



Discussion results

From a meeting with “Rainbow-NAC” on 13 March 2006 from 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Participants:

For “Rainbow-NAC”: A. Stauch (Spokesperson), P. Schärer, C. Clauß, J. Mattenberger

For the Committee for special affairs (CSA): W. Klingler, H. Wend, P. Johanning

1. Translations of official statement

“Rainbow-NAC” brought up the English and Spanish translations of the Church’s official statement on sexual conduct. These translations contain terms that distort the meaning of the German originals.

The CSA will forward this matter to the Coordination Group (CG).

2. Statement on Transsexuality

The Church administration has forwarded its statement on transsexuality to the district apostles, apostles, and bishops of Europe. However the formulations discussed in consultation with “Rainbow-NAC” were not incorporated. This had been differently discussed and should be corrected as quickly as possible.

The CSA will forward this matter to the Coordination Group with the aim of incorporating the new formulations.

3. Change of first name for transsexuals in membership database

The CSA will instruct all district apostles that the names and personal status of transsexual members must be changed in membership databases in accordance with legal requirements. In Germany, this will happen immediately after the responsible district court has issued a ruling on a name change.

4. Intersexuality

“Rainbow-NAC” addressed the issue of intersexuality (a more comprehensive term than the previously employed “hermaphrodite”). Here the Church should offer some clarity and provide appropriate pastoral care. In the meantime, suitable government brochures are available for parents of intersexual children.

The CSA will forward this matter to the Coordination Group with the aim of issuing a corresponding directive to the “Current Issues” Project Group.

5. HIV / AIDS

“Rainbow-NAC” lauded the efforts of the New Apostolic Church with regard to the AIDS crisis in African countries. The question as to what the Church is doing about this in Europe has come up. Is it possible to display a government brochure like the “addiction brochure” in the congregations? Are there opportunities to support any other such projects in Europe?



The CSA will forward this matter to the Coordination Group with the aim of issuing a corresponding directive to the “Current Issues” Project Group.

6. Pastoral care for women by women

This is an open topic. The CSA pointed out that there are already female teachers and youth leaders. This is a good start.

This topic remains open. A fundamental decision of the Church administration is necessary here. The search for solutions will continue.

7. Church contact person for pastoral care of homosexual members

“Rainbow-NAC” asked the Church to appoint an official contact person for matters of pastoral care for homosexuals.

The CSA will present this issue to the chief apostle with the aim of appointing a male contact for the pastoral care of homosexual brothers and a female contact for the pastoral care of lesbian sisters.

“Rainbow-NAC” asked the Church to do away with the term “practised homosexuality.” The group maintains that this term is derogatory and reduces homosexuality exclusively to sexuality, without taking account of love.

The CSA appreciates the problematic nature of the situation and will notify the district apostles accordingly. However, from a linguistic perspective there is no reasonable solution at present. And as already explained in the last meeting, no change to the Church’s official statement on sexual conduct is expected in the near future either.

8. Contact person for transsexuality, according to need

“Rainbow-NAC” brought up the question of special pastoral care for transsexual members, as regular pastoral care is not qualified to deal with this subject. The Church should appoint qualified persons as contacts. Direct collaboration between the Church and “Rainbow-NAC” would be useful.

The CSA will take this up with the chief apostle. “Rainbow-NAC” will learn the outcome of that discussion shortly.

9. Homosexual ministers and teachers

“Rainbow-NAC” addressed an incident that has recently become the subject of intense public discussion: a homosexual brother was relieved of his teaching function once it was discovered that he was a homosexual.

District Apostle Wend read out a personal statement which he had formulated in consultation with the brother in question. Certain concrete elements of the contents were not mentioned on account of the obligation to secrecy. Reproaches of a “double standard” or “inhumane treatment” are completely unfounded. It is not possible to reverse this decision, and all those in positions of responsibility have conducted themselves in accordance with the regulations of the Church.

“Rainbow-NAC” will publish a statement about the recent case on its website. The CSA will not publish anything further about this situation on account of the obligation to secrecy.



"Rainbow-NAC" asked whether musical functions (such as organist, choir leader, etc.) are also considered to be teaching functions.

The CSA confirmed that musical functions are not included as teaching functions, but emphasised that local acceptance must be taken into consideration. If there is local acceptance, the brother/sister can work as an organist or choir leader.

10. Distribution of flyers at Youth Days

"Rainbow-NAC" asked for permission to distribute flyers at Youth Days in the future.

The CSA foresees problems because the exclusive distribution of flyers gives the impression that one group is seeking to impose itself upon others. This becomes especially difficult when only one group is distributing literature, as others will soon follow. This would have to happen in a coordinated manner, for example, by setting up several information tables or stands on various topics.

11. Baptism of children of same-sex couples

"Rainbow-NAC" asked whether the Church would baptise children adopted by same-sex couples.

Yes, without restriction. That is the valid ruling from the District Apostle Meeting.

12. Next meeting

The CSA and "Rainbow-NAC" plan to meet once per year, or more often as the needs dictate.

Frankfurt, 16.03.2006

Peter Johanning / Arne Stauch