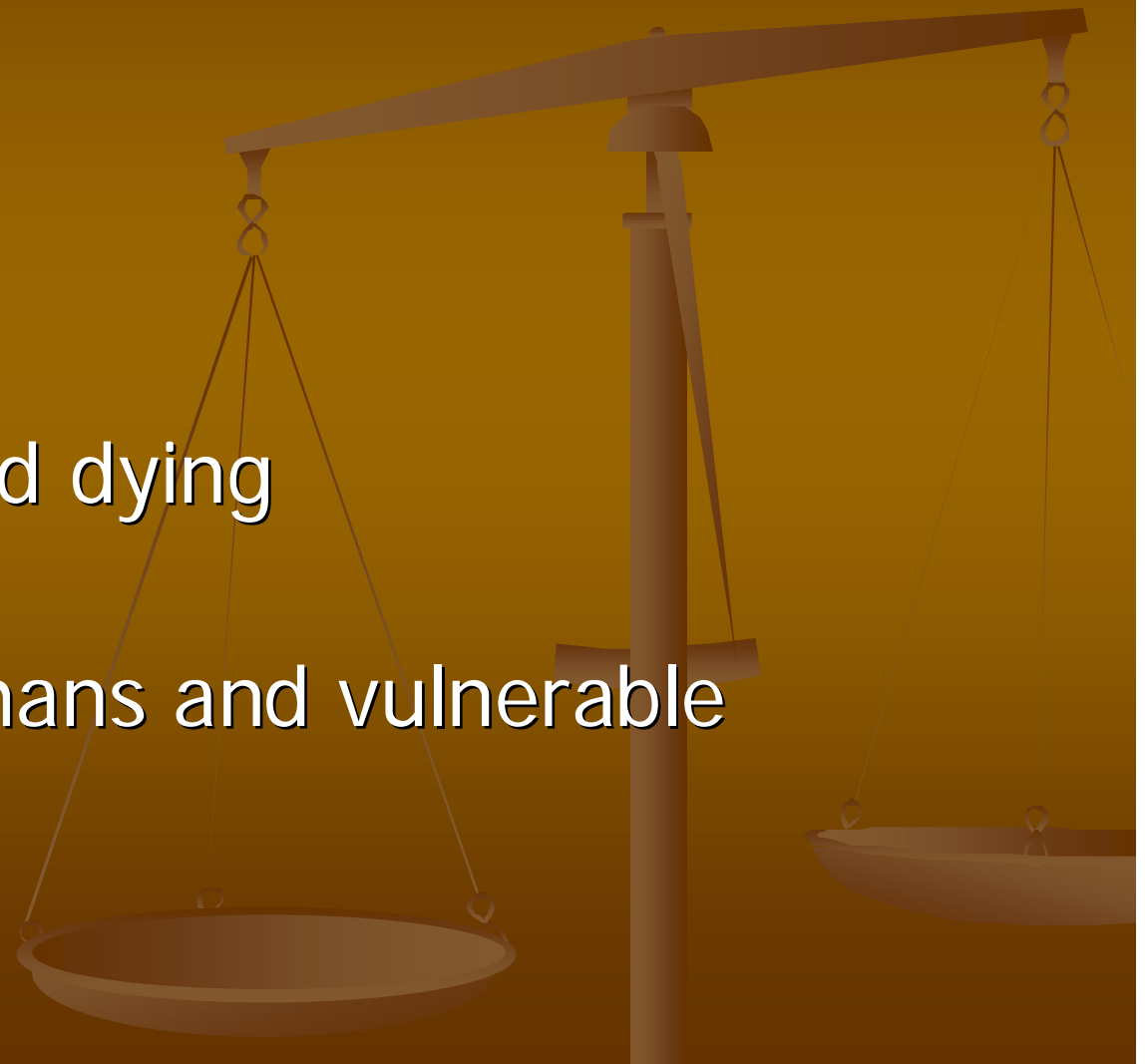


- Promote stigmatizing and discriminating attitudes based on fear and prejudice.
- Pronounce moral judgments on those infected.
- Restrict roles for women.
- Reduce complex social issues of AIDS to simplistic moralistic ones.
- Obstruct secular efforts in prevention.
- Become exclusionary places.

Parry S. (2004). Response of the FBO's to HIV/AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa. World Council of Churches.

