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## **Innovative New Toolkit for Black Church Leaders Designed to Help Reduce Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy**

(Washington, DC)—For many in the African-American community, the Black church has historically been a place where tough community issues are addressed, and that is why [The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](#) (The National Campaign), [Values Partnerships](#) (VPI), and prominent faith leaders nationwide have teamed up to provide important resources to Black clergy focused on early and unintended pregnancy.

Newly developed resources available at [www.TheNationalCampaign.org/blackchurch](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/blackchurch) include free videos, fact sheets, tips, and other information to help church leaders learn about these issues and bring them to their congregations in meaningful ways.

“The Black church has always been a powerful force for good and is uniquely situated to provide information, support, and guidance on relationships, sex, contraception, and childbearing,” said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, The National Campaign. “As a national organization committed to serving all women, we welcome this partnership with VPI and Black clergy leaders nationwide.”

Although the teen birth rate for young Black women in the United States has declined 49% in the past decade and 73% since peaking in 1991, it is still the case that roughly four in 10 Black girls get pregnant before the age of 20. Among Black women of all ages, 64% of pregnancies are described by women themselves unplanned. Research shows that having an unplanned pregnancy as a teenager or in one’s young adulthood has a huge impact on a woman, her partner, her family, and her community.

“The Black church and teen and unplanned pregnancy project from VPI and The National Campaign comes at a critically important time,” said Joshua DuBois, Founder/CEO, Values Partnerships. “The African-American church has been at the forefront of social change for generations and this is a moment where the church can rally around teen and unplanned pregnancy and make real progress on behalf of teens, women, and entire families.”

Among those who lent their expertise to this project and appear in the videos are Rev. W. Antoni Sinkfield and First Lady Kristy Sinkfield of Payne Chapel AME Church in Nashville, Tenn.; Rev. Que English of the Bronx Christian Fellowship Church in New York City; Dr. Yvonne Bennett of Hallelujah Christian Fellowship Ministries in Union, NJ; Rev. Kip Bernard Banks, Sr. of East Washington Heights Baptist Church in Washington, DC; Bishop Darren Ferguson of Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Arverne (Far Rockaway), NY; Rev. Derrick Harkins of the Union Theological Seminary in New York City; and Rev. Tony Lee of Community of Hope AME

Church in Hillcrest Heights, MD. Rev. Sinkfield's advice for his colleagues is to "Stop being afraid or ashamed or whatever it is about dealing with the realities of human beings being sexual beings. Have that conversation and create safe ground in the life of the church."

"When our kids come to church they just want someone to love and care about them. And out of that love and care emerges conversations about things that are important to them," First Lady Sinkfield agreed.

"The Christian church really has no option but to pay attention to teen and unplanned pregnancy. It's happening right in our houses of worship so if we don't pay attention to it, that means that we're saying that we're not doing our job," said Rev. English of the Bronx Christian Fellowship.

"Teenage and unplanned pregnancy is definitely an issue that impacts our communities," said Rev. Lee of Community of Hope AME Church. "The church needs to deal with the issues of the day and issues that impact people. The church should be a place where people can come not just for the answers to their problems but to be able to talk through the challenges of their lives."

"The role of the church should be to keep an open mind," said Dr. Bennett of Hallelujah Christian Fellowship Ministries. "Have seminars, invite people in that have expertise in this...let it be an open subject."

Noted VPI's DuBois, "We're so honored that some of the top faith leaders from across the Black church have contributed to this toolkit based on their years of experience and desire to make an impact on these issues."

The videos address topics such as what churches can do and what scripture says. The fact sheets, tips, and videos available at [www.TheNationalCampaign.org/blackchurch](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/blackchurch) were developed in response to a The National Campaign Black Clergy Convening in 2015.

**About The National Campaign:** The National Campaign is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization that seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families by preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy. Please visit us at [www.TheNationalCampaign.org](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org) or follow along on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**About Values Partnerships:** [Values Partnerships](#) (@VPIConsulting) uses the power of community and faith-based partnerships to solve problems and change the world. We take on causes and clients we believe in – and then we work to build grassroots partnerships and advocacy campaigns to advance goals, and mobilize customers, constituencies and audiences worldwide.

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