

Episcopal Life THIS WEEK

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people?

Preventing disease can make global village more secure

Diseases are a root cause of extreme poverty

Seventh in a 10-part series

By Brian J Grieves

In the struggle to address extreme poverty in the developing world, diseases are a root cause of the problem. More than 15,000 people die each day because of AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria—all preventable diseases. Eight thousand die from AIDS alone.

The key word that stands out for me is “preventable.” That means we are not helpless in the face of AIDS and other diseases, but rather have it in our capacity to control and eventually eradicate them. I remember how, in past decades, smallpox was a killer of millions and devastated so many communities around the world. A member of my parish in Honolulu in the early 1970s worked on the global smallpox eradication project. One weekend he had just returned from another international tour of smallpox sites and told us the incredible news that the last cases of smallpox had been isolated to a single area and the disease had finally been defeated. I had him stand up during the liturgy to share this good news. Everyone was so proud and overjoyed that the congregation burst into applause.

The resources and strategies for preventing HIV and treating AIDS are likewise within our capacity to achieve. Much of the news and statistics about AIDS is so discouraging, but the most painful part is that governments with the resources to combat the disease, despite increased support, have come up short of what is needed. But those of us in the pews are not powerless to affect our government’s policy. We have the right to advocate with our elected leaders to reorganize our nation’s priorities and to put more of our resources into development of communities worldwide, including programs that will overcome preventable diseases.

Let us pray for an end to pandemic disease, particularly the scourges of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, that plagues of death may no longer fuel poverty, destabilize nations, and inhibit reconciliation throughout the world.

- Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

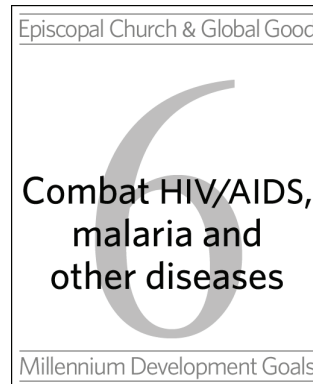
From March 7-14, 2007, in Boksburg, South Africa, 400 leaders from around the Anglican Communion will meet to address global poverty and AIDS through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals. The conference will develop strategies for a Communion-wide response to the AIDS pandemic. The church is uniquely placed, through its worldwide network, to be an agent of healing and care. This event stands as a beacon of hope to an often-depressed world.

The Episcopal Church provides its members with ways to put their faith into action by being advocates for the Millennium Development Goals. Joining the ONE Episcopalian campaign will join your voice to thousands of others in the church to be advocates for a dynamic global effort that will combat AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Perhaps your congregation, too, will stand up in a burst of enthusiastic applause one day when someone announces that these modern-day killers no longer threaten our global village. ■

The Rev. Canon Brian J Grieves (bgrieves@episcopalchurch.org) is the director of peace and justice ministries at the Episcopal Church Center.

Learn more about it

- **ONE Episcopalian**
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ONE/>
- **Educational resources from Episcopal Relief and Development**
http://er-d.org/programs_36756_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Resources from Episcopal News Service**
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_77743_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Episcopal Relief and Development malaria project**
<http://www.netsforlifeafrica.org/>
- **United Nations Millennium Development Goals**
www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
www.millenniumcampaign.org



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