

# Opinions on the Church's stand against condom use by the youth

**Is the Church stand against condom use by the youth fuelling the spread of AIDS? by Thengo Kavinya**

It has been more than two decades since the HIV virus was discovered, yet the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to exact a significant toll on Africa. In Africa, an estimated 22 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2007 and approximately 1.9 million additional people were infected with HIV during that year. In just the past year, the AIDS epidemic in Africa claimed the lives of an estimated 1.5 million people in this region. The use of condoms is a known effective means towards preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections. Most religions, however, frown on the use of condoms by its members. They believe that condoms encourage adultery and promote early sexual debut in the youth. Some religious groups only advocate for condom use by married people as a contraceptive not as protection against sexually transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS. The church believes that the most significant way of preventing AIDS is total abstinence and faithfulness amongst married couples.

I sought opinions from a number of individuals on their view about the current stand by the church on condom use and this is what they had to say:

Charles Majamanda  
Businessman

My answer is no. I'm saying this because I feel the church is right to oppose the use of condoms to unmarried people more especially the youth. I don't think the youth can use condoms two to three times on the other occasion they will decide not to use the rubber again in the end spreading the disease or getting unplanned pregnancies.

Bernadette Chiwaya  
Student, Chancellor College

I don't think so. I think the people or organizations that are encouraging the use of condoms are the ones who are fuelling the spread of HIV. First and foremost having sex outside marriage is a sin and in the bible it's called adultery. So if we encourage the youth to have sex outside marriage it will be sinning against God and secondly this will take away the value of marriage because many will see no reason of getting into marriage if they have already indulged into this behaviour.

Moneko Zoto  
Student, KCN

No. I believe that the church is right to be against the use of condoms because sex is to be done within marriage and not outside marriage. In addition to that the use of condoms among the youth promotes sexual behaviour that can put them at risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. If condoms are discouraged among the youth, sexual behaviour will be reduced for fear of contracting diseases and getting unwanted pregnancies.

Margaret Ngwira  
Marketing officer

Yes. We cannot continue to live the same way like we are still in the old age. It is high time the church has to learn to face realities that are on the ground. In the old times there were no deadly diseases such as AIDS which has no cure. Almost all the diseases had a cure and it was very unusual to hear that individuals are dying from a disease they had knowledge about. But with AIDS I think it's a different case, we know that it kills and I think it is wise to tell the youth to abstain and if they cant abstain then they should use condoms to avoid death which we could have prevented.

Charity Kampango  
Freelance journalist

No. I think the church stand has a positive influence in controlling the spread of AIDS because religious beliefs are strong determinants of people's perception of life.

Victor Kapiyo  
Shop attendant

I can say both yes and no. Am saying yes because I know that its hard for young people to abstain these days because they are exposed to a lot of stuff unlike in the past when people could know about certain things at a particular age but with the increase in technology young people are knowing these things at a tender age so they would like to try so I think its advisable to encourage them to use condoms. On the other hand am saying no because from the past no tradition has condoned sex outside marriage and also no religion condones sex outside marriage so I believe the Church's stand is right in not condoning the use of condoms.

Eneless Phiri  
Hairdresser

Yes. I feel it is the church's stand that is fuelling the spread of AIDS, I believe it could be wise if it could be preaching both abstinence and condom use so that the youth who cant abstain may not be exposed to the disease and on a greater part preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Trevor Maere

No it isn't. Usually individuals don't have the desire to have sex because of the condoms. Abstinence is the best practice amongst the use and I feel if implemented amongst unmarried people we can manage to prevent the spread of AIDS.