

## **Power in the Blood: A Service for Women Infected with HIV/AIDS**

by Charles B. Cotton Jr.

### **Worship Planning Notes**

“Power in the Blood” is a worship service specifically designed for women infected with HIV/AIDS. The central focus is declaring healing and freedom in the lives of infected women. This service should not take place on a Sunday. Rather, it should occur on a day that is non-traditional to the worship life of your church. Serving the present age requires us to do something different. This service should target women infected with HIV/AIDS, but it is not limited to infected women. Inviting women and men who do not have HIV/AIDS can educate and empower them to join the fight against HIV/AIDS. This experience is designed to be uplifting and educational. Every component of it is intentionally planned with this two-fold purpose in mind. Be sure to allow adequate time for planning the service, advertising, and preparing church members and the community.

### **Prelude to Worship**

The prelude to worship should be an intentional time of reflection. Worshipers come into the house of God with so much on their minds. Many come through obstacles at home, occupational challenges, day-to-day unexpected emergencies, and even traffic. The prelude should create a moment of expectation regarding what God is going to do in the worship experience. The selections that have been chosen help us focus on God, who is the ultimate worship leader. The prelude can be given by an instrumental ensemble, choral ensemble, or soloist. Be careful to choose a vehicle that will capture the sensitivity of this moment in worship. Note: the prelude is the start of worship, not the warm-up show for worship.

## **Power in the Blood: A Service for Women Infected with HIV/AIDS**

### **Selections for the Prelude**

1. I Love the Lord. By Richard Smallwood. As performed by Whitney Houston on *The Preacher's Wife Soundtrack*
2. For Ev'ry Mountain. By Kurt Carr
3. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow. Arr. by Roberta Martin
4. Glorious Is the Name of Jesus. By Robert J. Fryson

### **Litany: Declaration of Freedom. By Charles B. Cotton, Jr.**

Minister: I will bless the Lord at all times. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.

**People:** We have experienced the days of good and the days of gloom. Mountains have been a challenge to climb. Valleys have been a lonesome experience to walk through. Yet our faith is in God, and we still will praise his name forever.

**Minister:** Jesus has purchased our salvation through his sacrifice on Calvary's hill. He paid the price for our sins past, present, and future. His sacrifice gives us the right to eternal life. Therefore, we will not fear when life's storms and winds come. We will look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

**People:** Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases. He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

**Minister:** Walk each day in the assurance of your salvation. Speak to yourself saying, "By his stripes, I am healed." Every day will not be pleasant or filled with delight. But hold strong to God. He promised that he would never leave you or forsake you.

**People:** The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing I asked of the Lord, and that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

**Minister:** What shall we say to all these things? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be our guide and healer. He has declared, I am the Lord that healeth thee. Therefore, we will not fear adversity. We will not fear negativity and ignorance, even when it comes from our families and the Church. We will place our confidence in the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. We have a hope that goes beyond the grave. And we know that all things work together for the good of them that love the Lord and are called according to his purposes.

**All:** We declare, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." This day, we are set free. No longer will our infirmities or fear hold us hostage. We are healed by the power of his blood. AMEN.

### **Hymns of Declaration**

1. We Won't Leave Here Like We Came. By Maceo Woods
2. Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior. By Fanny J. Crosby
3. There Is a Balm. Negro Spiritual
4. Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee. By Henry van Dyke

### **Lessons from Holy Scripture**

Numbers 21:4-9, The Message Bible

(vv. 4-5) They set out from Mount Hor along the Red Sea Road, a detour around the land of Edom. The people became irritable and cross as they traveled. They spoke out against God and Moses: “Why did you drag us out of Egypt to die in this godforsaken country? No decent food; no water—we can’t stomach this stuff any longer.” (vv. 6-7) So God sent poisonous snakes among the people; they bit them and many in Israel died. The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke out against God and you. Pray to God; ask him to take these snakes from us.” Moses prayed for the people. (v. 8) God said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it on a flagpole: Whoever is bitten and looks at it will live.” (v. 9) So Moses made a snake of fiery copper and put it on top of a flagpole. Anyone bitten by a snake who then looked at the copper snake lived.

