

# Salt & Light

Summer 2003

The Newsletter of the Social Concerns Ministry Team

You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world...

*Educating and informing the church body in light of biblical principles*

*Mt. 5:13-14*

## Editorial Note:

This issue is a legacy to Social Concerns Ministry Team member Carrie Cook, whom God has called to Wisconsin to begin a new job and life. We will miss her, but she leaves making sure that we do not miss one of the great tragedies and challenges of our day. It is easy to overlook because it is far away...in Africa. Yet the statistics, scattered throughout this newsletter in boxes, cry out to be mourned over. As serious as AIDS is for adults, the impact on children is beyond imagining, as the opening article laments. The next articles examine African and U.S. government responses, highlighting the importance of discipline and dollars. The final two pieces consider the place of the church. No one can engage the needs of the whole person better than people empowered by the love of the One who died for us.

## AIDS Orphans

From: [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com), 5/1/03

"The HIV pandemic is producing orphans on a scale unrivaled in history," said Susan Hunter, an author of the "Children on the Brink 2002" report by the U.S. Agency for International Development. A summary was released at the 13th International AIDS Conference.

Currently there are nearly 16 million children who have lost at least one parent to the disease. About 90 percent of these children are in sub-Saharan Africa.

By 2010, about one in three children in Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and South Africa will have lost a parent, most of them to AIDS.

Famine, wars and other disease outbreaks often cause a large increase in orphans, but those are short-term calamities that quickly end, Hunter said. AIDS will continue to create millions of new orphans for decades.

Throughout the developing world, at least 44 million children will have lost at least one parent, 30 million of them to AIDS, according to the report.

The estimates do not include children born with the virus that causes AIDS, since most of them will likely die before they reach age

5.

"There is a cost and we don't know how to measure it," said John Williamson. The strain these children endure, watching their parents die and then forced to

forage for themselves, could create a generation of horribly disaffected people, Williamson said.

"The potential for social unrest, social instability is pretty significant," he said. "You have a very substantial proportion of your population that has been undereducated, malnourished, marginalized, is disaffected, not able to go to school." †

**Nearly 28 million children in Africa will have lost at least one of their parents to AIDS by the year 2010, causing a social nightmare for these countries.**

**By 2010, an estimated 20 million children—almost 6% of all the children in Africa—will be orphaned by AIDS.**

## The Uganda Model

**From: Citizen, May 2003**

Africa is in dire need of a miracle—not just because HIV, the AIDS virus, has swept the continent, or because AIDS has orphaned an estimated 12 million children, but also because the rest of the world thinks the solution to Africa's health crisis is condoms, "safe sex" and pharmaceuticals. And almost all the African governments have fallen in line.

Nearly every one, that is, except Uganda.

The numbers are astounding: While HIV has spread to an estimated 30 percent or more of adults in some African nations, which receive tens of millions of condoms each year from the United States, Great Britain and the United Nations, the infection rate in

Uganda is now down to just 5 percent.

And the main reason for this is simple: More and more men and women in Uganda are saying no to sex outside of marriage.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) study released before a United Nations' AIDS conference in Barcelona last summer found that, between 1989 and 2000, the number of Ugandan men and women with multiple sex partners dropped significantly. According to this study, "Ugandan males in 1995 were less likely to have ever had sex, more likely to be married and keep sex within marriage, and less likely to have multiple partners."

These changes in behavior caused

**Excellent site for statistics on AIDS and Africa: [www.aidsandafrica.com](http://www.aidsandafrica.com)**

the AIDS infection rate to drop more than 65 percent in Uganda between 1991 and 2000.

Churches and faith-based organizations have played a vital role in slowing the march of AIDS through Uganda, caring for the sick and the orphaned and teaching and counseling Ugandans about keeping sex within marriage. In fact, "in many African countries one-third to one-half of the health infrastructure is church-related," according to Christian Connections.

That's because religious organizations are better situated than ministries of health to call for the population to change their behavior. †

## Congress Passes \$15 Billion Global AIDS Bill

**From: Associated Press, May 16, 2003**

U.S. President Bush set the stage for the vote last January when he urged Congress in his State of the Union speech to come up with \$15 billion for worldwide AIDS programs, nearly triple current levels of spending. The legislation, while unprecedented in its scope, only authorizes the spending of \$15 billion over five years. Congress must still approve real spending levels in its annual budget appropriations.

