

Position of the New Apostolic Church on certain issues of sexual conduct

Bearing in mind the various cultures in which the Church is active throughout the world, the Church leadership adopts positions on certain issues of sexual conduct within and outside marriage in the following summarized form:

1. Core considerations on sexuality and how sexual conduct has developed in different eras and cultures

God's will on the role of sexuality in human partnership is described in the Bible:

- „Then God blessed them, and God said to them, *"Be fruitful and multiply;..."* (Genesis 1:28).
- *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."* (Genesis 2:18).
- *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24).

In Leviticus 18 and 20, descriptions are given of the kind of sexual conduct God does not condone. He enjoins us to keep His ordinances.

Prime cultural values such as those enthroned in religion, morals, marriage, and family, which have developed through the centuries, regulate how human partnership is to be structured. They find different cultural expressions and are subject to constant change.

From the 9th century, calls intensified that only church marriages should be accepted. Prior to the Council of Trent (1545-63) the Church accepted several forms of partnership, providing they were permanent unions of a monogamous kind. With the statutory introduction of civil marriage (in Central Europe at the end of the 19th century) the church's blessing could no longer be obtained without a marriage certificate. Thus marriage was placed under the jurisdiction and protection of the state. The churches, being subject to the state's authority, concluded from this, among other things, that any cohabitation between a man and a woman is sinful without a marriage certificate under civil law.

2. Case for marriage and family

The New Apostolic church has always emphasised the importance of the Church bestowing its wedding blessing, counseling couples to receive it in direct connection with their civil marriage. The Church supports all the endeavors by society to confer especial protection on marriage and family.

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman across a lifetime, this having been confirmed by a public promise of fidelity (cf. Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4.5; Ephesians 5:31). God's blessing is an important and valuable fundament for marriage and family. Seizing upon God's word and grace, praying together and sharing the experience of faith, all these strengthen the marital bond and bolster the family.

Spiritual shelter and sexual fulfilment are best experienced in marriage. A well-led marriage can instill in children the exemplary and constant conditions they need if they are to assume responsibilities in later life.

3. Sexuality and sin

The concern of our doctrinal teaching is to shed light on what, in the Church's opinion, does not conform to God's will. In so doing, we wish to help our brothers and sisters to adjust their conduct accordingly.

Sin is everything opposed to the will of God and contrary to His nature. It does not fall to man to determine *himself* what is sinful; the sole determinant is God's will, as may be discerned in Holy Scripture, or else - according to the meaning and spirit of Jesus Christ's Gospel - as revealed in timely manner by the Holy Spirit through the chief apostle and the apostolate.

By sinning, man incurs guilt before God always. Depending on the degree of personal responsibility or reproachability, the extent of guilt before God is greater or smaller. Sin as such is not susceptible to differentiation: sin is and remains sin. In the field of sexuality, sin may not be evaluated differently than would any other wrongful conduct. But this does not apply to the extent of guilt. God alone determines the gravity of guilt individuals incur for each and every sin.

For details on the link between "Sin and guilt" please consult the [attachment](#).

Basically each person, as part of his self-responsibility, is answerable in conscience to God, to his fellow man and to himself for all his thoughts, words and deeds. Each person therefore is also responsible for how he deals with his sexual disposition (cf. Romans 2:11-16; Acts 24:16).

If someone suffers from self-reproach, he may still hope to find grace and comfort in Jesus, provided he fulfils the necessary requirements (cf. Matthew 11:28).

The position adopted below is based on the previous statements:

Premarital sexual intercourse and Intimate caressing

Premarital sexual intercourse is not approved of by the New Apostolic Church, particularly when indulged in with frequently changing partners, with persons below the age of maturity, or to test sexual compatibility.

If a firm intention exists to get married in the foreseeable future and the Biblical tenets of a serious bonding intent, sustained fidelity, genuine love, and mutual support are adhered to (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4.5; Ephesians 5:31), then premarital sexual intercourse is not considered to be sinful. Nevertheless, the New Apostolic Church counsels couples, even in this case, to forego premarital sexual intercourse which shall be reserved for the marriage.

The New Apostolic Church does not approve of intimate caressing (for sexual satisfaction) with frequently changing partners and persons below the age of maturity.

Extramarital heterosexual life partnerships (outside of marriage)

Such marriage-like intimate cohabitation at a single address without marriage and without a Church blessing is not approved of by the New Apostolic Church. The Church counsels couples to get married and points to the meaningfulness of the wedding blessing. "Trial-run marriage" is not acceptable.

If a firm intention exists to get married in the foreseeable future, the Biblical tenets of a serious bonding intent, sustained fidelity, genuine love, and mutual support are adhered to (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4.5; Ephesians 5:31), then sexual intercourse is not considered to be sinful.

Adultery

The Bible, in unmistakable terms, designates adultery as sinful (Exodus 20:14 and 17; Matthew 5:27-28); cf. on this point also John 8:3-11.

Special guidelines apply in this case for ministers and teachers.

Homosexuality

On the grounds of Biblical tenets and Christian tradition, the New Apostolic Church does not approve of practised homosexuality.

It is solely for God to determine whether, and to what extent, a person who is absolutely confirmed in his or her homosexual disposition acquires guilt before God through the practice of his or her homosexuality.

In this regard, it should be expressly stated that sexual disposition has no relevance in the pastoral care of our brothers and sisters.

Brothers and sisters who are practicing homosexuals, or living in a homosexual partnership, cannot carry out ministerial and teaching duties in our Church."

Masturbation

Masturbation is not sinful.