

Concern for poor spreads worldwide

By Kim Jones
Life Editor

The Bible calls Christians to love others not only in speech but in action and truth. Believers and non-believers alike are joining together in the effort to show love to the poorest nations in the world.

In September 2000, 189 member nations came together at the United Nations Millennium Summit. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the group recognized that "we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level."

Out of this responsibility and duty to all the people of the world came the Millennium Development Goals: a list of eight objectives aimed at "improving the human condition by 2015," according to www.millennium.org.

These goals address issues such as fighting HIV/AIDS, wiping out extreme world hunger and poverty and reducing child mortality.

A global effort to improve life for all is underway, and many faith-based and anti-poverty organizations are involved in the fight.

Bread for the World is a "national Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decision makers," said www.bread.org.

Through an offering of letters, children and adults can pass a note to their congressmen, urging them to support legislation increasing funding to fight poverty, hunger and disease in poor nations around the world.

At last year's Q8 and United Nations summits, world leaders joined together in pledging the doubling of aid to Africa and other developing nations by 2010.

In the budget request for fiscal year 2007, President Bush asked Congress to approve an increase in poverty-focused development assistance of about \$2 billion, or less than half of one percent of the federal budget, according to Bread for the World's analysis.

They said that in order to fulfill this commitment on the U.S. side, the U.S. needs to contribute \$5 billion in fiscal year 2007. The focus of the current offering of letters campaign is this specific goal.

DATA, Debt AIDS Trade Africa, asks for the support of the world's wealthiest nations to put more resources towards Africa and to create policies that help Africa achieve long-term prosperity, according to the organization's website.

DATA was founded in 2002 by U.S. Sen. Bobby Shriver and activists from the Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt campaign. The organization asks for a commitment from wealthy nations to relieve extreme debts, fight the AIDS crisis, provide micro-development assistance and make trade fair so that Africa can work to boost its own economic growth.

The ONE Campaign, an effort to allocate an additional one percent of the U.S. budget to aiding the world's poorest countries, is a popular campaign with many objectives.

Getting children into grade school, providing clean water, fighting to shrink the number of AIDS orphans and debt cancellation are a few of the campaign's targeted issues.

A memorable ONE event was the Live 8 series of concerts that took place in the past July. Celebrities from all around the world joined in asking the leaders gathered at the G8 summit to make poverty history.

A Kentucky He Bread for the World advocacy workshop will be held Saturday, Feb. 25 at Second Presbyterian Church in Lexington. The workshop will offer information about the offering of letters campaign, the ONE campaign and other ways to help reduce poverty and hunger. For more information, contact Mary Alice Pank at 254-9716.

To learn more about the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Campaign, visit www.millennium.org. For information about the ONE campaign, Bread for the World, or DATA, visit www.one.org and www.data.org.

More than **38 million** people around the world are affected with HIV/AIDS, **25 million** in Africa alone. More than **1.7 million** Africans have died from the disease. Each day in Africa: HIV/AIDS kills **6,600** people and **8,800** are infected with the virus.

One in six people around the world live in extreme poverty, or less than \$1 a day.

MORE than 800 million go hungry each day.

One in seven people have no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. Over **20 million** people die from water-related diseases each year.

One person in seven goes to bed **hungry** each night.

In the United States, **14 million** children live in households where people have to **skip meals** or eat **less** to make ends meet.

18 million children have already lost one or both parents to AIDS, **12 million** of them in Africa. It is estimated that one child is **orphaned** by AIDS every **14 seconds**.

Sources: ONE Campaign, DATA, Bread for the World, WaterAid, World Vision, NetAid

Celebrities who have signed the ONE petition include:

- Bono
- Michael W. Smith
- Orlando Bloom
- Toby Mac
- Switchfoot
- Third Day
- The Newbays
- George Clooney
- Tom Hanks
- Danny Glover
- Cameron Diaz
- Jamie Foxx
- Jars of Clay
- Dave Matthews
- Brad Pitt
- Relient K
- M.G. Pat Robertson

Source: www.one.org

MIND BOGGERS

- For less than \$1 per dose, we

could save half of the African infants who contract HIV from their mothers at birth or through breast milk.

— National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, press release 2003

- Europeans spend \$11 billion a year on ice cream, while that same amount could fully fund the fight against global AIDS.

— The World Bank

- For the cost of just one movie ticket and box of popcorn for each American, we could prevent 13 MILLION CHILDREN from becoming orphans.

— www.data.org

"The one thing we can all agree on ... is that God is with the vulnerable and poor. God is in the slums ... God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives ... God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives, and God is with us if we are with them." — Bono, at the National Prayer Breakfast

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