Luke 8:43-48, The Message Bible

(vv. 43-45) In the crowd that day there was a woman who for twelve years had been afflicted with hemorrhages. She had spent every penny she had on doctors but not one had been able to help her. She slipped in from behind and touched the edge of Jesus’ robe. At that very moment her hemorrhaging stopped. Jesus said, “Who touched me?”

When no one stepped forward, Peter said, “But Master, we’ve got crowds of people on our hands. Dozens have touched you.”

(v. 46) Jesus insisted, “Someone touched me. I felt power discharging from me.”

(v. 47) When the woman realized that she couldn’t remain hidden, she knelt trembling before him. In front of all the people, she blurted out her story—why she touched him and how at that same moment she was healed. (v. 48) Jesus said, “Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you’re healed and whole. Live well, live blessed!”

### **Prayer of Healing. By Charles B. Cotton Jr.**

Creator God, we come this day giving thanks for Your hand of mercy and Your heart of grace. We are humbled that You would invite us into Your presence to receive healing. We declare that when we leave here, we will not leave the way we came. We invoke Your presence that lifts our heads, mends our hearts, and heals all of our diseases. As we engage in this service to educate and heal, we pause to say thank you for the men and women you have placed in our lives as physicians. We ask you to continue to endow them with knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS. You have brought us through many years of funerals caused by AIDS. You have brought us through hiding our prescriptions and letters from doctors from our families and loved ones. You have brought us through the hours of depression and suicide. Today, we stand in your presence as women who expect Your continued healing and uplift. Your word declares, “By your stripes we are healed.” We claim healing in our minds, bodies, and souls. We proclaim to every evil force that we will no longer be bound by this disease. We are free to receive our healing. We release ourselves to the power of Your Holy Spirit. Take control of us. Renew us. Revive us. Heal us in the name of Jesus, AMEN.

### **Worship through Songs of Declaration**

1. We Made It. By Kurt Carr

2. I Go to the Rock. By Dottie Rambo
3. God Is on Our Side. By Andraé Crouch
4. After This You Shall Live. By Donald Lawrence

### **Testimonies from HIV/AIDS Infected African American Women**

Ask 3 women who are infected with HIV/AIDS to share their stories. In sharing their stories, ask them to specifically speak to the role of faith in their journey. The three women should be selected who represent three periods of living with the disease. Also, if possible, select women who represent three distinct age groups.

Speaker 1: 1 year or less of diagnosis

Speaker 2: 5 years or more of infection and diagnosis

Speaker 3: 10 years or more of infection and diagnosis

### **Songs of Encouragement**

1. I Look to You. By Robert Kelly
2. I Believe God. By Kurt Carr
3. I Believe. By James Fortune
4. Through the Storm. By V. Michael McKay
5. Standing in Truth. By Tonex
6. The Greatest Power. By Donald Lawrence

### **Words of Hope, Love, and Faith (The Homily)**

In this brief (15 minutes or less) preaching moment, it is important that clergy speak words of hope, love, faith. Preachers need to impart an encouraging word to African American women infected by HIV/AIDS. The words of Cheryl Anderson should be kept in mind during the homily. In the book [Ancient Laws & Contemporary Controversies: The Need for Inclusive Biblical Interpretation](#), Anderson says,

By hearing the voices of the marginalized, God's work of redemption and reconciliation continues in our midst (2 Corinthians 5-16-21). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, those of us who follow in the name of Jesus Christ must work for redemption and reconciliation as well.

### **Worship through Dance**

1. Still I Rise. By Yolanda Adams
2. Right Time Right Place. By Kurt Carr
3. Spiritual Makeover. By Kurt Carr

### **Offering of Support to Local HIV/AIDS Women's Shelter or a Support Group**

Research local shelters and/or support groups that predominately provide services to African American women with HIV/AIDS. Find out the needs of these organizations. Make the needs known through your order of worship for this service and during the offertory plea. All financial proceeds should go directly to the chosen organization. A week or so after the worship experience, share the financial amount raised and all donations given to the selected organization.

