



'one Body, one Voice' John 17:23

HIV – A Call to Action

While we have not always acknowledged it, we recognise today that the Body of Christ, His Church, is living with HIV. With brokenness we admit that as Evangelical Christians we have allowed stigmatisation and discrimination to characterise our relationships with people living with HIV. We repent of these sinful attitudes and commit to ensuring that they are changed. We will follow Jesus' example and identify with those who are affected (Matthew 9:12-13) as we intercede fervently for one another (Romans 8:26).

We recognize that as the current generation of young people in our churches enters adulthood and becomes sexually active we have not always provided a clear, biblical framework of human sexuality and life skills for their guidance and nurture. We are cognizant that we have been insensitive to the inability of women, children and the most marginalised to exercise real choices and that in many areas of the world marriage and gender-based violence are risk factors for HIV transmission. We apologise for this failure and resolve to model and teach the essential value of human sexuality within the bounds of God-honouring lifestyles. We also commit ourselves to listen with understanding to our children, youth, women, and the most marginalised – especially people living with HIV – so that we can work together for a healthy and safe future which will enable all people to live in the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

The HIV pandemic has reminded us that the health of all communities is connected to the health of the most vulnerable and marginalised in our societies. We commit as leaders to equip ourselves and our congregations to follow the footsteps of Jesus. Since ours is the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) we will seek to live out incarnational faith working in partnership with the most marginalised and vulnerable to HIV infection.

As a community of Evangelical Christians we believe that all people regardless of belief, identity, gender, ethnicity or health are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Hence it is an essential element of our identity that we bear witness to the love of God for all people in word and deed, in private and in public. We therefore resolve to strengthen our theological reflection and practical action in our advocacy, respect for life and justice with dignity for all people. We realize that this resolution will profoundly challenge us as we deeply long to be a holy people who please God (1 Peter 1:15-16; Matthew 5:8). We reaffirm that we all live in and by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2) and agapé love (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).

We commit to working in HIV prevention in partnership with others to halt and reverse the spread of HIV. In so doing we understand that there are many social drivers that contribute to HIV transmission and that no one group or organisation can do everything. We will therefore work alongside other sectors of society so that all people will know how to protect themselves from infection and have access to the services needed to do so.

We commit to playing our part in caring relationships – individually and corporately – working to mitigate the impact of HIV on individuals, families and communities and advocating for comprehensive HIV services in prevention, treatment, care and support. We will work towards universal access for these services for people living with HIV so that they become less vulnerable and are enabled to be meaningful contributors within the Church and society.

We commit to develop a comprehensive HIV strategy in collaboration with our member-networks, people living with HIV and other partners.

As a community of Evangelical Christians expressed globally, nationally and locally we will foster connections between parts of the Body of Christ. We will strive for practical solidarity and sacrificial giving among Christians – person-to-person, congregation-to-congregation, denomination-to-denomination, and country-to-country – in order that Jesus may be lifted up, the Father glorified and men and women brought into His saving grace through the life revolutionising power of the Gospel we preach (Romans 3:23-24; 6:23; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13).