

Message from the Moderator and General Secretary on World AIDS Day 2004

December 1, 2004

Dear Friends;

Today is World Aids Day. December 1 also marks the end of the Beads of Hope HIV/AIDS Campaign which has engaged The United Church of Canada and its members and friends over the past year. An article describing this major effort follows. It was written by Kristine Greenaway, a former United Church colleague, who served the World Council of Churches as its Director of Communication for several years and now lives and works in Ottawa.

With this story we wish to express our deepest appreciation to everyone in the church for their tremendous support for this major initiative. During worship at Church House chapel this morning, the comment was made that few projects have captured the church like this one. Thank you for your reaching out to everyone whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS. Thank you for your 40,000 signatures, placed before the House of Commons last winter in bundles of 10,000 by all the different political parties. Thank you, too, for the more than \$2 million raised to date to continue funding education and care programs offered by our global partners and others.

I want to say a special thank you to the planning and implementation teams here at Church House and elsewhere in Conferences, Presbyteries and congregations who did everything from shaving their hair off, to presenting plays, to developing special worship services. They were able to get resources out, including 45,000 special Beads of Hope pins, because of people like those we have in our national Distribution Center, the Resource Production Department and others like them across the country.

For this magnificent expression of Christ's presence, thank you. May the wonder and joy of this Advent season, with all its sense of expectation and hope at Christmas, be even more real for you this year because of this special campaign.

Faithfully,

Peter Short.
Moderator

Jim Sinclair
General Secretary, General Council

**Ecumenical News International Daily News Service 30 November 2004
Canadian church's AIDS campaign doubles fundraising objective
ENI-04-0781**

By Kristine Greenaway
Ottawa, 30 November (ENI)--The United Church of Canada, Canada's largest Protestant denomination, said just before World AIDS Day that its two-year global HIV/AIDS advocacy, education, and fundraising initiative has netted 2 million Canadian dollars, double its original objective.

Campaign organizers reported that church members responded enthusiastically to the fundraising challenge for 1 December World AIDS Day. Money raised in events ranging from collective quilting to rock dancing festivals, flooded into the denomination's national offices in Toronto.

The emergency appeal, dubbed "The Beads of Hope Campaign", took its name from beaded pins in the shape of the international AIDS symbol, a crossed red ribbon, that were made in South Africa and Zambia for sale in congregations throughout Canada.

Funds will be disbursed through the church's global partners including the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance to support initiatives such as a project encouraging Muslim and Christian youth to work together to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

In support of the campaign's advocacy objectives, the denomination's moderator, Peter Short, travelled to the country's capital in March to present its parliament with 40 000 signatures on a petition calling on the government to increase its efforts to stop the pandemic.

In May, church officials reported government action on all the points raised in the petition. These included a 100 per cent increase in Canada's contribution to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and new legislation to allow export of lower cost medication to low income countries. The Global Fund this year increased cooperation with religious communities to help fight AIDS, which is a killer pandemic in some countries. [285 words]

All articles (c) Ecumenical News International Reproduction permitted only by media subscribers and provided ENI is acknowledged as the source.

Ecumenical News International
PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

Tel: (41-22) 791 6088/6111
Fax: (41-22) 788 7244
Email: eni@eni.ch