



Statement: „Brain Death / Heart Death“

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By brain death the medical profession means total and irreversible failure of the functions of the brain including the brain stem.

Heart death refers only to the heart and the cardiovascular system and to how the circulation of blood to the brain is temporarily impaired or interrupted. If the heart cannot be re-animated then brain death follows after a certain length of time.

From the perspective of the medical profession, brain death is equated with the death of a person, even when the cardiovascular system is still maintained through artificial support. If organ donation is planned, then death is only legally recognised when two doctors independently confirm the irreversible failure of the functions of the brain.

The New Apostolic Church agrees with this judgement. The Church has therefore no objection to the removal of organs for transplantation purposes or against autopsies for research and diagnosis. We are of the belief that when organs are removed from brain dead patients on artificial respiration, this does not constitute a killing. The soul is not affected.

Additional instructions for ministers of the Church:

The New Apostolic Church does not state an exact time when the soul and the body separate. There is neither a reference to this in the bible nor a scientific procedure demonstrating this.

If measures to prolong life are refused, a living will by the patient should be available. If this is not available, then the opinion of the next kin should be considered. If ministers are given appropriate instruction during the patient's lifetime, they can communicate this wish as the patient's confidant.

It is important, that ministers do not give medical or professional advice relating to the upcoming difficult decision concerning comatose patients.

The highest demands are made on ministers caring for patients in intensive care. Since conversation is usually not possible, a bond with the severely ill patient can be made by lovingly holding their hands. The patient can in silence, in conversation or in quietly spoken prayer be entrusted into the hands of our Heavenly Father, his omnipotence and his love, with a sincere prayer for the alleviation of suffering.