# Types of HIV/AIDS Services Needed

- Prevention
- Treatment
- Care for sick and dying
- Services to orphans and vulnerable children





# Types of Prevention Work for HIV/AIDS

- **Relief** (support for traumatized populations suffering from war, conflict and disasters)
- **Development and capacity building** (transformation to overcome poverty, inequality and oppression, and the strengthening of institutions including health care and public health)
- **Risk Reduction** (promotion of condom use, treatment of STIs)
- **Risk Avoidance** (promotion of abstinence, delay of sexual debut, partner fidelity, reduction of number of partners)

# Types of Work Done by FBOs

- Long history of relief and development work.
- Practice of caring for the needy, sick, widowed and orphaned.
- Development of schools.
- Strong advocate of risk avoidance, particularly abstinence and fidelity.
- Sometimes supportive of risk reduction efforts, including condom distribution.

# Current HIV/AIDS Prevention by Denominations

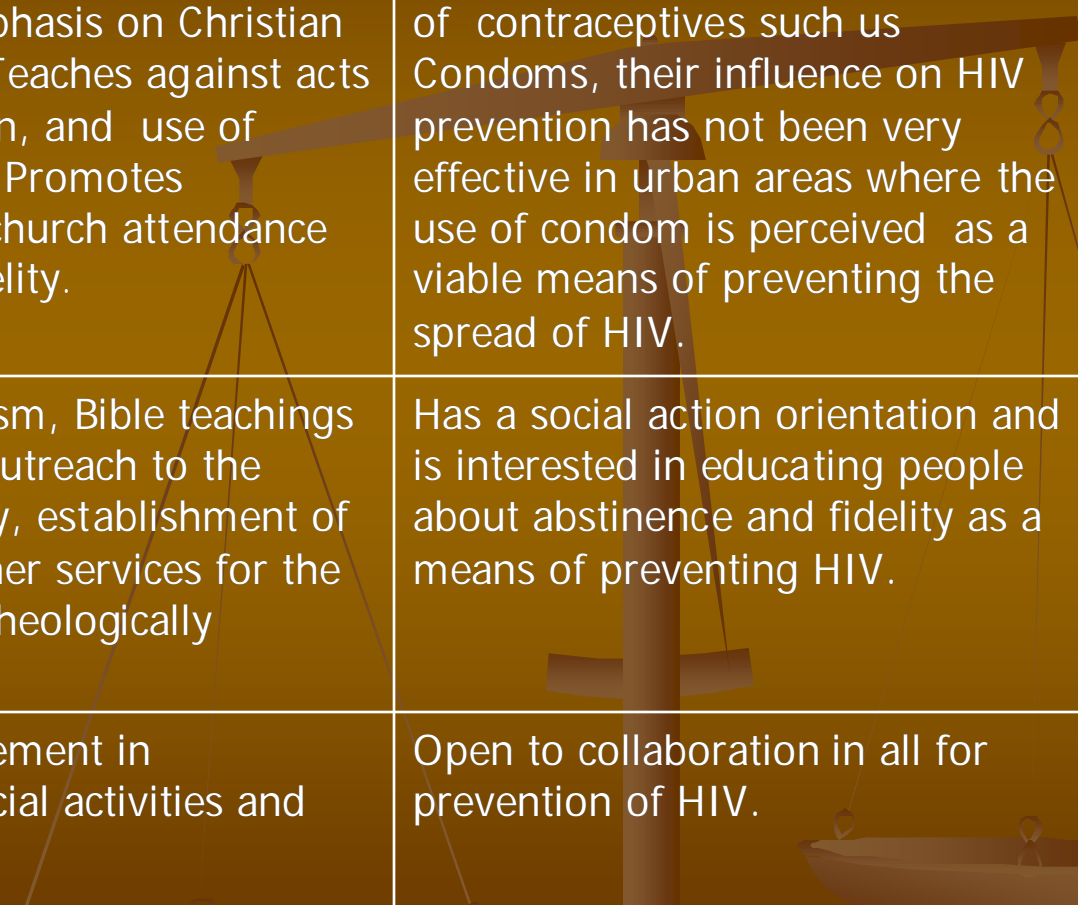
- **Orthodox:** most discourage the use of condoms and emphasize abstinence.
- **Evangelical/Pentecostal:** promote fidelity and encourage abstinence from sex till marriage. They do not directly discourage the use of condoms.
- **Mainstream Denominations:** liberal and social action focus makes them a facile partner in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- **All Denominations:** involved in relief, development, education and the care of the sick and needy as resources allow.