### **Benediction**

1. Great Expectations. By James Hairston
2. Lord You're Mighty. By James Hairston
3. Don't Count Me Out. Performed by Tramaine Hawkins
4. I Won't Go Back. By William McDowell

### **Post Worship Action Step**

In a private area of your church, provide HIV/AIDS testing for persons who are interested in knowing their status. It is important to have licensed medical professionals and counselors administering the tests and providing counseling. It is beneficial to acquire these resources from within your church or through a clinic or hospital that provides free testing in your geographical area. This is the most important step to take after the benediction. In order to serve the present age, do not stop with the benediction. Also, be sure to have the testing entity make available educational materials that can be passed out during and after the worship service.

### **Cites and Additional Information for Music and Material Listed**

#### **Selections for the Prelude**

1. I Love the Lord. By Richard Smallwood

Location:

Houston, Whitney. The Preacher's Wife Soundtrack. New York, NY: Arista, 1996.

2. For Every Mountain. By Kurt Carr

Location:

No One Else. New York, NY: Sony, 2009.

3. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow. Arr. by Roberta Martin

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #650

African Methodist Episcopal Church. African Methodist Episcopal Church Bicentennial Hymnal. Nashville, TN: African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1981. #593

National Baptist Publishing Board. The New National Baptist Hymnal. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Pub. Board, 1981. #529

Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #52

4. Glorious Is the Name of Jesus. By Robert J. Fryson

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #300

### **Hymns of Declaration**

1. We Won't Leave Here Like We Came. By Maceo Woods

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #407

2. Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior. By Fanny J. Crosby

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #435

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #272

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #162

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #276

3. There Is a Balm. Negro Spiritual

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #524

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #425

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #119

4. Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee. By Henry van Dyke

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #120

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #75

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #6

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #17

### **Worship through Songs of Declaration**

1. We Made It. By Kurt Carr

Location:

Morton, Paul. Still Standing. Nashville, TN: Light Records, 2006.

2. I Go to the Rock. By Dottie Rambo

Location:

Houston, Whitney. The Preacher's Wife Soundtrack. New York, NY: Arista, 1996.

3. God Is on Our Side. By Andraé Crouch

Location:

The Journey. Riverphlo, 2011.

4. After This You Shall Live. By Donald Lawrence

Location:

Trotter, Larry. Already Looking Bettah! Indianapolis, IN: Tyscot, 2007.

### **Songs of Encouragement**

1. I Look to You. By Robert Kelly

Location:

Houston, Whitney. I Look to You. New York, NY: Arista, 2009.

2. I Believe God. By Kurt Carr

Location:

Just the Beginning. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric, 2008.

3. I Believe. By James Fortune

Location:

Fortune, James & Fiya. I Believe. Houston, TX: Worldwide, 2010.

4. Through the Storm. By V. Michael McKay

Location:

Adams, Yolanda. The Best of Yolanda Adams. New York, NY: Verity, 1999.

5. Standing in Truth. By Tonex

Location:

Rainbow. San Diego, CA: Nureau, 2008.

6. The Greatest Power. By Donald Lawrence

Location:

Armstrong Bell, Vanessa. The Experience. Brentwood, TN: EMI, 2009.

### **Worship through Dance**

1. Still I Rise. By Yolanda Adams

Location:

The Best of Yolanda Adams. New York, NY: Verity, 1999.

2. Right Time Right Place. By Kurt Carr

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3. Spiritual Makeover. By Kurt Carr

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### **Benediction**

1. Great Expectations. By James Hairston

Location:

Youthful Praise. Resting on His Promises. Nashville, TN: Light Records, 2009.

2. Lord You're Mighty. By James Hairston

Location:

Youthful Praise. Resting on His Promises. Nashville, TN: Light Records, 2009.

3. Don't Count Me Out. By Walter Hawkins

Location:

Hawkins, Tramaine. I Never Lost My Praise. London, England: Zomba, 2007.

4. I Won't Go Back. By William McDowell

Location:

Arise: The Live Worship Experience. Nashville, TN: Light, 2011.