



ISSUE # 15 DECEMBER 1987

Newsletter

THE CHURCH CONFRONTS AIDS

a report on the Consultation in Toronto

Through the co-sponsorship of the Vancouver Persons with AIDS Coalition, and the Toronto School of Theology, I was able to attend the Canadian/US consultation on Theological and Ethical Issues Related to AIDS, held October 22nd thru 25th in Toronto. This consultation was a follow-up to the International Consultation on AIDS at the World Council of Churches held in Geneva last year.

The purpose of this consultation was to create debate on a variety of issues (for ease of discussion, participants were divided into three " streams " - Health and Illness, Social Consequences, and Sexuality.) as they relate to AIDS - to foster increased understanding in the Christian Community and beyond, encouraging creative, constructive and supportive responses from society to the AIDS crisis. Brought together at the Toronto School of Theology were 150 theologians, social ethicists, religious leaders, Persons with AIDS, and care givers, who's goal was to find answers to religious and spiritual questions that will confront us in our communities.

As a PWA, I (and others) were there specifically to give a face to the disease - to be a reality for people who up to now had only experienced AIDS theoretically. An HIV infection does not make us expendable, and we let them see we are not victims, but thinking, creative people cut from the fabric of North American life.

I arrived at the Consultation with little confidence that we would produce anything more than another statement that could be ignored by those it was meant to enlighten. I was unsure of how my ideas and experiences fit, but gradually the limited personal perspective I had brought with me gave way to a larger picture. Through our conversations we were able to exchange thoughts and frustrations. I was revitalized by talking with people that cared - finding out how they did it, how they

kept up the good fight. Their ideas and perspectives renewed mine. In session rooms and over dinner, we heard each other, and took back to our communities a wider view of the crisis than we came with. Through the words of Dr. Mervyn Silverman of San Francisco, Dr. Carl Bean of Los Angeles, and the remarkable Dr. Cecile de Sweemer of Senegal, I saw the global crisis, and it stirred rebellion in my soul. We ARE living in a war zone. We do not have time to procrastinate. Responsible action must be taken. We must assault the enemy head on. If it were a war against man, we would fight to the death. Why do we hesitate with this virus? Does the battle not seem real? The body count certainly is. It is our responsibility to create local dialogues about AIDS, to search for solutions to the myriad of problems it creates. We must discuss and teach. We must find our strengths. The church has got to help. The job is immense, and it is much more than healing.

We must move our governments to act, to create monies for education, care and research. We must find the treatments. We must teach. We must stop moralizing about sex, or how those individual desires are expressed. We must give the children the knowledge so it can make a difference in their lives. We must teach them intimacy, and we must teach them quickly. We have to face the challenge and come together as a world community. We must care for and respect equally all people, allowing each other to be who we are culturally, racially and sexually.

We must be civilly disobedient if necessary. The current governments resistance to efforts I am making to save my own life makes such disobedience feel totally in line. But what can I do that will build awareness? That will cause action and growth? I have buried too many friends already. Now I share this journey with too many more. Worldwide, people are dying daily, and still our governments can resist the seriousness of the situation - So what can I do to get them to take notice? I would scream out - but who would hear?

I do not know. Nor, really, did any of us at the consultation, but as the liberal faction of the church, it is clear we must speak out. We will not have the luxury of hiding behind ignorance when this holocaust has ended. We must renew and continue our individual battles. We must lace our responses to Persons with AIDS with understanding, knowledge and hope. We must trust and come together as a world community. In community there is healing. The gay community is doing it. Now we all must do it on a global scale. We must learn from the whole experience of AIDS - from the dying as well as the living that surrounds it. Together, with all the other good soldiers, we shall overcome. Over time, we shall win.

These are the words and feelings I carry back with me from Toronto. Did others hear? Did they feel? I hope so. Will we carry the message beyond our own minds? We must. We have no choice. Persons with AIDS the world over are waiting.

Reported by Nicholas Gray

STARRY SUCCESS :

Without exaggeration, the November 15th fundraiser for the Vancouver Persons with AIDS Coalition, " ONE STARRY NIGHT II ", was a success. By Saturday night, it was a hard ticket to come by, and those that got theirs were glad they did. The enthusiastic crowd at the Arts Club Theatre were given two hours of entertainment from Vancouver's, (and Canada's) finest performers, and loved it! Anne Mortifee, Rae Armour, the Melloyds, a singing nun, some angry housewives, and a host of other, talented, caring artists contributed to one fine evening. Deckerd out in a stunning array of Kevin Brown originals, the evening was once again hosted by Mr. Bill Monroe, who brought Tammy Faye along for a cry.

(An especially big hug from this PWA to Bill, who graciously volunteers his services for any PWA function we need him to. Thanks Bill.)

And thanks also to every giving soul who helped make this night a financial and creative success. So many helped and donated time and services, but Robert McQueen, Chris Allan, David Harrison, Janet Wright and our own Sharon Holtzberg must be singled out for an extra bow. We'll be looking forward to " ONE STARRY NIGHT III ", but till then, thanks for number two.

