

## **ABSTRACT**

In this research report an analysis of the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence as a strategy for HIV prevention and its implications for development was carried out. The Christian Action Fellowship, a student Christian organization at the University of the Witwatersrand provided a case for the research study. The alternative development paradigm informed my discussion of the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence in relation to development. In particular, it is its emphasis on participatory development and on the fact that development focus should be given to particular localities that I drew from the paradigm. However, the paradigm falls short of capturing the religious dynamics pertaining to local realities. Thus the results of the research study I carried out are meant to contribute to the development of the paradigm by factoring in the religious dimension of local reality in discourse of development. In this study, the religious dimension of local reality was captured in my focus on the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence as advanced within the evangelical faith based movement in South Africa. Furthermore, this research study is meant to contribute to discourse of development by stimulating intellectual reflection on the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence as a strategy of prevention and its implications for development in South Africa.

The study demonstrated involvement by the evangelical movement in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The study further demonstrated the existence of particular methods employed to advance the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence as a prevention strategy against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. One such method is the strategy of identification. This method is employed to appeal to the targeted audience when

presenting a case. Other methods employed are debate and argumentation as well as rhetoric. The deployment of these methods point to a religious construction of an identity that upholds pre-marital sexual abstinence as a lifestyle and a better HIV preventive option to other strategies of prevention. This research study is recommending further work in the areas where HIV prevention interventions and development interventions intersect within the local context (in all its dimensions) of identity construction.