

Foreword

This year's World AIDS Day theme is "Human Rights and Universal Access". Since November 20 is Universal Children's Day, we could also mark this day as a period for remembering children living with HIV. We can use the same liturgy for World AIDS Day, usually observed on the first day of December or around that time.

Vertical transmission is the most common form of transmission among children. As of 2007, only 64,000 of Asian children received Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART) according to the 2008 UNICEF Report. Services reached only a very low percentage of children and families in need. On average, only one of five children receive ART and even in countries where provision for treatment is 100%, many children living with and affected with HIV and AIDS are deprived of treatment because not everyone discloses their HIV status for reason of stigma and discrimination.

We also present the HIV and AIDS Policy of the Christian Conference of Asia. We hope that we can widely circulate this in our local churches and use this as basis for our ministry on HIV and AIDS and as part of the World AIDS Day observance this year.

We thank the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance for the liturgy prepared by Rev. Terry MacArthur and for allowing us to use and even make some adaptations according to our local context in Asia.

God bless us all.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Erlinda N. Senturias
Consultant on HIV and AIDS
Christian Conference of Asia



LIVE THE PROMISE: HIV and AIDS Campaign

Action Alert

21 October 2009

Get involved: World AIDS Day 2009 is around the corner

Introduction

World AIDS day is celebrated every year on 1 December. It is an opportunity for individuals and groups all over the world to come together to remember, and demonstrate worldwide support to, people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. It is the one day in the year where issues surrounding HIV and AIDS can take center stage.

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) strongly encourages faith-based communities to make the most of World AIDS Day 2009 by engaging in some form of worship, event, or advocacy focused on HIV and AIDS.

Background

The global theme for 2009 and 2010 World AIDS Day is “Universal Access and Human Rights” chosen by The World AIDS Campaign, a network of civil society groups active in the response to HIV and AIDS, including the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA).

This theme encourages us to deepen understanding, develop partnerships and challenge discriminatory laws, policies and practices that stand in the way of access for all to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

When human rights are not respected, people living with HIV are vulnerable to stigma and discrimination, illness, economic insecurity, and reduced access to treatment. Where rates of HIV prevalence are high and treatment is lacking, communities are devastated by the impact of the virus.

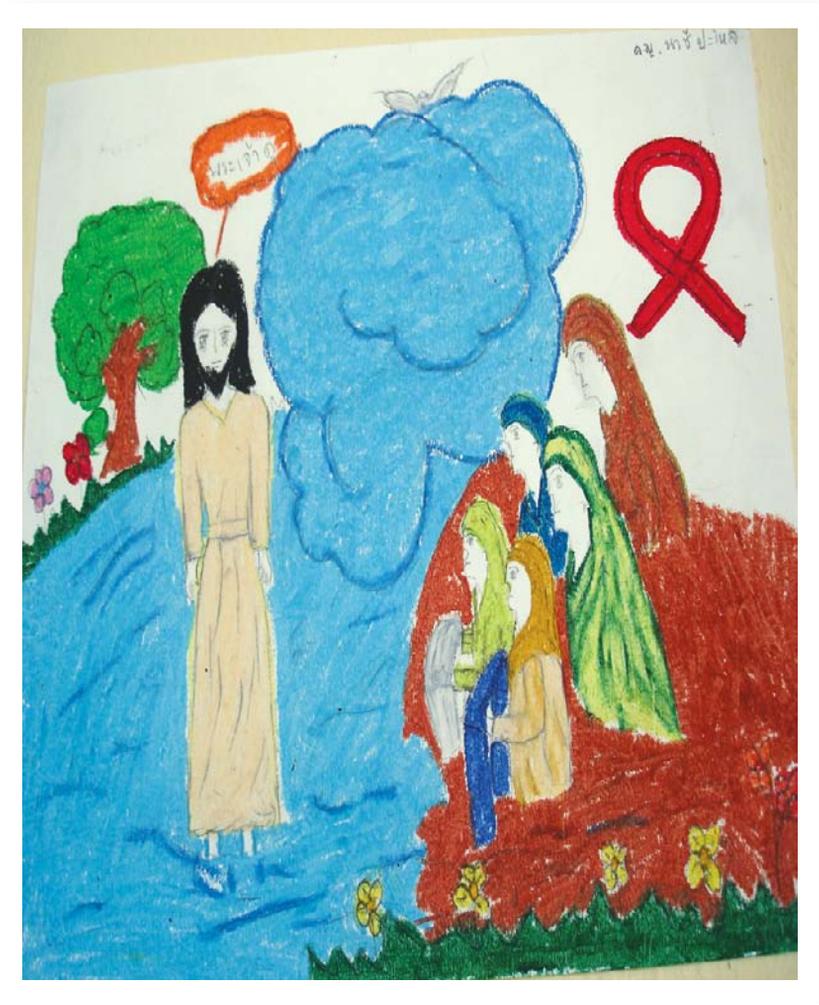
Over the past years there have been some encouraging advances in the global response to HIV and AIDS. We have seen increased commitment around the world to respond to HIV and AIDS in national and local initiatives, in churches and religious organizations and in civil society.

