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**THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL PRACTICES ON THE SPREAD OF HIV AND
AIDS ON ZAMBIAN PEOPLE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

In a BBC radio report last year, one speaker reported that Africa South of the Sahara is the worst affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Is it that African Christians are more promiscuous than say their European and American counterparts? After living in U.S.A. myself and after having traveled in Europe, I felt that the truth of the matter may be the direct opposite. It may be that apart from sex there must be other ways through which HIV and AIDS is spreading in Southern Africa. Things like rites of passage and other African cultural practices may be what have made HIV and AIDS to find a fertile soil in Southern Africa.

There have been a number of women who are infected with the HIV and AIDS virus in Zambia and Africa as a whole (UNICEF reports on Zambia 2003). Women are more vulnerable to AIDS than men in Zambia for a number of reasons, some of which are the collapse of the support systems leading to poverty, the dying of African moral values, etc. Therefore there is a need to intensify our efforts to find out the relationship between cultural practices in rites of passage and the spread of HIV and AIDS in patrilineal and matrilineal Zambian cultures?

To promote effective joint involvement into finding the solution to this problem the following objectives will be achieved: To explore the salient cultural practices of rites of passage which promotes and hinders the spread of HIV and AIDS in Zambian women and the people of Zambia, to explore through a narrative approach, cultural practices and gender, to collect stories of women who have been the victims of these cultural practices, to look at rites of passage, a theological reflection.

Since culture plays a major role in people's lives in Zambia and Africa as a whole, there is need to take Zambian or African culture seriously so that we can look at the salient cultural practices in rites of passage which influence the spread of HIV and AIDS.

This research is based on a number of methods, which are: literature review, focus group discussions and qualitative interviews.

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