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GUIDELINES FOR
TEACHING HIV/AIDS
IN THE
LOCAL CHURCH



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The Pastor—making a decision for the Church to be involved in HIV/AIDS ministry

Firstly, the Senior Pastor must see the need and be motivated to involve his local church in HIV/AIDS ministry. The levels of involvement most probably will be:

- local church involvement
then
- outside/community involvement

Motivating factors for the pastor in local church HIV/AIDS involvement are:

- The need is so great.
- It is one of the greatest open-doors to the non-Christian world in terms of evangelism.
- So many are dying without Christ and only the Church can remedy that.
- The toll in human lives that are dying prematurely is a primary factor.
- The plight of orphans and resulting street children is another.
- The economic devastation in losing so many people to AIDS who are in their productive years is causing poverty.
- The non-Christian world has no solutions to the moral dilemma of AIDS; only the Church has answers that can change the ‘heart’ of a person.

Start with local church leadership

1. The Pastor can take the contents of this manual and have **a meeting** relative to HIV and AIDS ministry in the local church, **with all of those in church leadership**. They could discuss the following:
 - Explain to leadership the need for the church to be involved.
 - Give some motivational teaching out of the chapters in this manual to the leadership so the HIV/AIDS ministry is a team effort.
 - Preach a few sermons to the whole congregation on biblical morality and values.
2. **Conduct an HIV/AIDS education workshop in your local church.** If the church leadership has teaching, and the congregation has some preparation through Sunday sermons, the next step can be to arrange an adult AIDS awareness workshop, perhaps on a Saturday. Make sure you do the following, if possible:
 - Put up posters around the church promoting the workshop. (See sample of poster at the end of Chapter 20 “Education.”)

- Give a hand flyer to every adult in your congregation, inviting them to the seminar. (See sample flyer of 4 to a page in Chapter 20.)
- Teach the adults about the most important aspects of HIV/AIDS, especially covering:
 - HIV/AIDS Statistics – Chapter 3
 - Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Facts Explained – Chapter 4
 - Quiz – Chapter 5
 - Facts on Condoms – Chapter 8
 - Crimes Against Children – Chapter 16
 - Sexuality God’s Way – Chapter 2

Other chapters can be taught later. Especially invite parents to attend.

3. Conduct an HIV/AIDS and morality training workshop for the youth.

Be sure to involve the parents of the youth if possible, in getting the youth to attend. Be sure the parents agree to the workshop. However, it is NOT always a positive thing to have the parents physically present with the youth. The age barrier is sometimes a problem in talking about HIV/AIDS and sexuality with both the parents and youth in the same room. It might be advisable to conduct workshops with the church youth over a period of several weeks rather than trying to cram it into a single day.

4. Make HIV/AIDS ministry involvement mandatory for Bible college students.

A special emphasis covering most of the concepts in this manual should be a “must” for those training for Christian ministry. A college level examination for testing Bible college students is available by writing OPERATION WHOLE offices. It can be mailed to you.

5. Develop trained, local church teams for evangelism using AIDS prevention as the open door.

Once you have several HIV/AIDS trained leaders in your local church, begin to groom them for outside, community ministry. To do that they must:

- Know the HIV/AIDS material well.
- Know how to adapt it to the age-group they will minister to. (See Chapters 17 through 22 for guidelines.)
- Have the appropriate visual flip charts available to the teams who will be teaching.
- Make appointments with local school principals to make your presentations available to the community. Offer to come and assist the teachers in HIV/AIDS education by doing a free AIDS awareness class. Once you get into one school and have a recommendation letter regarding your program, you will have an open door to all the school children in the community. Many of these children and their parents can be followed up by your local church.
- Offer to conduct free AIDS education to the employees of local businesses. Assuredly, if your church HIV/AIDS awareness teaching teams do a good job, you will be flooded with opportunities to share

this message all over the community. In each session, you will be able to present Christ as the solution for change in moral behaviour while giving AIDS education.

- Invite community leadership to an AIDS emphasis in your church. This can be the village Chief, the Mayor or other such high profile persons to open such an event. Doing so will also bring the non-Christian community out to your local church event. Combine a first class AIDS Awareness campaign with a gospel outreach. Again, many will come to know Christ as a result.
- Once your HIV/AIDS ministry team is trained, make arrangements to have Assemblies of God hand-out booklets available to those who hear your presentations. Please contact the local resident missionary in your area, or write to OPERATION WHOLE so that you will have these available for your church's AIDS ministries.
- Target HIV/AIDS ministry education to these groups:
 - School age children (particularly middle and high school)
 - Parents
 - Truck drivers
 - Police officers
 - Military & army
 - School teachers
 - Prisoners
 - Health and social service workers
 - Commercial sex workers
 - Business employees

In all of the above, your church teams will be able to share life-saving information on HIV/AIDS, plus share the simple gospel while they are doing these educational presentations.

- Once you have teams in the local church that are confidently ministering in the community on AIDS awareness, you can begin to train teams who can help in "home-based" care for the HIV and AIDS patients. This training information is covered in Chapter 13.
 - Begin to target the following:
 - Christian homes that have a loved one HIV-infected
 - Non-Christian homes that have a loved one HIV-infected
 - Lead the HIV-infected to Christ, and also their extended family
 - Visit hospital wards where AIDS patients are
- A wise pastor will train someone under him in the local church to care for the those sick with AIDS. There also should be another lay pastor in the local church who can conduct funerals. Otherwise, in areas where there is a high infection rate in the population, that pastor will

have little time for shepherding his congregation. He will constantly be at funerals which can rob the life of the living in the church. There should be a “delegated” church leader responsible for the issues of death and dying. This will help the pastor with his priorities.

- The local church can sponsor a community parade and open-air service on the theme of “I CAN WAIT.” Banners can be made and held as people march. There can be singing, skits, and a powerful message which will all heighten community awareness of AIDS and moral values. Many will come to Christ through these kinds of rallies.

There is much the local, Christian church can do to bring Christ, life, and hope to the community by getting involved in HIV and AIDS ministries. The opportunities are endless. For any local church to pretend HIV and AIDS is not its problem and not become involved in this strategic area, may very well miss out on one of the greatest opportunities to share the gospel with a hurting world. God will help and bless you through it. Amen!

*“Then the King will say to those on His right hand,
‘Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink;
I was a stranger and you took me in;
I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me;
I was in prison and you came to me’ ”*

(Matthew 25:34, 35, 36).