

# AIDS in Southern Africa; How Our Church Partners Are Responding to the Pandemic

South Africa and Malawi Travel Study Seminar

February 22 – March 6, 2008

Sponsored by: Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN), Presbyterian Peacemaking Program  
Presbyterian International AIDS Ministries Office and Presbyterian Office on Africa

## **Background**

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most affected by the AIDS epidemic. More than two-thirds of all people infected with HIV live there.
- Women are disproportionately affected, representing 61% of people living with HIV in the region.
- An estimated 50% to 80% of tuberculosis patients in Southern Africa are also HIV positive, underlining the urgency to address HIV/TB co-infection in the region.
- In 2007, Southern Africa accounted for almost a third (32%) of all new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths globally.
- With some 5.5 million people living with HIV, South Africa is the country with the largest number of infections in the world. You women in South Africa face greater risks of becoming infected than men: among 15-24-year-olds, they account for about 90% of new HIV infections.

SOURCE: UNAIDS. Fact Sheet "Sub-Saharan Africa."  
[http://data.unaids.org/pub/FactSheet/2008/epi07\\_fs\\_regionalsummary\\_subsafrica\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/FactSheet/2008/epi07_fs_regionalsummary_subsafrica_en.pdf).

## **Cross-Cutting Issues**

- HIV/AIDS and poverty
- HIV/AIDS and human rights protection
- HIV/AIDS and stigma and discrimination
- HIV/AIDS and gender inequality
- HIV/AIDS and orphaned children
- HIV/AIDS and lack of healthcare

SOURCE: UNAIDS. "Sub-Saharan Africa – 2007 AIDS Epidemic Update."  
[http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/jc1526\\_epibrief\\_s\\_ssafrica\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/jc1526_epibrief_s_ssafrica_en.pdf)

## **South Africa – Reality**



- HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in children under 5 years of age accounting for 57% of all deaths.
- 52% of all deaths for all ages are caused by HIV/AIDS, the highest cause by far.
- For people aged 15-49, HIV prevalence is 21.5%.

SOURCE: World Health Organization. "Country Health System Fact Sheet 2006: South Africa."

[http://www.afro.who.int/home/countries/fact\\_sheets/southafrica.pdf](http://www.afro.who.int/home/countries/fact_sheets/southafrica.pdf)

## **Malawi – Reality**

- The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among those 15-49-years-old is estimated as between 11-18%.
- The estimated number of people needing antiretroviral therapy in 2005 was 169,000.
- Life expectancy is now 42 years of age.



SOURCE: World Health Organization. "Summary Country Profile for HIV/AIDS Treatment Scale-Up: Malawi." December 2005.

[http://www.who.int/hiv/HIVCP\\_MWI.pdf](http://www.who.int/hiv/HIVCP_MWI.pdf)

## So what about the churches in the midst of such a crisis?

### SOUTH AFRICA

*“The problem with HIV is that you are caught out, labeled. We [people of faith] need to address the stigma – the judgment and discrimination. We need to address gender relations, the value, dignity and vulnerability of women and children. We need to address sex and sexuality and power.”*

- The Rev. Nelis Du Toit, CABSCA (Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partners in South Africa that were visited were the Evangelical Presbyterian Church South Africa (EPCSA) and Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA).

1. Both denominations view HIV/AIDS as a serious problem for their members, and have committed a staff position at their national offices to focus on HIV/AIDS ministries.
2. Both programs focus on widow care, orphan care, youth groups and educating pastors.
3. Both train home-based care volunteers to help care for those who are infected.



*“Pray that the humanity of all people be recognized—we are all made in the image of God. Pray for our government. Pray for the energy of caregivers, such as grandmothers. Pray for all people in positions of leadership in HIV/AIDS work—there are so few people working on this and it is so big a problem. Pray for strength and wisdom.”*

- The Rev. Esther Maringa, Health Co-coordinator, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa

A great example of how South African churches are reaching out may be seen at JL Zwane Uniting Presbyterian Church and Community Centre in the township of Guguletu, South Africa.

Church programs include:

- Orphan Support – feeding programs, social workers offering care, general care
- Support for Children – after school program (Rainbow program) for two hours of teacher-supervised homes, and feed programs
- Community Outreach – emergency food program, assist building homes with Habitat for Humanity
- Education – about HIV/AIDS and the progression of the disease
- Hospice care – home-based care and palliative care to AIDS and cancer patients. They have 122 AIDS patients with more coming each day.
- Spiritual Counseling – pastors of the church offer special counseling for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Arts – Siyaya is a singing, dancing, and instrumental touring group comprised of youth from the township. Their main goal is to utilize traditional singing and dancing to educate young people about HIV/AIDS and prevention and testing. 2008 sees the group on their third tour of the United States.