A NEW FACE :

If you've stopped into the office early enough, then you've had a chance to meet our new receptionist. Jackie Hegadorn joins us to help Sharon handle a growing list of responsibilities. Since the inception of the Coalition, Sharon has handled all the logistics of running the office, organizing fundraisers, and following through with all the paperwork that accompanies these things. It has been no small task, and as the Coalition continues to expand it's activities, we can no longer ask her to do it alone.

A Comedienne in her off hours, (you may have seen her alter ego Lovee Sizzle at this summer's Fringe Festival), Jackie should find her sense of humor a very valuable asset around here! We're glad to have you aboard. Welcome!

VANCOUVER PERSONS WITH AIDS COALITIONS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING :

The Annual General Meeting of members is scheduled for January 16th, 1988. The meeting will begin at 1 pm, at Gordon House, 1019 Broughton St. This is our first general meeting of members, and we hope to have a good turnout for this event. We have completed our Board of Directors Workshop, and our organization is evolving a better working structure for the future. This and other items of interest to members will be discussed. It is a good opportunity to get together and set the direction for the society's activities for the next year.



Christmas. It is a time meant for children and families, for festivities and good cheer. It can be a joyously loving time when people share it. When you are far away from those you love, or they are no longer here, it can be the loneliest time of the year.

Knowing that the holidays possess the potential for sadness as well as joy, it is our suggestion that you make your holiday plans early. Don't wait till the last minute in hopes that something spontaneously wonderful comes along. If it does, you can always go with it, but have a plan. Call friends, go to parties. Know what you are doing and who it will be with. With something planned, you have the opportunity to look forward to a celebration, and you will not end up with an evening alone. Plan something that will make you happy, and take the joy from the moment. Holidays can be a vibrant, loving thing, but it is up to us to take the steps to make it so.

All of us at the Coalition wish everyone the world over a healthy, happy Christmas. We look forward to the new year, and all the strides forward we will make. We pray for peace, health and love for all.

Merry Christmas

*Wishing You
Peace and Joy at Christmas*

PERSONAL NOTES :

PWARC, moving into a new home, living alone for the first time in five years, needs a few household items, cheap! Toaster, television, pots and pans, can opener, silver ware, etc. Phone John at 689-3286 and lets talk.

Apartment to sublet : Sunny one bedroom available for one month only - Dec. 5th to January 5th. Cost- \$250. Call Doug at 684-3809.

PWA (Painter with AIDS) available for apartments and other painting needs. Please contact through the Coalition office at 683-3381.

Apartment to share : Friendly Dutch Canadian Gay white male has a comfortable one bedroom suite to share. I have ARC, and would like to share with same. Pool, Sauna, central location, reasonable rent. Please call 682-5760.

WORDS OF INSPIRATION : Variation on a theme by Rilke

A certain day became a presence to me;
there it was, confronting me - a sky, air, light ;
a being. And before it started to descend
from the height of noon, it leaned over
and struck my shoulder as if with
the flat of a sword, granting me
honor and a task. The day's blow
rang out, metallic - or it was I, a bell awakened,
and what I heard was my whole self
saying and singing what it knew : I CAN.

HYPNOTHERAPY STUDY UPDATE :

In the October issue of the Newsletter it was reported that a Hypnotherapy Study would be started under the auspices of Dr. Kamal Baig.

Unfortunately, this study is still in development and does not yet have a start date. All those that responded with interest to the study will be contacted as soon as we have the appropriate information and can set up a group meeting between yourselves and Dr. Baig.

Thank you for your patience about this interesting project.

Nicholas Gray

MY COUSIN TONY : A Remembrance by Therese Spitzer

My cousin Tony was tall, elegant, and interesting. He travelled continents, wherever he could find steam locomotives. He wrote books about model railroads and the antique urban rail line of San Francisco.

Tony died of AIDS this year.

Tony lived in a vintage San Francisco house that he had restored. The stained glass windows were cleaned to their old brilliance, hardwood was refinished and polished with care. The painted wood exterior blended with the rainbow coloring of the neighbouring homes of that flamboyant San Francisco period.

Tony, who was an engineer by profession, cut a wall between two rooms to allow his wonderful collection of miniature trains to travel in great curves and sometimes at breakneck speeds.

I shall miss his annual appearance in Vancouver. He once arrived on a motorcycle, dressed in handsome leathers to protect himself from the elements. More often he landed his small plane to join us for the symphony or an early music event. His last trip was to EXPO 86 to witness what will possibly be the last major gathering of steam locomotives the world will ever see.

I kissed him goodbye. I did not know then that it was forever, although he was clearly very ill. And do you know, I would kiss him again, even if I knew he was dying of AIDS. I would nurse him with no worry that the disease would be transmitted to me.

Cases of AIDS will decrease. Education to change dangerous sex habits has begun. The panic is more dangerous than the disease.

