

# "The Church's Apathy Towards AIDS"

Dear Editor,

The Christian Church has said little in response to the personal tragedies and social failures associated with AIDS. Since 1981, with few exceptions, only the strident voices of Christians who regard AIDS as God's retribution on sinful people have been heard. Recent notable exceptions were a failed effort by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in New York City to provide a facility for AIDS patients and a statement of support by the bishop of the Episcopal Church.

The otherwise unexplained silence of other Christian communities is subject to at least two interpretations. Perhaps they agree with the view that certain of the at-risk populations deserve the disease and the horrible death it portends; or perhaps they are unaware of the suffering or directly aware of the suffering associated with AIDS and the challenge for ministry it generates.

The first explanation is theologically flawed. It suggests that human pain and suffering is directly intended by God, a view widely rejected by Jewish and Christian theologians. The second explanation seems more plausible, but publicity about AIDS has overcome this deficit.

The scriptures affirm that all are acceptable to God. Jesus' concern for the outcast draws attention to those from whom political and religious establishments all too easily turn away. The response of Jesus, most clearly described in the Gospel of Luke, was deliberately to turn to those rejected by their communities and perhaps by their families. He touched them, ate with them, and announced that they were the subjects of God's favor.

The sudden appearance of the AIDS population confronts the religious community with a similar challenge. Instead of overt actions, or to befriend people rejected and despised, and to speak for them in those places where their voices are too weak to be heard. For Christians, the obligation is two-fold: They are required to offer comfort and compassion to individuals whose lives are struck by tragedy, and to represent such needs in the public arena.

The Christian church has no option. Jesus taught that those who follow him are to be found in ministry, if they are to truly be His disciples, the church has no option; its mission must conform to the character of servanthood consistent, in part, of being a sign of God's compassion for all. The parable of the last Judgment (Matthew 25) indicates what the test of disciples is. The striking note sounded is that, on Judgment Day, people will apparently not be asked whether they believe in God, or even that they believe in Jesus Christ. They will be asked how they acted in the face of immediate needs of their neighbors. This test of discipleship, dramatized by the parable, must shape the church's ministry here and now.

Nearly all AIDS-Related complex patients have been shunned in some form by a public that fears their disease, objects to their sexuality or disapproves of their conduct. However, in light of the example set by Jesus, the latter reasons are not sufficient to justify neglect of any human need. Neither should fear of contagion prevent Christians from AIDS patients. It is a fear that the stigma of

## Speaking Out!



MISS NEO-BLACK SOCIETY PAGEANT

The eight contestants seeking the 1985 Miss Neo-Black Society title are pictured above on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The Miss Neo-Black Society Pageant will be held at 8 p.m. on Friday, October 4, in Cone Ballroom of Elliott University Center on campus. Tickets will cost \$1 and will be available at the door. The contestants (clockwise, from left at bottom) are: Sabrina Butler of Washington, D.C., Audrey Barbour of Falls Church, Va., Angela Strong of Hamlet, Quanda Loflin of Durham, Viveca Williams of Landover, Md., Kathy Oakes of Clinton, Rojolyne Finch of Durham and Tella Hand of Charlotte. The pageant's theme this year is "Crystal Images of Class, Elegance and Beauty."

people with AIDS will be extended to those who befriend them. Friends may withdraw in fear of contagion or disapproval of the treatment in AIDS patients. Jesus was not deterred from having fellowship with "alienated" and "unclean" because of the reaching out to people with AIDS of ARC.

The course of the disease varies among patients. Part of its insidiousness is its unpredictability. Most of the patients try valiantly to maintain their independence as long as possible. But as they become too weak to work, lose income, medical insurance and possibly living quarters, suffer losses of eyesight and mental function, and are socially ostracized, they can slip into a state of almost total dependence on family, lovers and friends, who may or may not remain committed to them. The intensity of the physical and emotional toll of this terminal disease may provoke

the loss of a patient's total support system.

Some of the homosexual or bisexual patients keep their sexuality and illness from family members out of a desire not to hurt, embarrass or burden them.