This year's theme of "Universal Access and Human Rights" encourages us, as people of faith, to reflect and work to promote human dignity and respect and protect the human rights of people living with or affected by HIV, or those who are vulnerable to infection. At home, in schools, at workplaces or worship spaces, you can take a lead, empower others, and help promises be delivered that will mean a compassionate, active and effective response to AIDS.

What can you do?

- Find out what is happening in your local area to commemorate World AIDS Day 2009. Encourage your church or organization to get involved, or use some of the ideas below to organize an event in your local community!
- Plan an ecumenical service for the Sunday before World AIDS Day, or on 1 December itself. The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has prepared a special service that can be used on the first Sunday of Advent, plus ideas and other worship resources that can be adapted for other times. The service is available in
 - English at: http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/WADLiturgy090928_EN.pdf

- French at: http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/WADLiturgy091006_FR.pdf
 - Spanish at: http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/WADLiturgy091006_ES.pdf
 - German: http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/WADLiturgy091014_DE.pdf
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- Use the World AIDS Campaign material, being sent to all EAA HIV and AIDS contact people, to prepare posters, messages, and other promotional material. World AIDS Day materials can also be downloaded from the World AIDS Campaign website: www.worldaidscampaign.org
 - Learn about the commitments toward universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support made by governments [link to UNGASS] and how you can join in civil society to ensure that effective targets are made and kept.
 - Raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and human rights of people living with or affected by HIV, or those who are vulnerable to infection in your area. Link up to other community events around World AIDS Day. Work with and support networks of people living with HIV and AIDS.
 - Wear a red ribbon and ask others to do the same.
 - Visit the EAA's website, <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaidsworld-aid-day/> for more study and action ideas.
 - Add your event to the list of events taking place all over the world by adding an entry to the World AIDS Campaign online calendar at: <http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/Key-events/World-AIDS-Day/Events-Calendar/WAD-2009-Events-Calendar>



2009 WORLD AIDS DAY LITURGY GUIDE

Introduction

Every 15 seconds someone in the world dies of AIDS-related illnesses, but even more often a person living with HIV is discriminated against, judged, excluded, whispered about, fired from their job, arrested, beaten, or thrown out of their house. In 2009 and 2010, World AIDS Day will focus on HIV and human rights. As Christians, these are precious moments for us to reflect on HIV and our belief that all people are created in God's image. While we work to promote and protect the human rights of people living with or affected by HIV, or those who are vulnerable to infection, we must also recognize and take action on the spiritual dimension that call's us to work for justice and treat all as our sisters and brothers.

Preparing the Service

You are encouraged to use this order of worship on World AIDS Day – Tuesday, 1 December 2009. It may also be used at a service on the Saturday or Sunday before or after World AIDS Day.

The only special item needed for this service is the branch of a tree with leaves on it for the pastor/priest/leader to use throughout the service.

This service can be downloaded from <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/world-aids-day/> to make it easier for you to adapt it for your own context.

Musical Preparation

Greeting

The leader of the worship holds up a branch.

Leader : A righteous branch is springing up,

People : **surely coming,**

Leader : fulfilling the promise,

People : **so all living with HIV have access to health care and live in safety.**

Leader : The days are surely coming.

People : **Surely.**

Leader : And this is the name by which they shall be known:

People : **The Lord is our righteousness.**

Leader : We worship God, faithful, sure,

People : **coming with hope,
dwelling with us in love,
executing justice and righteousness in the land.**

adapted from Jeremiah 33: 14-16

Hymn

Suggestions: "Hail to the Lord's anointed" or "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" or "Come, thou long-expected Jesus" or "Hark, the glad sound"

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 33: 14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Psalm 25:1-6

The leader reads the phrase from the Psalm. The people respond. And other readers speak the "I lift up..." parts.