## Efforts of Sample Non-governmental FBOs

- **World Vision International:** World Vision promotes a variety of prevention modalities such as condom promotion and distribution, care for people living with AIDS and behavior change.
- **Catholic Relief Services:** Provides social support services for people living with AIDs and have groups of community volunteers who perform AIDS prevention dramas.
- **The Salvation Army:** Provides relief supplies, education and prevention programs. They also provide spiritual support for people living with AIDS and affected communities. The Salvation Army is currently involved in providing support for HIV/AIDS orphans.

# Tendencies for Prevention Strategies

	Risk Avoidance	Risk Reduction
Orthodox	✓	
Evangelical	✓	
Pentecostal	✓	
Charismatic	✓	✓
Mainstream	✓	✓



<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Mission/Philosophy</b>	<b>HIV/AIDS Prevention</b>
<b>Orthodox</b>	Conservative approach to social action with emphasis on Christian moral virtues. Teaches against acts such as abortion, and use of contraceptives. Promotes faithfulness in church attendance and marital fidelity.	Since most of them forbid the use of contraceptives such as condoms, their influence on HIV prevention has not been very effective in urban areas where the use of condom is perceived as a viable means of preventing the spread of HIV.
<b>Pentecostal / Evangelical</b>	Active evangelism, Bible teachings moral values, outreach to the needy in society, establishment of schools and other services for the underserved. Theologically conservative.	Has a social action orientation and is interested in educating people about abstinence and fidelity as a means of preventing HIV.
<b>Charismatic / Mainstream</b>	Teaches involvement in evangelism, social activities and politics	Open to collaboration in all for prevention of HIV.

# Implications for Partnerships between FBOs and Governmental organizations

Orthodox denomination	Partnership is possible and highly encouraged especially in the area of treatment. They do not believe in the use of condoms as a means of prevention. Collaboration therefore has challenges.
Pentecostal / Evangelical	Prevention by abstinence is prioritized. Faithfulness to one partner is encouraged. Collaboration is encouraged, but caution is needed in matters of sex education.
Charismatic	Collaboration is strongly encouraged as charismatic churches have remained open to social issues and educational activities including sex education. Abstinence as a means of prevention remains a priority.
Other Mainstream Denominations	Besides the Orthodox, Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic churches, most of the mainstream denominations are open to talking about condom use and other means of prevention.

# Importance of the Faith Community

- The appeal of religion to the average Ghanaian makes the faith community an important consideration in any initiative that aims to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country.
- In countries such as Ghana, faith-based involvement may prove to be as necessary as condom social marketing, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and other state-of-the-art interventions in HIV prevention efforts (Green, 2003).



# Why Engage Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)?

- Many faith-based organizations command large audience/congregations in sub-saharan Africa
- Christian churches as an FBO can be viewed as the largest, most stable and most extensively dispersed non-governmental organization in many countries.
- They are able to mobilize people through their networks and communication.
- FBOs are able to influence behavioral change and thus promote AIDS prevention in areas where religion is pronounced.

# FBOs engage themselves in creating awareness through the media and literature



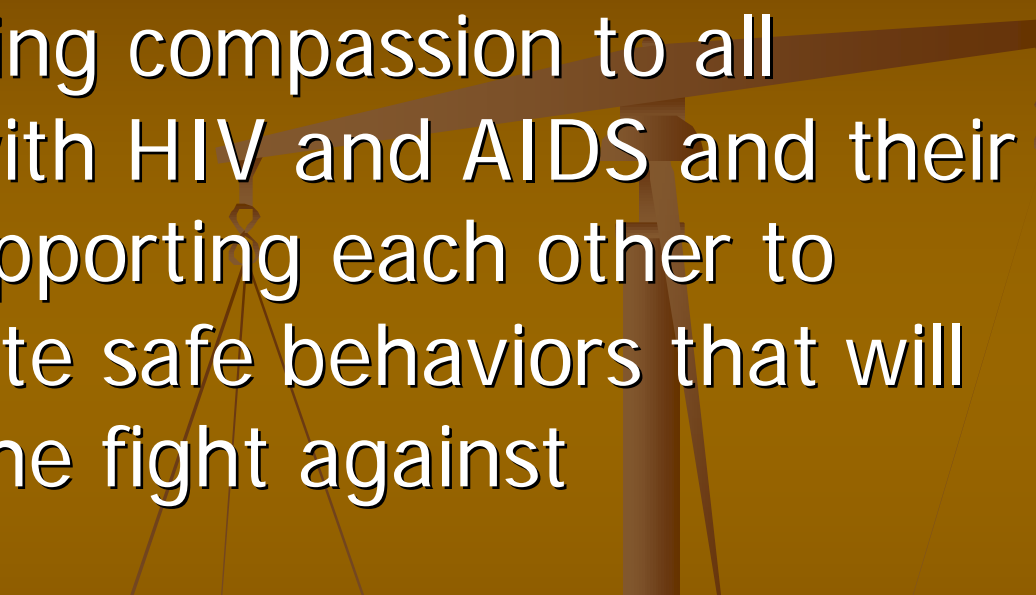
*"HIV - I thought it could never happen to me"*

