

**RESOLUTION ON
ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME [AIDS]**

[Adopted by the Fourteenth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 24-28-1983. Vote: 99% Majority]

Whereas, we are called as contemporary disciples of Jesus Christ, to express our love of God through love of neighbor and through the active pursuit of justice; and

Whereas, we are called individually and corporately, to the ministry of caring concern, advocacy and healing for all who suffer affliction, and to the ministry of support and comfort for the dying; and

Whereas, there exists in the United States—and in 16 other countries—a documented epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome [AIDS], an illness of unknown origin which ravages the human immune system causing its victims to be vulnerable to serious, opportunistic, often fatal diseases; and

Whereas, the United States Centers for Disease Control report that the number of diagnosed AIDS cases is doubling every six months; that an over-all case mortality rate of 41% is predicted (as of April 1, 1983 the mortality rate was 37.6%); that the 1,500+ cases reported to date represent only the most serious and fatal cases; that it is estimated there are 10,000 to 100,000 unreported or undetected AIDS cases nationwide; and

Whereas, the tragedy of this epidemic is intensified by the age of the victims (median age 35 years with 85% below the age of 45 years), the futility of the available treatments, and the prolonged, debilitating, expensive nature of their illnesses (average cost per patient: \$60,000); and

Whereas, the United States Centers for Disease Control, responding to the AIDS epidemic as a national health emergency, made \$2.4 million available for AIDS research in fiscal 1982 by

re-prioritizing its own budget and by allocating \$500,000 approved by Congress for AIDS research (over a Presidential veto), while adjusting to a 20% cut by the Reagan administration in its total budget; and

Whereas, the National Institutes of Health invited applications for research funds a year and a half after the onset of the epidemic (and the loss of 200 lives); has yet to make a major grant for AIDS research to a research hospital or university (the largest grant to date was a \$133,000 research subsidy to Houston's M.D. Anderson Hospital); projects the expenditure of 1/5 of 1 percent (approximately \$3 million) of the \$4 billion NIH budget for AIDS-related research in 1983; and faces a Presidential budget request calling for 25% reduction in NIH funds available for research grants; and

Whereas, despite strong leadership from some Congressional leaders, the Congress of the United States has been alarmingly slow in appropriating funds to combat that rapidly spreading, deadly epidemic (only \$2 million has been appropriated for fiscal 1983 which begins October 1st; compared with \$10 million allocated within the first two weeks of the more recent Tylenol scare); and

Whereas, this Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome epidemic constitutes a threat to the health of all Americans and to the entire human population worldwide and demands concerted, adequately financed efforts to discover its causes and effective therapies for treatment and cure;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares its compassionate concern and support for all who are victims of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and the opportunistic diseases it enables, their lovers, spouses, families and friends:

Calls upon all United Church of Christ clergy and laypersons to become knowledgeable about this epidemic and to offer pastoral care and caring concern to its victims; and

Calls upon United Church of Christ congregations throughout the country to become knowledgeable about and supportive of community-based organizations which are providing services to AIDS patients, raising private funds for research, lobbying for federal, state and municipal funds for research and patient services, and undertaking the difficult task of making up-to-date information about this rapidly growing epidemic available to the public; and

Recognizing the debilitating effects of this illness and the high cost of treatment, declares its emphatic support for changes in Social Security Administration regulations which will enable AIDS patients to receive disability benefits and calls upon the President of the United States and members of the Congress of the United States to use their good offices to facilitate such changes so that undue suffering may be alleviated; and

Commends the United States Centers for Disease Control for its responsible and vigorous efforts to meet the research funding needs demanded by this epidemic, despite its limited budget, as well as its continuous efforts to bring this epidemic to the attention of medical authorities, political leaders and the public at large; and

Calls upon the National Institutes of Health to more actively support AIDS research and to alter its policies to facilitate the generous and expeditious allocation of funds for AIDS-specific research; and

Calls upon the Congress of the United States to recognize the seriousness of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome epidemic and to substantially increase the amount of funds available to the United States Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health for AIDS-specific research; and

Calls upon the United Church of Christ Office for Church in Society to monitor Congressional action on increased appropriations for AIDS research and to mobilize support for such appropriations throughout the United Church of Christ; and

Instructs the President of the United Church of Christ to personally communicate this action to the President of the United States, the Directors of the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health, to the Governors of the fifty United States, the United States Conference Mayors' AIDS Task Force, and to the public media.