

1985

RESOLUTION: THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME)

WHEREAS, the Gospel affirms Jesus as the humble, loving, accepting Christ whose ministry to the poor, outcast, dispossessed and lepers has special priority, so much so that the very nature of grace and faith in Jesus' life and mission is demonstrated by his continual identification and association with the broken and the isolated (Luke 4:16-30, 7:18-23); and

WHEREAS, Jesus deliberately turned toward those rejected not only by their community but by their families, touching them, eating with them, and announcing that they had a place of honor at the heavenly feast, and

WHEREAS, God's people are called to that same ministry of reconciliation to act with justice, righteousness and compassion, and to speak prophetically in the name of a just, righteous and compassionate God (II Corinthians 5:9-20); and

WHEREAS, the sudden appearance of AIDS in our population, including more than one hundred fifty diagnosed in Connecticut, calls the religious community to follow Jesus' model and teaching; and

WHEREAS, nearly all AIDS patients are shunned in some way, either by their families or the public; which fears their disease, and

WHEREAS, public policy in support of research in AIDS was affirmed by Margaret Heckler, former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, as a number one health issue, but with relatively small sums being made available to combat the diseases and

WHEREAS, the presence of AIDS among the general public has caused near panic, through the problems of diagnostic uncertainty, sensationalization by the media, and public fears of carriers among staff in schools, hospitals, and other public institutions which service AIDS patients;

TEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 118th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ affirms publicly its concern for the victims of AIDS, their families, and friends, and it supports immediate measures taken by public and private health offices to detect and combat the disease, and encourages the media and health services to give restrained and careful information on the subject' and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVED that the Department of Church and Society inform local, state, and federal legislators of the need for strong legislation to provide funds for research and treatment of AIDS and informational material for the public, and encourage the federal Department of Health and Human Services to provide appropriate funds for holistic care for AIDS patients to include medical, nursing, psycho-social, and pastoral services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Church Life and Leadership

1. encourage pastors and congregations of the Connecticut Conference to expand their ministries to include AIDS patients, their friends and families;
2. encourage pastors and congregations to accommodate support groups for AIDS patients, their friends and families;
3. encourage the Connecticut hospices to maintain an open policy toward accepting AIDS patients' and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Church and Society advocate the passing of laws at all levels of government which ensure the privacy of AIDS patients.