For more information on HIV, the risks and taking an HIV test, you can contact the

**African AIDS Helpline:**  
**0800 0967 500**

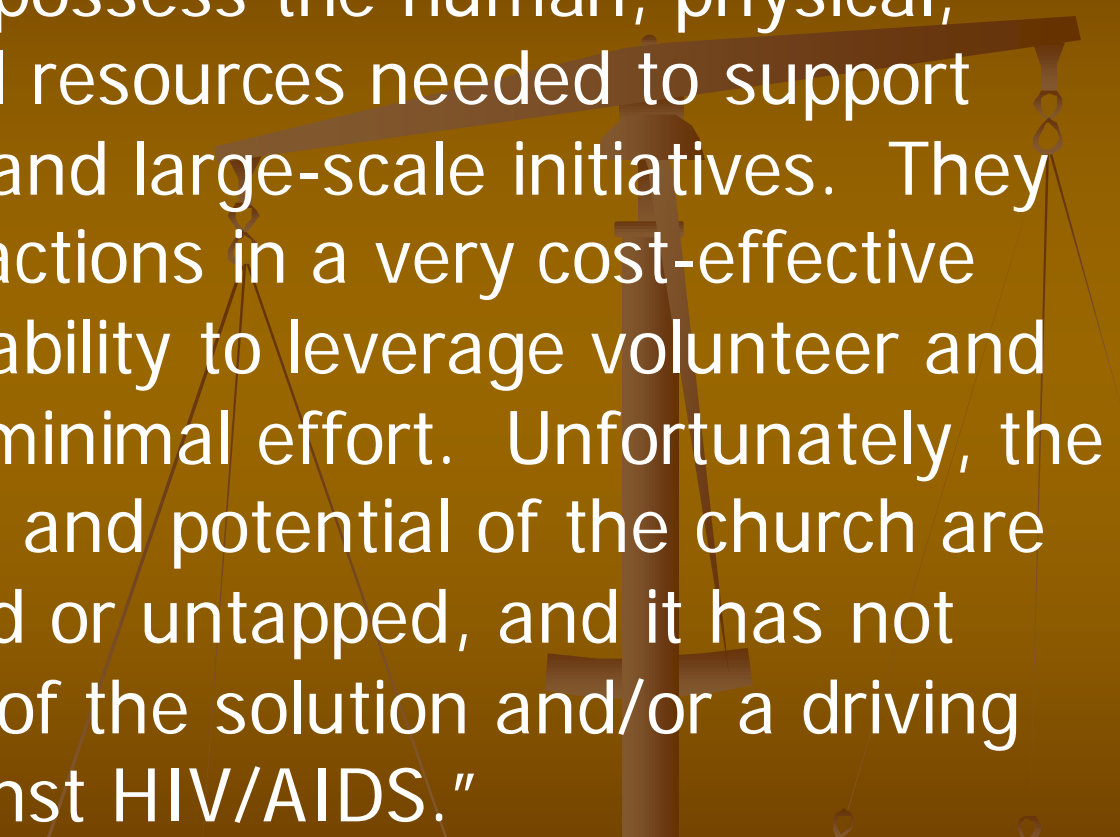
All calls are free and confidential.  
The African AIDS Helpline is a service provided by the South African Agency  
GlaxoSmithKline/AVERT.





