



The United Church of Canada General Council

GCE Report on AIDS (1986R213)

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Excerpts of Report

Theological Affirmation

We affirm that the Christian conviction that God loves and cares for all people includes persons with AIDS, and we reject the argument made by some that AIDS is God's punishment for homosexuals.

Public Policy Affirmations

We affirm:

- a. THAT all persons in our society have the right to adequate, appropriate, accessible and affordable health care regardless of their disease and irrespective of such factors as sexual orientation;

- b. THAT, in light of the public reaction to persons with AIDS the United Church's human rights position regarding gay men and lesbians takes on added significance, namely, that all persons regardless of sexual orientation have the right to protection from discrimination in such areas as accommodation, employment and access to services;
- c. THAT education is critically important both for persons in high-risk groups regarding means of reducing the potential for exposure to the AIDS virus, for those exposed in health care and related professions, and for the general public regarding the facts and misconceptions related to AIDS;
- d. THAT ongoing significant public funding is needed for research, education, health care and social support for persons with AIDS;
- e. THAT federal and provincial governments be urged to undertake forward planning by public health authorities to address the predictable health care crisis before it gets upon us;
- f. THAT children with AIDS or the AIDS antibody should have continued access to school and all services available to other children;
- g. THAT people who are members of (or presumed to be a part of) one of the high-risk groups should not be discriminated against in securing insurances (e.g. life or disability); that requesting applicants to take a test for an AIDS virus is valid, providing that such requests are part of a standard applying to all persons in which the request is based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria (e.g. age, type of insurance); that no testing should be carried out without the expressed written consent of the applicant; and that any applicant who tests positive on the AIDS virus but is otherwise well and does not exhibit AIDS symptoms should be provided insurance with the appropriate exclusions for AIDS and its related diseases.

Call to the Church

We call upon the church:

- to be an active expression of God's love in the midst of the human tragedies related to AIDS;
- to affirm that the well-being of both individuals and communities requires not only social responsibility but also personal responsibility to refrain from high-risk behaviours and to adopt responsible behaviours, with a view to the care of one's own body and the care of those to whom we are bound in relationship, family and community;
- to extend pastoral care and support to persons with AIDS, their partners, families and friends;
- to participate in education about AIDS and advocacy on public policy issues of concern to person with AIDS;
- to be a supportive and effective ally of groups in the gay community and the health services field engaged in support of persons with AIDS and persons in high-risk categories.

General Council Executive Nov. 1986

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