The bill specifically targets 12 nations in sub-Saharan Africa and two in this hemisphere, Haiti and Guyana, that have been ravaged by the AIDS pandemic. The package recommends that 55 percent of

direct aid go to treatment programs, 20 percent to prevention, 15 percent to palliative care and 10 percent to children orphaned by the disease. It also would allow, but not require, the administration to contribute up to \$1 billion in 2004 to the international Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It establishes the position of Coordinator for HIV/AIDS at the State Department.

House conservatives were able to

**As of 2001, some 17 million Africans had died from AIDS, making it the worst plague since the Black Death killed 25 million people in Europe in the 14th century. Another 26 million Africans are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and the vast majority cannot afford the drugs that might save their lives.**

amend the bill to ensure that 33 percent of all prevention funding go to abstinence programs, and that Catholic and other religious groups are not denied funding because they oppose condom distribution. †

## One Person Matters

From: **Christianity Today, July 9, 2001**

Drawn curtains and a padlocked door don't stop Busi Mdamba from knocking at the simple South African mud home. She peers into every window and finally sees a man lying on the floor.

"Can you open the door for me?" Mdamba yells. The man shakes his head weakly.

"Okay, I will come back this evening when your son has returned," she says.

"It is like this all of the time," Mdamba says quietly, "No one knows how to handle a sickness like this. AIDS is a very shameful thing to have, so the people are just locked in a back room and forgotten."

In this environment, 12 women from the church's Baptist Women's Association Home-based Care Unit don their trademark red shirts. They have been trained to bathe the sick,

administer prescriptions, and evangelize.

"When you show Christ in practical ways through physical and emotional support, people begin to ask questions and wonder why you are different," Mdamba's husband Pastor Sibusiso says.

In sub-Saharan Africa, it is extended families, who according to social tradition, absorb relatives' hardships. But with 12.1 million AIDS orphans in Africa, the extended family is fast becoming overextended. Outside help is welcome.

The women volunteer for as many as 20 hours a week. When their bus-fare allowance runs out, the women walk, sometimes alone and sometimes in pairs, five or six miles just to cook dinner and clean house for one person. When the church's ministry fund runs dry, the women

give food from their own meager tables. Other churches in the area have started similar programs.

Thembi Thokozile, a mother of two, has seen the ministry from both sides. After scrubbing a floor, she sits and talks with a woman still strong enough to sit up in a char. Thokozile tells of Jesus' love and forgiveness. She prays with a reverence and urgency only someone who has personally dealt with the pandemic can muster.

A few months ago, church volunteers came to Thokozile's home while her husband was dying. Not wanting anyone to know what was happening to her family, she was nevertheless drawn to them.

"I watched them come in day after day and show my family love," Thokozile says. "As I learned more and more about Christ, I saw his

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## The Church's Challenge

From: **Christian Network Journal, Spring 2003**

According to Frank Griswold: In the US, HIV/AIDS is too often seen as an illness found simply in individuals who engage in risky or immoral behavior. Throughout the world this illness is present throughout all segments of society and hits traditional family structures the hardest. The Church is called to be an example of care and compassion to those with HIV/AIDS, not an example of judgment.

I would point to the excellent work of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) as an example of the work being done in the church today. The NEAC is

focused on education and empowerment of Episcopalians and advocacy on behalf of those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. I think, in particular, their advocacy role highlights the unique part the church has to play in the fight against this illness in that they promote the care of the entire person—emotional, spiritual

**A broad array of African religious leaders gathered June 10, 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya to acknowledge that they have been far too silent as AIDS has swept through their congregations. "We have not done enough," said Abune Paulos, patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.**

and physical.

Above all, the Church should teach and be an example of compassion. It is not our role to judge. Church leaders of many of our Anglican provinces in Africa are at the forefront in educating people about this disease

and removing the stigma.

There are things—relatively

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## One Person Matters

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love through their sweeping floors or playing with my children.”

When a woman next door to Thokozile died, the volunteers helped the grieving family buy a pauper's coffin and plan the funeral. The church provided for the five children left behind and found them homes. Thokozile decided to find out why the volunteers gave so much. After one visit to the small church, she asked Jesus to be her Savior. Now Thokozile is sharing the comfort she received. †

## The Church's Challenge

*(Continued from page 3)*

simple things—that can be done to stop this disease. The message that we can fight HIV/AIDS too often is lost in the overwhelming statistics of its current prevalence—especially in such places as sub-Saharan Africa.

The Church can and should use its

presence and power to pressure governments in the developed and developing world to act responsibly regarding the funding and management of resources. We can stop the disease. It is going to take money and commitment from our governments but it can be done.

To a town or an individual church that is wrestling with how to deal with the illness and how to respond to the needs of their entire community, I would say that compassion should be their guide. I think the church is already an example of this compassion. †

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