



## Guideline dealing with AIDS: The New Apostolic Church welcomes everyone!

Zurich. "The New Apostolic Church will welcome those with HIV and AIDS and their families with love and acceptance. The Christian response to a person with HIV/AIDS must be compassionate, helpful, and redemptive. Jesus, as our example, cared for those with disease with a personal demonstration of God's love (Luke 5:12-16)." It is with these words that the New Apostolic Church's guideline for dealing with HIV/AIDS begins.

The paper, ratified at the District Apostles' Meeting in Karlsruhe on 20 April 2006, goes on to say: "We believe in the value of human life as a gift from God, thus we believe that all people, healthy and diseased, are loved by God." The Church goes on to express its view that the disease is not a "punishment from God." No one suffering from AIDS will thus be excluded from the fellowship of New Apostolic Christians. On the contrary, all children and adults are welcome to take part in all divine services, Sunday school, youth groups, and other activities.

At the same time, the official document clearly explains how to prevent infection. In it the Church recommends the use of condoms. It discourages genital mutilation of women and shared use of syringes for drug abuse.

The official Church document "[Church Policy on AIDS and HIV](#)" can be downloaded as a PDF-file (only available in English).

There has been a New Apostolic work group dealing with the subject of HIV/AIDS and its effects—especially in Africa—since 2001. The then Chief Apostle Richard Fehr commissioned District Apostle Johann Kitching from Johannesburg to show efforts

that could be made, and concrete solutions that could be found, to help combat this humanitarian and social problem from the perspective of the Church. The first steps included awareness programs for ministers and members in the congregations, especially in Southern Africa. Seminars explaining prevention and protection measures are now conducted regularly by doctors and teachers. In each country the Church works in cooperation with the individual government and non-government organisations and networks who are also engaged in the fight against AIDS. Some points of emphasis of the Church's work in fighting AIDS in the year 2006 include better care for infected persons and their families. The fact that interactive patients heal more quickly than isolated patients is also taken into account. For this reason, attention and care is especially important. The public information of the patients is also to be improved.

The concept of "drama groups," in which young people act out scenes about the right way of dealing with HIV/AIDS, is also to be utilised more effectively. In addition, a new brochure, a new poster, and a guideline for ministers will be produced on the subject of HIV/AIDS.

A team within the Church's work group will in the meantime develop a teaching curriculum emphasising "Life Skills Development," which is to be used in Sunday school and Confirmation Instruction.

You can find more information in line with the Church's stand on HIV/AIDS on the website of the organisation "Engender Health" (<http://www.engenderhealth.org/index.html>).

**AIDS is a chronic, life-threatening disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HI-Virus, HIV).** The HI-Virus damages or destroys certain cells of the immune system. As a result, the body can no longer effectively combat bacteria, viruses, or fungal infections. The virus and the infection are both called HIV.

## 2 June 2006

The New Apostolic Church will welcome those with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) and their families with love and compassion. The Church's response to a person with HIV/AIDS must be compassionate, helpful, and respectful. The goal is to support, care for those who suffer with a personal demonstration of God's love (John 13:1-16).

Therefore, we the people of the New Apostolic Church stand together in the following:

- We believe in the love of Christ for us as a gift from God. We welcome that all people, healthy and disabled, are loved by God.
- We do not believe that those who have tested positive for HIV or have AIDS have incurred punishment from God.
- No one with HIV will be excluded from the activities and fellowship of the New Apostolic Church.
- We understand that since this virus is not spread by casual contact, there is no risk of contracting the AIDS virus from any infected adult or child in the church setting.

And therefore:

- We welcome all children and adults who are HIV+ to join us in the divine services, Sunday School, Youth, and special events and all church activities.
- We suggest that those affected make a confidential disclosure to a member of the Church Leadership or to the local health services (Child Protection and/or police support).
- We commit to educate and teach God's values: AIDS is preventable!
  - It can be prevented by avoiding sexual contact outside marriage and by maintaining a faithful, monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner. People who do not plan to stay monogamous in the future are responsible for the consequences, which in some instances can be severe, although the Church does not agree with such actions, and thus recommends to encourage that such people adhere to safe means to avoid a potential HIV/AIDS infection.
  - It can also be prevented by avoiding needle injection practice such as sharing needles, syringes, and other injection materials, by ensuring properly sterilized materials are used during medical care and by avoiding intravenous drug abuse.

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