

## THE CARE OF THE TERMINALLY ILL

May 2001

Palliative care is the branch of medicine that focuses on reducing the intensity of symptoms and/or suffering arising from a terminal illness. Previous experience with the pathological process predicts that this illness will surely cut short the person's life span. The aim of palliative care is to provide comfort with fluids, nutrition, and symptom control, but not offer aggressive treatments that would unduly prolong the dying process.

- A. As members of CMDS:
1. We believe human beings are created in God's image and therefore have immeasurable value.
  2. We believe eternal life, (continued existence of the people of God dwelling in redeemed bodies in a new heaven and earth enjoying perpetual fellowship with God) is either accepted or rejected during our physical life.
  3. We believe physical life is a gift of God but eternal life is a greater gift.
  4. We believe individuals are permitted to make choices that may not be best, or even wrong, in the eyes of God.
  5. We believe human beings do not have the right to choose the time of death.
  6. We believe we are to be loving and compassionate to all those in need.
  7. We believe our model for our practice is the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.
- B. Therefore, the position of CMDS is that:
1. We should always seek life-giving, life-enhancing solutions to human suffering.
  2. We should do nothing to intentionally hasten or cause a patient's death.
  3. We should not prolong the process of dying as an end in itself.
  4. A competent patient has the right to choose the extent and form of treatment.
  5. When the patient cannot communicate, we should seek to understand the patient's wishes from the personal care power of attorney or family.
  6. The objective of palliative care should be to relieve suffering, provide human companionship and to minister to an individual's spiritual well-being.
  7. By word and deed we should try to show all people, especially those suffering and dying, the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.