A stained glass window proclaims JL Zwane's caring vision.

*“We are here to invest in human beings. We want to commit ourselves to transformation. We want to let people know they are not alone.”*

- The Rev. Edwin Louw, Associate Pastor, JL Zwane Uniting Presbyterian Church

## MALAWI

*"The General Assembly has become active in HIV/AIDS work as we are losing a lot of members. Some pastors do not feel free to speak of HIV/AIDS. We say, 'Open up and talk about it.'"*

- The Rev. Lecton Kaluah, Interim General Secretary, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner denomination that was visited in Malawi was the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (CCAP).



The actions, conversations and prayers of home-based care volunteers from CCAP congregations bear witness to the hope of Jesus Christ.

What the CCAP is doing:

1. Distributing a booklet that explains the CCAP policy guidelines for HIV/AIDS.
2. Encouraging HIV/AIDS testing and counseling so that members can learn their status and live a healthier lifestyle while protecting loved ones.
3. Providing pastoral counseling for those sick and/or dying and for their loved ones.
4. Organizing home-based health care – visiting sick individuals to check health status make food deliveries.
5. Offering orphan care – continued care for children orphaned by parents who have died due to complications of HIV/AIDS.
6. Sponsoring youth group programs around income generating activities like farming and HIV/AIDS education.

The people of the Kaphuta Presbyterian Church proclaim, "Love is our moto." ("Moto" means fire in the Tumbuka language.) The people truly are on fire with the love of Jesus Christ. Their ministries provide an example of the way Malawian churches are reaching out.

Programs include:

- Addressing HIV/AIDS in some way each Sunday during worship
- Home-based care to terminally ill patients, many of whom have HIV/AIDS
- A drama troupe that provides education on HIV/AIDS
- The encouragement of voluntary testing
- A Community Based Child Care program
- The church has built a maize mill where maize is ground to meal. Proceeds from the mill support the childcare program.
- A youth group
- A garden to provide produce to supplement the diets of people living with HIV/AIDS.
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It is estimated that forty-six percent of Malawi's population is under 15 years old. CIA. *The World Factbook*.

*"I wondered, what does peacemaking have to do with HIV/AIDS? And I realized that where there is sickness and where there is suffering, there can be no peace."*

- The Rev. Kondwani Gondwe, Matiki Presbyterian Church.

## LEARN MORE

### Read about the travel/study seminar.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program created a blog to post stories from the travel/study seminar. Visit <http://presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking> and click on the links for February 2008 and March 2008 to read the stories.

### Order *Africa's Children: A Church Response to Children's Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa*

This book and study guide reviews the models of care existing in sub-Saharan Africa and evaluates them in the context of the African culture and the realities of limited resources. Additionally, this book includes discernment questions for congregation for individuals that want to help. Call 800-524-2612 and order 25-384-07-003. This resource is made available free of charge through gifts to International AIDS Ministry and Africa Area Office Extra Commitment Opportunities (ECOs), the Peacemaking Offering and the Pentecost Offering.



### Web Pages

PC(USA) International AIDS Ministries  
[www.pcusa.org/aids-international](http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international)

PC(USA) Office on Africa—Malawi  
[www.pcusa.org/worldwide/malawi/index.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/malawi/index.htm)

PC(USA) Office on Africa—South Africa  
[www.pcusa.org/worldwide/repouthafrica/index.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/repouthafrica/index.htm)

Presbyterian AIDS Network  
[www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm)

Presbyterian Peacemaking Program  
[www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking)

UNAIDS: The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  
[www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)



## WAYS TO SUPPORT ONGOING WORK

1. **HIV/AIDS and Peacemaking Offering Extra Commitment Opportunity #E053504**—Gifts support the PC(USA) as it works with partner churches to address both the causes and impact of HIV and AIDS by empowering women; reducing poverty through income-generating activities; and providing orphan care, home-based care, and AIDS education in seminaries.
2. **AIDS Crisis Overseas #862706** —Gifts support a range of church and community-based projects, including prevention education, home-based care, spiritual and emotional care of persons living with HIV, and training of pastors.
3. **AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Africa #051674**—Funds support community-based orphan care programs, providing basic needs, including food, clothing, education and medical care. Funds also support training of caregivers.
4. **Home-based Care in Africa #051700**—Funds will go to provide congregation-initiated home-based care programs.

For more information about these ECOs and other ways to support PC(USA) work with AIDS in Africa, go to [www.pcusa.org/aids-international](http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international).



For more information, call 1-888-728-7228, x5624.  
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