

HIV/AIDS Speakers Bureau

Expert speakers are available to address the topic of AIDS within your church or conference. Speakers offer fresh insights on a variety of topics—from women and AIDS, to thinking theologically and biblically about global health. Whether an AIDS researcher or a layperson affected by AIDS, each speaker gives a unique perspective that will inform, inspire, and ultimately challenge your audience to get involved with the global AIDS fight.

Please email Diane Degnan at ddegnan@umcom.org to request more information about a speaker, and to check his or her availability. Note that speakers give freely of their time and talents, although hosting organizations are asked to cover travel expenses.

Speakers

Fritz and Etta Mae Mutti
Kansas City, MO

Bishop Mutti and his wife Etta Mae are past co-chairpersons for the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund. In December 1988, their middle son, Fred, informed them that he was HIV positive. Four months later, they learned that their oldest son, Tim, also was infected with the AIDS virus. Both died in just a few months.

A huge hole was left in the Muttis' lives. They say it can never be filled with total healing. But they live by faith and gradually have moved from suffering to sharing, from aching heart to advocacy. Together, they wrote the book *Dancing In A Wheelchair*, and have told their story in scores of places. They say they have learned to be tough in the face of hostile judgment, and have given their lives to witnessing.

Etta Mae Mutti has served on the SAVE Foundation Board in Kansas City, Missouri, has been a board member of AIDS National Interfaith Network, and worked at the Topeka AIDS Project and Kansas Ecumenical Ministries in Topeka, Kansas.

Fritz Mutti was elected to the episcopacy by the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in 1992 and assigned to the Kansas area (1992-2004). In retirement, he serves as a member of the Coordinating Council of Churches Uniting in Christ. He is also employed as a faculty member at Saint Paul School of Theology.

Selected topics:

- “The Mission of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund”
- “Supporting HIV/AIDS Ministries Around the World”
- “Understanding the Global Health Crisis caused by HIV/AIDS”
- “A Personal Story of AIDS”



Linda Bales

Washington, DC

Linda Bales Todd is the director of the Louise & Hugh Moore Population Project for The United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society, based in Washington, DC. Advocacy on issues related to population, women, and children comprise the bulk of Linda's work with emphasis on HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, human sexuality, reproductive health and human trafficking. Bales has traveled widely in Africa and has observed the AIDS pandemic first-hand. She speaks about how AIDS is affecting women and children around the globe.

Selected topics:

"Women and AIDS" (with emphasis on women's rights, health, and child marriage)

Donald E. Messer

Denver, CO

Donald E. Messer founded the Center for the Church and Global AIDS. The center supports and advocates for persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS around the world through programs of education, prevention, care, and treatment.

He is author of fifteen books, including *Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence: Christian Churches and the Global AIDS Crisis* (Fortress, 2004). He has spoken at AIDS conferences in Kenya, South Africa, India, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada, Indonesia, Uruguay, South Korea, Cambodia, and the U.S.

Messer's previous service includes twenty-nine years as a university and seminary president and professor, as well as time as a pastor. He served as a director of both the General Board of Global Ministries and the Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Concerns. Messer chairs the international United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee.

Selected topics:

"Role of the Church in Combating HIV/AIDS"

"Dealing With Stigma and Discrimination"

"Breaking the Silence Surrounding Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS"

"What the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund is Doing"

"Thinking Theologically and Biblically About Global Health"

Michael J. Christensen

Madison, NJ

Michael J. Christensen (M.A., Yale, Ph.D., Drew) is director of the Shalom Initiative for Prophetic Leadership and Community Development, and Affiliate Associate Professor of Spirituality and Religious Studies at Drew University. In this capacity, he serves as the national director of Communities of Shalom—a grass roots, interfaith, international, community development network of over ninety 'shalom sites', coordinated by Drew University Theological School in partnership with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Currently, he is program consultant for the Pastoral and Congregational Care Training (PACCT) Program—an HIV/AIDS educational program in Malawi, Africa, co-sponsored by CitiHope and the Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia.

Christensen is an ordained United Methodist minister in the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Selected topics:

“AIDS in Malawi”

“Faith-based Approaches to Ending AIDS”

“Apocalyptic Dimension of AIDS”

Rev. John Wesley Culp

Columbia, SC

Rev. John Culp has been a member of the United Methodist Global Aids Fund Committee for six years and a United Methodist Minister for forty-one years. He has taken an active role in South Carolina to educate and minister to people on the seriousness of HIV/AIDS. South Carolina now ranks eighth in the nation in the rate of new AIDS cases annually.

For thirty-one years, Rev. Culp has worked with youth on understanding poverty, which has included leading them in home repair projects. He is the co-author of the book, *Send Me*, on the development of work camps in South Carolina.

Selected topics:

“Addressing the AIDS Issue in Rural America”

“Ministering to ‘the Least of These’”

“Global Consciousness of HIV/AIDS”