Leader : To you, O LORD,

People : **I lift up my soul.**

Reader : I lift up Winnie from Zambia. Her mother died of AIDS-related illness when she was seven. She was abandoned for some time by her relatives. Hurt, unsure, struggling, she said: "I would like to be treated well; to feel loved and valued and to go back to school."

Leader : O my God, in you I trust;

People : **Do not let me be put to shame.**

Reader : I lift up the woman in Russia, not daring to give her name, fearing at every moment that someone will discover her secret so she loses her job.

Leader : Do not let my enemies exult over me.

People : **Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame.**

Reader : I lift up Mary from the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. She was raped and afterwards unable to find medical care. The camp is full of people living with HIV but she is afraid to take the test. She defends herself, "I have no friends. No one talks to me and the worst thing is that no one, no one wants to hold my baby."

Leader : Let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

People : **Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

Reader : I lift up people living with HIV who are evicted from their homes in Borei Keila, Cambodia and forced to live in horrible conditions in what has become known as an AIDS colony.

Leader : Lead me in your truth, and teach me.

People : **For you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.**

Reader : I lift up Steve Harvey, head of Jamaica AIDS Support, a group that works with gay and bisexual people affected by HIV. He was kidnapped and killed when it became known that he was gay.

Leader : Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,

People : **For they have been from of old.**

Reader : I lift up the widow from Washington, DC, whose husband died of AIDS-related illness contracted through injecting drug use. She has hepatitis C due to unsafe needles. She pleads: "Safe, affordable, low barrier/no barrier access to needles, and treatment would save lives, and money."

Leader : Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

People : **According to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!**

The leader takes the branch and lifts it as a kind of silent witness. The leader looks at the people while asking the questions

Leader : What righteous branch is God raising up to confront the wantonly treacherous, to spare the targeted from shame?

What righteous branch is God bringing forth in our midst, so people living with HIV can live in safety?

What righteous branch is God growing in you?

Silence

Prayer

Leader : Let us pray:
Universal God,
God of everything and everyone,
leaving nothing and no one outside your love,
spring up branches of righteousness
which shelter the least and listen to the silenced,
which reach the forgotten and gather the unwanted
so that all under your care, all will live in safety,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sung Acclamation

Suggestions: “Ososo, ososo” from Korea or “Esho hae probhu” from Bangladesh or “Dans nos obscurité” from Taizé or the first verse of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”.

Epistle Reading

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Alleluia

Gospel Reading

Luke 21:25-36

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Sermon

Hymn

Suggestions: Another one of the hymns suggested for the opening.

Affirmation

The branch is passed through the congregation while the following affirmation is recited. This is better if the leader says a few words and the people repeat it, than if they read it out of the worship order of service. People are invited to stand for this. The leader should try and find a strong rhythm between the call and the response by the people.

I am
somebody.
I have the right to live.
I may be HIV positive,
but I have the right
to essential medicine.

I may be a prostitute,
or a drug addict,
but I am
accepted by God.
I may be an infected single mother,
but I have a right
to treatment.

I am
God's child.
I may be poor,
but I have a right
to healthy food
and clean water.
I maybe be different from you,
but I have a right
to be safe.
I may be dying,
but I have a right
to receive care
and support.

I am
God's child.
I can raise my head.
I can work for justice.
I may be
without my legs,
but in Christ,
I can stand tall,
because my redemption is near.
I am
somebody.
We are all God's children.
We all have a right to live.

Prayers of Intercession

Prayer

Branch of Righteousness, surprise the world with a purity that allows being touched by a hemorrhaging woman, rather than a purity which protects itself from others. Surprise the world with a holiness that can affirm the prostitute who washed your feet with her hair, rather than a holiness which does not associate with those who don't follow the standards of the community. Surprise the world with a goodness that is able to feed the hungry on a hillside, rather than the goodness which accuses others of not taking care and judging their misdeeds. Surprise the world with a spirituality which affirms the praying penitent, rather than the religious leader thanking you for his favored status. Surprise the world with a gesture which opens your table to all who would come,

rather than a law which declares some unclean and unfit.
Branch of Righteousness, surprise your world.
Show us the leaves which tell us that your reign is at hand,
so all your people can stand tall, and raise their heads
because your redemption is drawing near. **Amen.**

Lord 's Prayer

Offering

Hymn

Suggestions: "O Lord, how shall I meet you" or "All glory, laud, and honor"

During the hymn the branches are waved before or around the congregation.

