

Pastoral Statement on HIV/AIDS

On the occasion of this historic meeting of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa, it is important to raise the issue of AIDS and the response of the Church to this pandemic.

People are dying. They are dying every day, every hour, every minute and literally every second. They are children, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, and they are dying. The loss of life is enormous. Over twenty-six million people have the virus in sub-Saharan Africa. Women and the young represent the highest percentage of those infected.

The burden of care for those who are dying and those left behind is extraordinary. The plight of the orphans is a growing concern.

The *2004 Book of Discipline* calls the church to minister to the victim, to advocate for those who are infected, to engage in preventative education, provide treatment and pastoral care, and advocate for public health policies that enable those infected to receive the care and services they need.

The church in Africa does all of these things and more. Each conference has significant AIDS ministries in place while continuing to explore ways of strengthening their ministries. The work is difficult and challenging, but the workers are courageous. Unfortunately the need is growing and the church's response has not measured up to what many of us would like it to be.

Together, as the Council of Bishops, the General Agencies, the Central Conferences in Africa and around the world, we must make every effort to respond to this crisis. We must mobilize funds to come to the rescue of those affected by this pandemic, continue to care for those in need, engage in advocacy and deliver the appropriate health services.

We must support the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund, lift up the Millennium Development Goals that call for halting the spreading of HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases, and work with the General Board of Global Ministries in strengthening our ability to deploy health care workers in the field and improve our clinics and hospitals.

This work is important. It is necessary. It is urgent. And it is required of us by Jesus Christ who called us to care for his children.

— *United Methodist Council of Bishops*
Moputo, Mozambique
November, 2006

How To Make Donations

The Center for the Church and Global AIDS is a non-profit organization, classified by the IRS as exempt under IRC Section (501) (c) (3) and is a public charity under IRC section 509. Donations support the Center's programs. Individual, church and corporate donations are invited. All donations are tax exempt and will be acknowledged. No funds are used for salaries of officers, board members, or the International Advisory Council.

For additional information and opportunities to contribute, visit www.churchandglobalaids.org or write to:

**7185 South Niagara Circle,
Centennial, CO 80112.**



The
Center for
Church and
Global AIDS

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund was established at the 2004 General Conference to raise \$8 million by 2008. Funds are used to support programs offering HIV and AIDS education, prevention, treatment and care services in the United States

and around the world. You can support the Global AIDS Fund by giving to UMCOR Advance #982345. To give by credit card, call 1-800-554-8583. For local church and Annual Conference credit, put your gift in the offering plate on Sunday marked Advance #982345. Checks for the Fund may be mailed to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087 Online giving is available at <http://hbs.gbgm-umc.org/give/>.



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December 1 is the official World AIDS Day every year. November 25, 2007 is Christ the King Sunday; December 2, 2007, is the First Sunday of Advent. For resources to help you teach, preach, lead worship, and reach out, check these sites regularly:

www.umc-gbcs.org (select Social Community and click on HIV/AIDS)

www.gbgm-umc.org/health/worldaidsday

www.churchandglobalaids.org

Editors' Note: If you have other websites or resources to recommend, please send a brief email to jreddig@umpublishing.org. Include a one or two sentence description of the resource.