AIDS : ACUPUNCTURE AND MOXBUSTION :

Acupuncture and Moxbustion have been an important study throughout Chinese medical history. This practice is presently recognized by most developed countries. They have been used experimentally for the cure of 270 different diseases, with successful results in 30 of these diseases. Acupuncture and Moxbustion have been found to help in the cure of infectious diseases, bacterial viruses, parasitic worms, leptospirosis, and particularly influenza, asthma, anemia, fever, bacterial dysentery, tuberculosis, and diarrhea.

Acupuncture and Moxbustion stimulates the circulation and can regulate the red and white blood cells. This strengthens the immunities enabling the body to control toxicity. A natural herb product is provided along with the acupuncture and Moxbustion. This product is an antitoxin and assists treatment. For more information, contact Sharon at 683-3381, or Danny through his pager, 667-1055.

TUESDAY NIGHT SUPPORT MEETINGS : by Garry Andrews

There has been a lot of input, in and around the office concerning our Tuesday Night Support Group Meetings. I would like to take the time to explain what these meetings are about, and to extend to you the invitation to join us, and take part in these greatly needed meetings.

Every Tuesday the Vancouver PWA Coalition's Holistic Committee have organized an evening support group at St. Paul's Hospital. (for schedule see " Ongoing Events " on page eight.) There are two types of meetings every other Tuesday. One is a closed meeting that is open to PWA/PWARC's only. This support meeting is used for the purpose of allowing the PWA/PWARC's to talk amongst themselves about personal issues concerning the disease and how it affects their lives. On alternating Tuesday's the committee presents specialists on Holistic and Alternative Therapies. These meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. I feel that it is important to have these support meetings as it enables those newly diagnosed to have the support we all need and allows us to introduce them to the Coalition, where they can find further support and avenues of choice which will enable them to live with their diagnosis in a way that suits the individual the best. I would also like to encourage the older and more experienced Coalition members to attend these meetings to show support not only to the new people, but yourselves as well. I hope to see you all there when possible, and feel that a few smiling faces can heal a thousand wounds. In love, respect and support ;

Garry Andrews : Permanent Facilitator of Closed Meetings.

POLARITY THERAPY :

Polarity Therapy is a pressure point technique developed by Dr. Randolph Stone, who refined the electromagnetic polarity concept to a practical and extremely effective healing art. Polarity reduces stress by balancing life energy. Many of the techniques are simple and easy to learn. The giver and the receiver are both energized and calmed following a session. For information about workshops or sessions, contact Don at 254-0940.

SELF - HEALING GROUP :

An Introduction to Louise Hay, and other self-healing approaches and techniques will be held on December 13th from 10am to 5pm. For more information please contact Claudine at 732-0341 or Don at 254-0940. Be sure to ask them about their ongoing groups that meet every Wednesday from 7pm to 9pm.

REIKI : Is a gentle yet powerful healing art, useful in the management of any state of dis-ease, that is currently being offered to Coalition members. For more information or to set up treatment, contact Greig at the office, 603-3381.

ONGOING EVENTS

MONDAY : BUSINESS MEETING : 11:30 am

Open to PWA/PWARC's. This is the best way to share the responsibilities and decisions of the Coalition. Meetings are held in the Coalition office at 1170 Bute St.

TUESDAY : SELF _ SUPPORT GROUP : 7:30 to 8:30 pm. on alternate Tuesdays.

Open to PWA/PWARC's only. Discussion surrounds concerns held by the group at the time of the meeting. There is no specific topic, just a chance to talk.

TUESDAY : HOLISTIC THERAPY : 7 :30 to 8:30 pm on alternate Tuesdays.

Dec. 1st : Marta Hunter
" The Alexander Technique "

Dec. 15th : Dwayne Daw
Massage Therapist

All Tuesday night meetings are currently held in Room LM-6, Comox Building, St. Paul's Hospital. (in the basement at 1056 Comox) Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 5th all support group meetings will be held in Room 127, Main Floor of the Comox Building, St. Paul's Hospital.

HEALING CIRCLE RETURNS :

The Sunday evening Healing Circle will return as of January 10th, 1988, in Room 113 of the Comox Building at St. Paul's Hospital. Starting time is 7:30.

The Healing Circle is primarily a time for hands on healing ; meditation and visualization. It is open to all PWA/PWARC's and all other interested parties.

WORLDWIDE PRAYER :

Each day at 7 pm, a world wide moment of prayer and meditation is being held for PWA/PWARC's. All over the world (7 pm in each time zone), people are joining together in one spirit and one mind to end the AIDS crisis, each in their own way. We ask people of faith, to pray, and those that practice meditation or visualization to meditate and visualize. We ask all people to take this moment to be of one spirit and of one humanity. These moments are co-sponsored by the Metaphysical Alliance, and the AIDS Interfaith Network. Let in the light.

SPIRITUAL CORNER :

....on another shore,
and into a greater light.....

Anonymous