

God is still speaking,



UNITED CHURCH AIDS/HIV NETWORK

The HIV and AIDS E-communication from the United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network (UCAN) – Office for HIV and AIDS Ministries, Health and Wholeness Advocacy – Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ. www.ucc.org/hivaids

March 16, 2007

Leadership is the Theme for World AIDS Day 2007 and 2008

Written by Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer

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The Steering Committee of the [World AIDS Campaign](http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/)

[<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/>] has just announced the World AIDS Day theme for 2007 and 2008. The theme is “Leadership” and it will be promoted with the campaigning slogan, “Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise.” Lots of resources for observing World AIDS Day are already available from the UCC web site at <http://www.ucc.org/hivaids> and from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance <http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad.jsp>. More resources will be posted in late summer and early fall.

Each and every day leadership is vitally needed on every front of our response to HIV and AIDS. Religious leadership is as important today as at any time during this pandemic. From the pulpit to the board room, from kitchen table to the seats of government office, leadership is critical to galvanizing our collective will and resources in the efforts to bring healing, wholeness and accountability to keep the promise to stop AIDS.

The World AIDS Campaign reports, “Despite the efforts to hold leaders accountable in 2006, progress in halting HIV is falling far short of targets. Over 25 million people have been lost to AIDS so far, and 4.3 million people were infected with HIV 2006. The spread of HIV is quickening – with more people infected in 2006 than in any previous year. This is despite the number of promises by world leaders to provide services to curb the rates of infection and to bring down death rates. The G8 has made commitments in the fight against AIDS, which now need to be delivered. In other high level meetings, governments of rich countries promised to increase the spending on development aid to 0.7 percent of their annual budget. Only a handful of countries have done so. In the Abuja Declaration, African leaders committed to allocating 15 percent of their budgets to health. This has happened in just one or two countries, with only one-third of African countries spending over 10 percent. Promises are not being kept because there is a lack of leadership at every level.” (from [World AIDS Campaign](http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/en/wac/keep_the_promise/world_aids_day_2007/wad_2007_theme_leadership)

[http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/en/wac/keep_the_promise/world_aids_day_2007/wad_2007_theme_leadership])

December 1, 2007 may seem a ways off, but why wait. Dr. Hale Schroer, my liturgics professor at Eden Theological Seminary would say, “Every Sunday is a little Easter and every Easter is a big Sunday.” That same way of thinking holds true for World AIDS Day. Everyday, throughout the world, people are affected by HIV and AIDS, making everyday a World AIDS Day. Every December 1, is a major observance of World AIDS Day when we remember those who have died from AIDS and rejoin our efforts to keep the promise to

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let it shine
the light of 10 years

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stop AIDS. What leadership can you provide today and in the days ahead to build momentum, capacity and service where you are?

Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer is Executive for the Office for Health and Wholeness Advocacy for Wider Church Ministries, a covenanted ministry of the United Church of Christ. HIV and AIDS ministry is one of the two major areas of focus for the Health and Wholeness Advocacy Office.

Important Dates and Events

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| May 19 | National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV and AIDS Awareness Day
http://www.banyantreeproject.org/hivaids_awareness.html |
| May 20 | International AIDS Candlelight Memorial
http://www.candlelightmemorial.org |
| June 27 | National HIV Testing Day
http://www.hivtest.org/press_files/subind_ex.cfm?FuseAction=Spotlight.main |

Concerns of Life



"What are your biggest concerns, in your life, in your world?" "My biggest worry is what will happen to me if my mother dies." ... "My biggest worry is what I will do if my mother and father cannot take care of me." ... "My biggest concern is where I will live if my mother leaves me," reply eighth grade girls at Inanda Seminary, a boarding school for girls in Durban, South Africa. "This is not what I expected ... But this is South Africa. Although no one is exactly sure, the official line is that 1 in 4 women are HIV positive (compared to 1 in 14 men). That disparity is one of South Africa's tragic legacies." ...

To read the rest of this story, written by Global Ministries' short-term volunteer, Holly McKissick, go to www.globalministries.org and click on "mission bulletin story."



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