Even when told that a family member is dying, some families have refused to help. Parents and siblings who do not abandon patients may go through this experience without the understanding and support of other family members and friends, or of their congregations. For a variety of reasons, they may choose to bear this burden privately. Their concern for secrecy may extend to requests that death certificates not reveal AIDS in an ennobling manner, the response of Christian communities has tended to be one of apathy. The church, if it is not to be found wanting in its message and mission, can be apathetic no longer. The church and individual

Christians can help to alleviate the suffering associated with AIDS. This seems particularly possible in urban areas where nearly all AIDS patients either reside or seek treatment.

Sincerely,  
Earl E. Shelp, Ph.D.  
Institute of Religion and Ronald  
H. Sunderland, Ed.D.  
Institute of Religion



Robert P. Black, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, announced that the Board of Directors of the bank and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System have approved the conceptual design of the bank's new Charlotte branch building to be built on the 300 block of East Trade Street. The building, of approximately 265,000 gross square feet, will be four regular stories and a mechanical level. It will span the entire block of East Trade Street and will

be clad in North Carolina granite. Key features of the new structure will be a plaza along Trade Street and an entrance lobby overlooking City Hall and its large front lawn. All of the functions of the bank's Charlotte office will be housed in the new building. Construction is estimated to begin by the fourth quarter of 1986 with completion expected in early 1988. The architect for the project is Odell Associates, Inc. of Charlotte.

Call THE POST  
For Your  
Subscription  
376-0496  
We'll Catch You  
Up On The  
Latest News!

### THE CHARLOTTE POST

Our Name Says It All!

Announcing....

The Charlotte Post delivered to your doorstep 52 times a year for only \$17.76.

To Subscribe Call 376-0496

FIND GOOD BARGAINS! in The Charlotte Post

GET THE CHARLOTTE POST To Subscribe Call 376-0496

### WRECKED YOUR CAR? FREE REPAIR ESTIMATES

WE MAKE REPAIR ESTIMATES FOR SEVERAL BODY SHOPS AT NO COST TO THE CAR OWNER.

### WHY DRIVE ACROSS TOWN?

### AUTO ACCIDENT APPRAISAL SERVICE

2501-B Beatties Ford Rd., Charlotte  
(Located behind Watts Chiropractic Center)  
Referrals From Attorneys Accepted

## 399-0224

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A PATIENT OF WATTS CENTER TO USE THIS SERVICE.

### First Class Used Cars

<p><b>8 1981 ARIES WAGON</b> Automatic, air conditioning, power steering, rack. Cash Sale Price \$3799 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 16.75 APR, 42 mo.</p>	<p><b>4 1983 ESCORT L</b> Automatic, air conditioning, cassette. Cash Sale Price \$4099 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 14.50 APR, 48 mo.</p>
<p><b>7 1982 ESCORT GL</b> Automatic, air conditioning, cassette. Cash Sale Price \$3799 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 15.75 APR, 42 mo.</p>	<p><b>3 1984 CHEVETTE CS</b> Automatic, am-fm cassette. Cash Sale Price \$4399 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 11.25 APR, 54 mo.</p>
<p><b>6 1982 CHEVETTE 4 dr.</b> Automatic, air conditioning, nice. Cash Sale Price \$3799 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 15.75 APR, 42 mo.</p>	<p><b>2 1984 CHEVETTE</b> Automatic, air conditioning, radio. Cash Sale Price \$4699 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 14.25 APR, 54 mo.</p>
<p><b>5 1982 ESCORT GL</b> Cloth seats, air conditioning, 4 speed, rack. Cash Sale Price \$3799 <b>\$99</b> Mo. 15.75 APR, 42 mo.</p>	<p><b>1 1984 T1000 4 dr.</b> Cloth seats, automatic, air conditioning. Cash Sale Price \$5399 <b>\$119</b> Mo. 14.25 APR, 54 mo.</p>