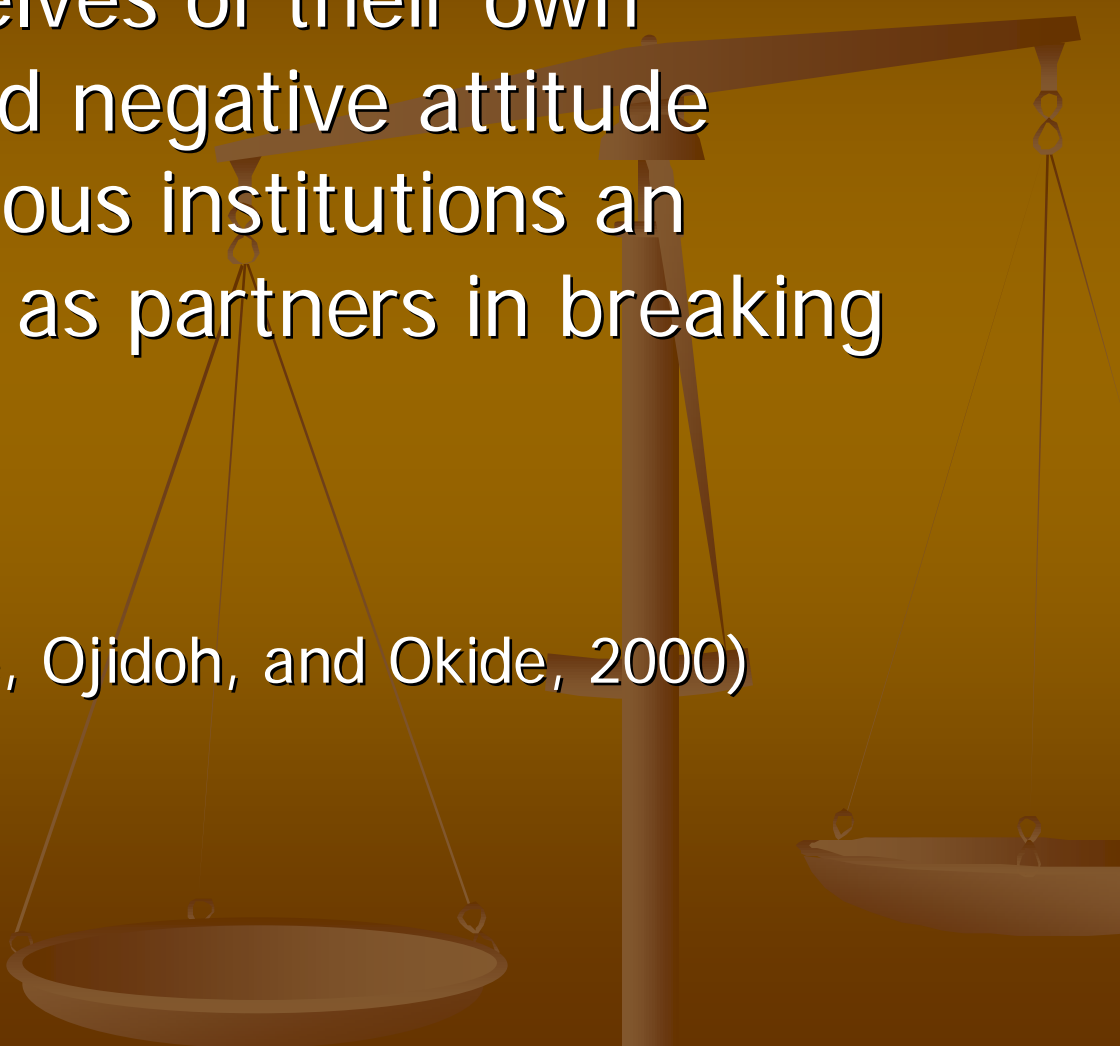
“Let us all go from here with the singular resolve of showing compassion to all persons living with HIV and AIDS and their families, and supporting each other to adopt appropriate safe behaviors that will lead us to win the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

-Alhaji Aliu Mahama,  
Vice President of the Republic of Ghana



“Churches are respected within communities and most have existing resources, structures and systems upon which to build. They possess the human, physical, technical and financial resources needed to support and implement small and large-scale initiatives. They can undertake these actions in a very cost-effective manner, due to their ability to leverage volunteer and other resources with minimal effort. Unfortunately, the resources, capabilities and potential of the church are considerably neglected or untapped, and it has not been considered part of the solution and/or a driving force in the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

(MAP International, 1997)



“...activists in HIV prevention need to purge themselves of their own prejudices and negative attitude towards religious institutions and engage them as partners in breaking the silence.”

(Iwere, Ojidoh, and Okide, 2000)