Benediction

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WORSHIP RESOURCES

CALL TO WORSHIP:

- Leader:** As people of God, we seek to act from deep spirituality and theology;
- People:** To love others as oneself (John 13: 34-35);
- Leader:** To serve the least of our brothers and sisters (Matthew 25: 31-40);
- People:** To see the whole community as part of one body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12;12).
- Leader:** Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ Romans 8: 35).
- All:** Jesus came that we may have life in all its fullness (John 10: 10).

LITANY OF COMMITMENT:

- Leader:** Active response to HIV and AIDS cuts across fair and respectful relationships, human sexuality, gender justice, human rights and universal access.
- People:** The ministries of the Churches need to address vulnerable children, orphan children, elderly, young people, women, men and key affected populations.
- Leader:** As people of God we are called to:
- Men:** Deepen the theology and spirituality of HIV and AIDS and reflect this into the pastoral life of the Church;
- Youth:** Assert the roles and rights of affected people in the Church and in its work;
- Children:** Integrate prevention, treatment, care and support;
- Women:** Conduct lobby and advocacy for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS; and
- All:** Ensure stewardship of time, finances and resources in the area of HIV and AIDS.
- Leader:** We will promote HIV- and AIDS-competent Churches in Asia by:

Ministers/Clergy: Preaching and teaching non-judgmental messages about HIV and AIDS in our Sunday Schools, worship, various lay-led fellowship meetings and Bible Studies;

Church Council and Leaders: Conducting community outreach programs, designate special times of healing and prayers;

All: Learning from the experiences of positive people and those affected, and inviting them as full participants in preventing the HIV transmission;

All: Celebrating World AIDS Day every December 1st and AIDS Sunday on the nearest Sunday following

Educators/Teachers/Administrators: Equipping pupils and students in Church-related and owned institutions, and in seminaries and other formation centres with knowledge, skills, attitudes that will actualize our roles as a healing and reconciling community.

(source: CCA Policy on HIV and AIDS)

(For more Litany of Commitment materials, parts of the CCA Policy on HIV and AIDS can be used.)

WHEN DOES THE HEALING START?

By Revelation Velunta, used with permission

(A Responsive Meditation Based on Mark 1. 40-45)

Leader: Millions of people today experience the plight of the leper in the Markan passage every single day. The healthy stay away from them. The healthy have stopped talking with them. The healthy have stopped interacting with them. The healthy stand from afar and watch them die.

People: What is the difference between illness and disease? Disease is physical. Illness is social. We, the un-sick, create and name the illnesses that keep us safely distanced from the sick. We, the un-sick, create the borders that keep the sick away from us. We, the un-sick, have access to the funds and the medicines that can help the sick live longer lives. We, the un-sick, decide who is ill and who is not.

All: Many times, we, the un-sick, create the rules, the fences, the sanctions, the systems that make the sick sicker, the weak weaker, and the dying dead.

Leader: In the Markan passage, we find the story of a leper. A person very much like a person with HIV or AIDS. He is considered unclean. People are told to keep away from him. People are told not to speak to him. People are told not to touch him. Though alive, society considers him dead.

People: What is life without companionship? What is life without conversation? What is life without the warmth of a human touch?

All: God did not create people to be alone. In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not supposed to be alone.

Leader: To celebrate Immanuel is to celebrate God-with-us. We are not alone. We shall never, ever, be alone. Yet, many among us, the leper of ages gone, the person with HIV or AIDS today, are alone.

People: To celebrate Immanuel is to follow Jesus, Love Incarnate.

All: In the Markan passage, we find the story of a leper. A person very much like a person with HIV or AIDS. He is considered unclean. People are told to keep away from him. People are told not to speak to him. People are told not to touch him. Though alive, society considers him dead.

Leader: Yet Jesus, Love Incarnate, came near him, spoke to him, and touched him. Jesus did what society told him not to do. In the companionship, in the conversation, in the warmth of a human touch, the walls the un-sick created to separate and to isolate the sick were torn down.

People: When does the healing start? Does it start with medicines or with technology? Does it start in hospitals or in churches? Does it start with prayer or with the much-needed deposit or all-important HMO card? When does the healing start?

All: Or does it start when we realize that we are each other's keepers, that we are all God's children and thus sister and brother to each other, and that one's pain is everybody's pain, and that one's struggle is everybody's struggle, and that one's healing is everybody's healing, and that one's resurrection is everybody's resurrection.



