

UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
PRESS STATEMENT ON THE HIV/AIDS SITUATION

30 NOVEMBER 2005

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) was declared in 2001 as a HIV/AIDS Friendly Church. We called on all the congregations and institutions of the URCSA, to implement the spirit of this declaration in the life of the Church.

As a church we acknowledge that HIV/AIDS is having a disastrous effect on many people and families in our country and the region. We acknowledge the pain and suffering of those living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Many members of our own church and the broader Christian community are living with HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is therefore, not somebody else's problem, it is the problem of the church. We must acknowledge that we, the body of Christ (the church) has AIDS.

We believe that Christ came that all may have life in abundance. We also believe that Christ calls His church to be a caring and compassionate community. In the spirit of our Belhar Confession, we believe, that as a church, we must stand where God stands, with the people living with HIV/AIDS and against discrimination, rejection, deprivation and prejudice, that they in many instances have to deal with.

The URCSA as a HIV/AIDS -Friendly Church, assures all people living with HIV/AIDS and their families of our support, love and sincere Christian compassion. We will provide for them in their needs.

We call on all people to do all we can to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. It's the best weapon that we have. We must prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, by abstaining from irresponsible sexual practices. Make responsible choices, because life is precious. South Africans must take control over this disease and their lives. The power to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, lies in our own hands, through responsible choices.

We must however, sadly acknowledge, that there are those people who are in situations where there is an imbalance of power where they have no choice and become the victims of other people's power. These vulnerable people of our society we must protect at all cost.

We are deeply concerned about the about the hostilities between government and certain NGO's in the HIV/ AIDS situation. Rigorous debate and actions on

the issues of the day is of the utmost importance, for democracy to flourish. It concerns us however, when these hostilities, do not create a conducive situation to address effectively the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. While fighting parties may score points for themselves, people living with HIV/AIDS become the casualties in these fights. We call upon government and NGO's to find common ground, for the sake of the people living with HIV/AIDS.

The URCSA will seek an audience with Deputy- President Pumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, the Chairperson of the National AIDS Council and the Minister of Health to voice our concerns and to clarify important issues around HIV/AIDS.

Issued by:

Rev. Daniel D.J.Kuys (Media Spokesperson for the Moderamen of the General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church).