Dear Editor,

The Christian Church has said little in response to the personal tragedies and social failures associated with AIDS. Since 1961, with few exceptions only the strident voices of Chrisains 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 proin New York City to provide a facility for AIDS patients and a statement of support by the bishop of the Episcopal Church.

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 heps they are unaware of the suffering or directly aware of the suffering ass-ociated 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 vercome this deficit.

The scriptures affirm hat all are acceptable to ind. Jesus' concern for the outcast draw attention to those from whom pulitical 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, are with them, and amounced that they were the subjects of God's favor. The sudden appearance of the AIDS population controuts the religious community with a ed, and to sp

two lold: They are requir-ed to offer comfort and compassion to individuals whose lives are struck by tragedy, and to represent such needs in the public

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 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 Christ-ians 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 Loftin of Durham, Viveca Williams of Landover, Md., Kathy Oakes of Clinton, Rojulynne 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 be-friend them. Friends may withdraw in fear of conta ion or disapproval of the leterred from having fel-lowship with "alienated" and "unclean" because of the reaching out to people with AIDS of ARC.

The course of the disc losses of eyesight and men-tal function, and are social-ly ostracized, they can slip in to a state of almost total dependence on family, lov-ers and friends, who may or may not remain com-mitted to them. The inten-sity of the physical and emotional toll of this ter-minal disease may provoke

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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 extend to requests that death certificates not re veal AIDS in an ennoblin

tended to be one of a

The church, if it is not to be found wanting in its message and mission, can be apathetic no longer. The church and individual

CAR

Christians can help to al-leviate 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



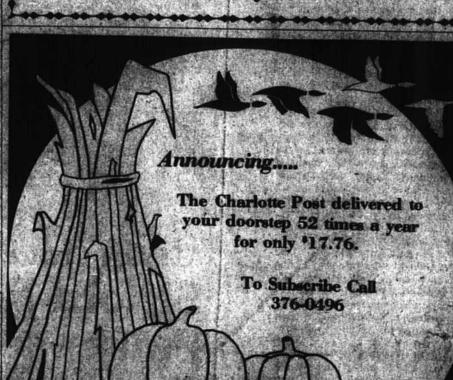
Robert P. Blick, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, announced that the Board of Directors of the bank and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System have approved the conceptual design of the bank's new Charlotte branch building to be built on the 500 block of East Trade Street. 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 Carolins granite. Key features of the new structure will be a plaza along Trade Street and a entrance lobby overlooking City Hall and its large from 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 1968 with completion expected in early 1988. The architect for the project is Odell Associates, Inc. of Charlotte.



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