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Geographical/regional cultural implications for sexualities, LGBTQ+ issues

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Historically Black Churches (HBCs) have maintained a central role in the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual lives of African-Americans. Unfortunately, HBCs have played a divisive role in the public discourses about the human rights of LGBT individuals. Pastors of HBCs have used theology to justify the stigmatization and oppression of LGBT individuals. They have disseminated homophobic and heterosexist theologies through sermons, bible studies, and the exclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals from full participation in the sacraments of the church. Church-sanctioned LGBT stigmatization has had a destructive influence on the bio-psycho-social and spiritual well-being of many African-American LGBTQ+ individuals. A small group of African-American pastors and HBCs have forged a new theological path that affirms LGBTQ+ individuals as equal in the eyes of God, deserving of full inclusion in the church, and deserving of equal human rights. Unfortunately, these pastors and HBCs have experienced significant intra-community backlash for their ministries (e.g.,

declines in congregation memberships, pastors' loss of employment and ordination, condemnation by national denominational associations, and loss of funding for ministry programs. I am conducting a narrative interview study with 15 African-American pastors who offer an LGBTQ+ affirmative ministry. The primary research questions include: 1) What are the essential tenets of the pastor's LGBT-affirming theology? 2) How do they enact LGBTQ+ affirming theology within HBCs and the Black community? 3) How has the LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ Black community responded to their ministry? 4) Do social workers play a role in their LGBTQ+ affirming outreach ministries? If no, why not? If yes, what roles do they play? In the proposed paper presentation, I will share the research findings, the implications for future community-based research, and the implications for LGBTQ+ affirming collaborations between social workers and churches in African American communities.

Biography

He is working as a Researcher Assistant Professor Graduate Social Work Department West Chester University of Pennsylvania His experience includes various programs, contributions and participation in different countries for diverse fields of study. His research interests reflect in his wide range of publications in various national and international journals.

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