158 Who is my mother?

BRONWEN $\text{♩} = 96$

Ian Render

Who is my mother? Who is my brother?

All those who gather round Jesus Christ:

Spirit-blown people born from the

Gospel sit at the table, round Jesus

Christ.

vv 1-3 v 4

Detailed description: The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of five systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: 'Who is my mother? Who is my brother? All those who gather round Jesus Christ: Spirit-blown people born from the Gospel sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.' The final system includes two measures of piano accompaniment labeled 'vv 1-3' and 'v 4'.

1 Who is my mother?
 Who is my brother?
All those who gather round Jesus Christ:
 Spirit-blown people
 born from the Gospel
 sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.

2 Differently abled,
 differently labelled
widen the circle round Jesus Christ,
 crutches and stigmas,
 cultures' enigmas
all come together round Jesus Christ.

3 Love will relate us -
 colour or status
can't segregate us round Jesus Christ:
 family failings,
 human derailings,
 all are accepted, round Jesus Christ.

4 Bound by one vision,
 met for one mission
we claim each other, round Jesus Christ.
 Here is my mother,
 here is my brother,
 kindred in Spirit, round Jesus Christ.

Shirley Murray
(used with permission)

POLICY ON HIV and AIDS for CHURCHES

PREAMBLE

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) seeks to act from deep spirituality and theology:

Loving others as oneself

(John 13: 34-35)

Serving the least of our brothers and sisters

(Matthew 25: 31-40)

Seeing the whole community as part of one body of Christ

(1 Corinthians 12;12)

Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ

(Romans 8: 35);

Jesus came that we may have life in all its fullness

(John 10: 10).

Jesus also clearly mentioned the 'other sheep'

(John 10:16a)

and the Church needs to look into the response to these people of God as well.

This policy is built on the Christian principles of peace-making, healing and reconciliation, and aims to equip churches in Asia to be 'HIV competent'. CCA acts as a facilitating agent for dialogue and action on common concerns and for the breaking down of barriers that separate and cause division between peoples. As a common problem, HIV and AIDS is breaking down barriers and enabling various faith communities to come together to find solutions.

Many Asian countries have witnessed the slowing down and reversing of the HIV epidemics among specific populations, for example, children. CCA commits to the prevention of new HIV infections. CCA also commits to slowing down existing epidemics and preventing new epidemics. Christian attitudes and teachings have contributed to stigma and discrimination and we acknowledge that we are part of the problem for a long time. Therefore, CCA commits to removing stigma and discrimination, to empowering individuals, families and communities who are living with HIV to gain access to effective treatment, care and support.

National and ethnic cultures have a strong influence on the practice of Christianity in Asia. The powerful action of Asian cultures often supports harmonious and rich relationships involving Christian individuals and communities. Our cultures also present us with many serious challenges as we reach 'in' to our own Christian communities to mobilize ourselves as best we can to deal with HIV. Theological reflection, scientific inquiry and public opinion all make competing claims on our responses to HIV. HIV competent churches are those which can assess their own capabilities, and which can discern which elements of their local epidemics they will directly engage or not engage.

The following policy is based upon the CCA's Pastoral Guidelines on HIV and AIDS.

VISION

The active response to HIV and AIDS cuts across fair and respectful relationships, human sexuality, gender justice, human rights and universal access. The ministries of the Churches need to address vulnerable children, orphan children, elderly, young people, women, men and key affected populations.

CCA is called to:

- deepen the theology and spirituality of HIV and AIDS and reflect this into the pastoral life of the Church;
- assert the roles and rights of affected people in the Church and in its work;
- integrate prevention, treatment, care and support; conduct lobby and advocacy for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS; and
- ensure stewardship of time, finances and resources in the area of HIV and AIDS.

SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

HIV and AIDS challenge us to break down barriers between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and our judgment that leads to stigmatization, discrimination and the violation of human rights.

There is a need to examine the liturgical rites in churches, such as the practice of baptism, Eucharist, and funerals to ensure fuller participation of people living with HIV and AIDS in the life of the church.

The active participation of people living with HIV and AIDS in the life of the congregation will enrich our spiritual experience and bridge the gap between our religious teachings and the realities on the ground.

