The African American Women’s HIV/AIDS Conference

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***Experiencing Contextual Bible Study: The Story of Jephthah’s Daughter (Judges 11)***

South Africa has the highest number of persons living with HIV and AIDS in the world. Contextual Bible Study is a way of doing bible study that was developed there in the midst of ongoing struggles against poverty, violence, limited educational opportunities, as well as HIV/AIDS. It is different from traditional bible study because it encourages us as people of faith to take into account our own cultural, social, and economic realities when we read the Bible. For more information on this process, visit the website of the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Ujamaa Center: http:www.sorat.ukzn.ac.za/ujamaa

**Discussion Questions**

1. In verses 37-38 we learn that Jephthah’s daughter and her female companions go to the mountains to “bewail her virginity.” At that time, what were the expectations about a woman’s role?
2. Are those expectations similar to or different from those for African American women today?
3. How do those similar expectations today put African American women at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases?
4. As a result, what are some programs that our churches need to start?

**Closing prayer (unison)**

Most gracious Father God, help us to know that we are indeed created in your image and that we are not just our hair, our thighs, or our legs. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, inspire us to see other biblical images of women and how they have faithfully served you. Inspire us to use our creative abilities to sing and dance like Miriam, after the crossing of the Red Sea, so that we can celebrate our people’s heritage and accomplishments. Empower us to be leaders, like Deborah, so that we can help our people face new challenges. Grant us courage to seek new avenues for our healing, as the hemorrhaging woman did. Instill in us a love for knowledge so that, like the woman at the well, we can ask profound questions. May we do all of these things to insure the wellbeing of our people, and may all that we do be attributed to your glory. In the precious name of your son, Jesus, we pray. Amen.