

## **Reaction to the AIDS epidemic**

### **“Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod perspective”**

AIDS can affect every person on this earth. Whether you are Lutheran or Muslim, male or female, heterosexual or homosexual, African American or Caucasian, AIDS is a disease that affects our country, our churches, and even our families. Unfortunately, over the last 30 years, AIDS has been looked upon as a “gay” disease, or as a purely immoral disease of pagans and atheists. Though this may be true in some American cases, what about the thousands of African citizens who are becoming infected every day by receiving health care or practicing ancient rituals? What about the individuals, even born and raised Christians, who have made the wrong decisions in their teenage and college years and found out that those wrong decisions, will end their lives? Finally, what about the people on their death bed who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

If you were given 10 years to live because of a mistake that seemed miniscule at the time, would you want to hear the good news of Eternal Life beyond this world because of a Savior and the grace of a very giving God? Would you want people to deny you this good news due to some mistakes of the past or old beliefs in a certain lifestyle? The apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I become weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” As Christians, we are called to spread the Gospel to all nations, no matter the circumstance or past history.

I believe that those affected by HIV/AIDS are extremely hungry for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The LCMS and other Christian denominations should help these individuals receive the spiritual and physical care they need. Also, education and advocacy programs need to be implemented, which focus on the dangers and emotional turmoil of AIDS. Until we see these people as one of “us” as opposed to one of “those”, AIDS sufferers will die not being able to sit at the foot of the cross to receive the unending grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Brady L. Finnern  
LCMS Health Ministries  
Intern