OK	USED CARS	OK
<p><b>1981 FORD ESCORT</b> 2 door, automatic transmission, power steering, factory air, light blue. \$2195</p>	<p><b>1978 CHEVROLET MALIBU ESTATE WAGON</b> Loaded with equipment. Silver with red interior. \$2995</p>	
<p><b>1986 FORD PINTO</b> Automatic transmission, radio and heater, factory air conditioning, dark green finish. \$1995</p>	<p><b>1986 CHEVROLET CITATION</b> 4 door, hardback, automatic transmission, p.s., p.b., factory air. Several to choose from. \$4795</p>	
<p><b>1983 CAVALIER WAGON</b> Automatic transmission, power brakes, factory air, sand grey finish, cloth interior, power steering. \$4995</p>	<p><b>1983 CHEVROLET CAVALIER TYPE II COUPE</b> 5 speed, factory air, am-fm cassette, 6,000 miles. \$7995</p>	
<p><b>1980 CHEVROLET CAPRICE CLASSIC</b> 4 door sedan, loaded with every factory option. Pretty 7 line blue custom paint. SPECIAL \$2995</p>	<p><b>1983 CHEVROLET CAVALIER WAGON</b> Automatic transmission, air conditioning, sand grey finish, nice compact, 5 door wagon. \$4995</p>	
<p><b>1979 MERCURY COUGAR XR7</b> Sport coupe, V-6 engine, a.s., p.s., p.b., factory air, beautiful dark maroon with vinyl roof. \$3995</p>	<p><b>1979 CHEVY MONZA</b> 2+2 fastback, 4 cylinder, speed, chrome wheels. Silver blue. Special \$1295</p>	
<p><b>1980 CHEVROLET CAPRICE WAGON</b> V-8 engine, a.s., p.s., p.b., power windows, tilt and cruise, factory air, silver blue finish. \$3195</p>	<p><b>1978 FORD PINTO</b> 4 cylinder, 4 speed, stereo cassette. Light grey finish. \$1495</p>	
<p><b>1979 FORD MUSTANG GHIA</b> Coupe, 4 cylinder, 4 speed, radio and heater. Slate grey finish. Special. Special \$1995</p>	<p><b>1978 DODGE OHNIT</b> 4 door, 4 cylinder, 4 speed, 7 line blue paint, good economical compact. \$1795</p>	
<p><b>1983 CHEVROLET IMPALA</b> 4 door, V-8 engine, a.s., p.s., p.b., power windows, factory air, FM radio, maroon finish. \$4995</p>	<p><b>1983 CHEVROLET MALIBU</b> V-8 engine, a.s., p.s., p.b., factory air, nice intermediate sedan, 2 to choose from. \$5995</p>	
<p><b>1978 BUICK SKYLARK</b> 4 door, V-6 automatic, power steering, power brakes, factory air, dark green finish. Special \$995</p>	<p><b>1983 GMC 315</b> 4 cylinder, 4 speed, radio, camper top, pretty light blue finish. \$3995</p>	
<p><b>1986 PONTIAC LEMANS</b> 4 door, automatic transmission, power steering, power brakes, factory air, light grey finish. Nice intermediate sedan. \$2995</p>	<p><b>1981 CHEVROLET IMPALA</b> 4 door, automatic transmission, power steering, power brakes, factory air, light grey with matching vinyl seats. Ideal family sedan. \$2495</p>	
<p><b>1983 CHEVROLET S-10 PICKUP</b> V-6, 4 speed transmission, 4 wheel drive, white with blue interior and chrome roll bars. 35,000 miles. \$9995</p>	<p><b>1977 CADILLAC SEBASTIAN</b> Fully equipped with all the options. Dark green, vinyl roof &amp; velvet seats. \$1995</p>	

### This Week's Special

1979 CAMARO: 2 dr., gray metallic finish, full power, air. Great looking car. **\$3995**

<p>1978 OLDS DELTA 88 ROYALE: 2 door, brown &amp; tan finish, fully loaded, 41,000 miles. <b>\$2995</b></p>	<p>1979 PONTIAC LEMANS: 2 door, silver &amp; burgundy finish, extra clean. <b>\$2895</b></p>
<p>1979 MERCURY COUGAR XR7: 2 door, blue, fully equipped. <b>\$2995</b></p>	<p>1981 CADILLAC COUPE DEVILLE: 2 dr., blk. fin., auto. trans., air, p.s., p.b., elec. win., doors, seats, 36K mi. <b>\$7295</b></p>

## NORTH 21 MOTORS

CLEAN USED CARS

4586 Statesville Rd. At Nivens Rd. **598-8534**

## Prestige

Highway 71 East - Charlotte - (704) 536-8008  
\$199 Down plus taxes, title, doc fees with approved credit.

Easy That Great Old Feeling With Genuine Old Parts