



Are These Our Neighbours?

AIDS SUFFERERS

“Do not, my brothers, speak ill of one another.”

James 4:11

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The virus (HIV) destroys certain white blood cells. This results in the body losing its ability to protect itself against disease, such as tuberculosis.

AIDS is transmitted by sexual intercourse, infected blood and blood products. It can also be transmitted from pregnant mother to the unborn child through the placenta, and after birth in breast feeding.

Definitions:

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus—the cause of aids

HISTORY AND SPREAD

Research indicates HIV moved from chimpanzees to humans in the 17th century.

1959 Congo recorded the first human death .

1978 AIDS identified in American and Swedish homosexuals, and in Haitian and Tanzanian heterosexuals.

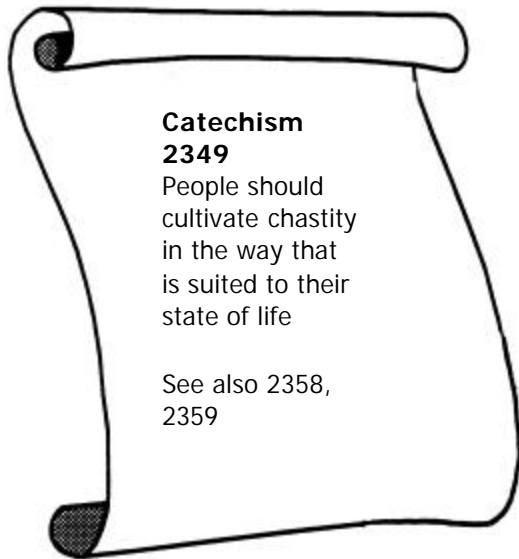
Between 1959 and 1999 explosive growth.

- From one death to 2.8 million with an estimated 34 million infected with HIV.
- 16 million of these were women and over 1 million children.
- 24 million were in Sub Saharan Africa, of whom 13 million were women.
- 1 million in USA about 50,000 in Canada.
- 12 million – out of 13 million – of the orphans found in Sub Saharan Africa.
- Known statistics in 1999 do not include Eastern Europe, Asia including China, where the conditions for spread of the disease (multiple partners, drug addiction shared needles) are now widespread.

CONTROL OF DISEASE

1. At present no cures. Research is centered on a multi drug approach, which is much too costly for third world countries with a pandemic. No significant research into a vaccine.
2. Control will be achieved by tackling the known causes of transmission such as sexual promiscuity & permissiveness.





“The church should approve condoms to prevent the transmission of death”

South African cleric

My friend caught it from one of the teachers. Lots of girls sleep with their teachers. They do it to pass exams.”

15 yr old girl in Central African Republic.

References

Social encyclicals

Centismus Annus 1991, Section 36.2 use of drugs, 39 morality.

Reports of Aids annual conferences.

Modern Media especially religious press and international press.

www.aegis.org/epidemic

www.unaids.org/epidemic update/report/table

Speaker resource

1. Saskatchewan Health
2. Aids Saskatoon. 665 9976
3. Aids Persons living with Aids Network of Sask 373 7766
4. African missionaries.
5. Sister Callista Arnold Ursuline Order 653 0534
6. Members of the medical profession and of the pharmaceutical industry.



Discussion

1. What responsibility do first world governments and population have, if any, to (a) their own AIDS sufferers (b) those worldwide?
2. Does this responsibility extend to pressuring the pharmaceutical industry to provide HIV/AIDS drugs at less than normal profit?
3. What can the church do in this pandemic?
4. What other conflicts in thought and action are there in the treatment and prevention?

Action suggestions

1. Contact local sufferers to hear their stories and those of their loved ones.
2. Help palliative care organizations.
3. Press for the reduction of drug costs in the Third World countries.
4. Open discussions with church authorities for a better understanding of the views of both the laity and the religious.