

# AIDS and Peacemaking

## 2007 Peacemaking Offering

*“And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2)*

**H**ow can there be peace in a community where the generation who are the main income earners and parents of children are dying, when more and more young children are left alone to fend for themselves or be cared for by older siblings who must drop out of school to keep the family alive? What happens when the structures that support communal life, peace, and stability are undermined because the people who worked to maintain them are dead or too sick to do anything or are too few to do all the work?

The voice of hope reflected in the Peacemaking Offering’s theme is nowhere more urgently needed than among those nations whose peoples are struggling with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The tree of life that brings healing to the nations reminds us of God’s far-reaching love to all the world’s people. It also reminds us that peace cannot truly reign anywhere while millions are in need of healing and communities are on the brink of collapse. We are called to respond with boldness. This year the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and International Health Ministries invite you to learn more about the AIDS pandemic in

### Supporting PC(USA) Work through Giving

This year ask your congregation to consider giving all or part of its share of the Peacemaking Offering to our AIDS work in Africa. A new HIV/AIDS and Peacemaking Offering Extra Commitment Opportunity, #E053504, has been created to track the giving by congregations and presbyteries to AIDS work using their portion of the Peacemaking Offering. The purpose of this ECO is to 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 and support, home-based care, and AIDS education in seminaries. For more information about this ECO 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).

Africa, the United States, and elsewhere around the world. Consider using part of your congregation’s share of the Peacemaking Offering to make a difference to those living with AIDS.

### Young Women and HIV/AIDS

The group that accounts for the most new cases of AIDS in many African countries is young women. The lower status of women in these countries, sexual abuse, and the rising number of orphans all play a part. Many orphaned girls trade sex to make enough money to survive and to care for younger siblings because they know of no other way to earn an income.



photo by Janet Guyer

*A home-based care volunteer from Nkhoma Synod in Malawi helps this family of four siblings who have lost their parents to AIDS, shown here with their grandmother.*

If you attended the 217th General Assembly in June 2006, you may have had a hand in keeping a young Congolese girl from prostitution and from contracting HIV. The official General Assembly tote bag was made by young women in the Province of Kasai, Democratic Republic of Congo, who were part of an income-generating project of the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (CPK). Many of the women helping with the project would have been at risk of prostitution—and contracting HIV in this region where rates are increasing—but instead were enabled by the tote bag project to make money to live on. (See [www.pcusa.org/aids-international/partner-churches/congo.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/partner-churches/congo.htm) for more information.)



photo by Caryl Weinberg

*A teacher with the Department of Women and Families, Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, works with girls in the income-generating program that made the bags for the 217th General Assembly.*

The PC(USA)'s International AIDS Ministries supports this and other efforts to help young women stay in school, learn trades that will give them decent wages, and in other ways make them less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

### **Presbyterian Work with the AIDS Crisis in Africa**

The International AIDS Ministries is primarily working in partnership with African churches that have developed programs both to prevent the spread of HIV and to meet the needs of people with AIDS and their families.

Our work in Africa centers on Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Kenya. Each country's needs vary due to the economic, political, and social situation within the country. Many countries face challenges such as low industrial and agricultural production, widespread unemployment, lack of food security, inadequate income, lack of safe drinking water, increasing numbers of vulnerable children and orphans, illiteracy, and deteriorating infrastructure. Such issues are compounded by AIDS and also place people at risk for HIV. It is a vicious cycle.

The PC(USA) supports our church partners in two primary ways. First, our AIDS consultants and health liaisons in Africa provide technical support to assist our partners in developing their own solutions to the AIDS pandemic. Second, grants are provided to partners for their ongoing work with orphans and vulnerable children, income-generating activities, education, home-based care, and other AIDS-related programs.

### **Presbyterian AIDS Network**

Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) is a group of Presbyterians who advocate and care for persons and families who have been infected or affected by HIV/AIDS in the United States. Go to [www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm) for more information.

### **Facts about AIDS in Africa**

Young women aged 15–24 are about three times more likely to be infected than young men of the same age.\*

Children under 15 years of age account for one in six AIDS-related deaths worldwide.\*

Life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa is 48 years of age.\*\*

\*UNAIDS 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic  
 \*\*2004 Revision United Nations Population Report