We will promote HIV- and AIDS-competent Churches in Asia by:

- preaching and teaching non-judgmental messages about HIV and AIDS in our Sunday Schools, worship, various lay-led fellowship meetings and Bible Studies;
- conducting community outreach programs, designating special times of healing and prayers;

- learning from the experiences of positive people and those affected, and inviting them as full participants in preventing the HIV transmission;
- celebrating World AIDS Day every December 1st and AIDS Sunday on the nearest Sunday following;
- equipping pupils and students in Church-related and owned institutions, and in seminaries and other formation centres with knowledge, skills, attitudes that will actualize our roles as a healing and reconciling community.

PREVENTION

CCA calls on Member Churches and National Councils to address the prevention of HIV in a holistic manner including encouraging discussion on, and understanding of:

- the social factors that can make us vulnerable to HIV, including how these affect members of our congregations;
- cultural practices within our society that enhance our vulnerability;
- issues such as domestic violence, incest, substance addictions that are often not discussed openly;
- the sacredness of sex and relationships that emphasize mutual respect and honesty within families;
- scientifically proven and evidence-informed methods of prevention, e.g. condoms; and
- new and alternative methods of prevention.

TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT

We commit to enhance access to treatment for all, and those in substance addictions, through efforts such as treatment literacy, awareness workshops, promotion of voluntary confidential counseling and testing (VCCT), dispensing of medicines, treatment of Opportunistic Infections (OIs), Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART), and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

This includes actively helping individuals to access services that are available from providers other than the Church.

We will promote scientifically proven methods of care and support as a special ministry of the Church, following the principles of non-discrimination and de-stigmatization, as well as support those looking for alternative treatment and supportive measures.

We will promote policies and dialogue that enhance the human rights and dignity of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Within our organizations, we will seek to create an environment that empowers people living with HIV and AIDS to communicate with their family and community and openly share their HIV status, and with co-workers, in order to bear witness and to encourage others to do so.

We will promote the adoption of policies and practices that protect confidentiality and enable openness between Churches and people living with HIV and AIDS.

ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION

We will advocate for and with people living with HIV and AIDS:

- to bring about greater awareness of the global HIV and AIDS situation and its root causes;
- to ensure dignity and rights of affected persons, especially to access adequate health care (universal access), education and employment;
- to obtain treatment (medications and laboratory tests) and to ensure access to the full range of education, counseling, voluntary HIV testing and care;
- to allocate adequate resources and provide programs that serve to decrease the incidence and impact of HIV and AIDS in the region;
- to reduce costs of treatment.

- to form partnerships as required: ecumenical, other faiths, other people living with HIV and AIDS networks, civil society, business and government;
- to work with political and other leadership to introduce legislation as appropriate; and,
- to have more understanding of the scientific findings and reconciling basis of our faith on issues such as human sexuality.

GENDER JUSTICE

Gender inequality is at the centre of gender-based violence which is a pervasive public health and human rights issue worldwide. Gender-based violence includes domestic violence against women, exploitation of children (child labor, sexual abuse, incest, child marriages), prostitution, human trafficking and unfavorable cultural practices (polygamy, female genital circumcision and cleansing rituals). All these increase the risk of HIV infection.

Therefore:

- We will uphold the ideals of public-spiritedness, social service, family values and traditions that enhance relations and respectful communication with each other.
- We encourage fidelity and the fruit of the spirit, viz: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5: 22-23)
- We will promote fairness and respect in relations between women and men, boys and girls in society and in the Church, encouraging more equal status, levels of responsibility, access to resources and share in decision-making.
- We will promote discussion on cultural, traditional and our own religious practices which undermine such fairness and respect.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

One of the challenges of the Churches is to seek to understand more fully the gifts of human sexuality in the contexts of personal responsibility, relationship, family and Christian faith. We can no longer ignore the importance of discussing this gift of God in Churches. We can draw some wisdom from the findings of the research of scientific communities on the different forms of sexual practices. We need to be aware that there are different forms of relationships.

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME, FINANCES AND RESOURCES

To ensure that HIV and AIDS is addressed in the Asian region, CCA is expected to identify staff persons mandated to follow through on HIV and AIDS, and will work with Member Churches and National Councils to do the same. Available structures should be maximally utilized and time provided. CCA will have mechanisms that ensure accountability to the people we serve, and those from whom funds are received.

CCA calls upon Member Churches and National Councils to discuss and disseminate this policy in all official decision making bodies and to encourage concrete action and implementation at all levels.

Unanimously approved by the CCA General Committee at its meeting on September 29 to October 01, 2009, at the Bangkok Christian Guest House, Bangkok, Thailand.

All photos used are by the Church of Christ in Thailand - AIDS Ministry



