

We dedicate the 2006 Annual Report to

CHARLES WILSON, MD, DSC, MSHA

with deep appreciation for his vision and dedication
as a founder of GAIA and for his exceptional leadership as
GAIA's board chair for seven years. We welcome his continuing
service to GAIA as trusted advisor and friend in his
new role as Chair Emeritus.

GLOBAL AIDS INTERFAITH ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT: 2006

INTRODUCTION

In 2006 we were able substantially to build upon the remarkable gifts and investment of our Malawi partners. This strategy continues as Malawi's people create their own solutions to the AIDS crisis. We began a mutually fruitful 3-year research partnership with the University of California, San Francisco as data are collected to help us learn how to mobilize the religious infrastructure of Malawi more effectively. In the US, we continue to add new supporters: individuals, foundations, churches, and community organizations.

GAIA PROGRAMS

The GAIA Villages

We are presently replicating the remarkable success of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded project in 20 villages in southern Malawi. Through this comprehensive intervention, village women, trained this past August as caregivers, have identified, registered, and assist over 1230 orphans and provide care to 160 home based care patients. They give village talks about HIV and related health issues and have been trained in the door-to-door counseling that has proven so effective in connecting people to HIV testing resources. One group of village caregivers is pictured to the right.



More than 250 grandmothers are among the caregivers of the orphans GAIA serves in these villages. GAIA assists these women to provide for their orphaned grandchildren and others they care for with food, basic supplies like soap, and school supplies and uniforms. The program also provides mandatory school fees (tuition) for students who qualify for high school admission.



In 2006 we partnered with 30 Malawi community based organizations (CBOs): The CBOs deliver the following kinds of interventions in our program areas: orphan care, home based care for people with AIDS, HIV prevention among youth, women's empowerment, support of hospitals and clinics, and HIV training conferences. Following are highlights of these projects.



Orphan Care

We train and equip village guardians to care for some of the hundreds of thousands of children orphaned by AIDS. They convey food donations, clothing, and school supplies. The Kanengo AIDS Support Organization (KASO) Early Childhood Center is a model example of the kind of CBO GAIA supports. It gives orphaned children a chance to develop and grow

through play. At learning centers they shape clay, learn letters, colors and shapes, explore the natural world, and play simple rhythm instruments. The center also uses art to help orphans deal with grief over the loss of their parents.

Educating Orphans

GAIA continues to provide school fees for 250 children orphaned by AIDS and served by community based organizations in the Central and Southern Regions. We also provided supplementary support in the form of books, uniforms and basic hygiene.

A hero. This year cancer took the life of Rosemarie Bevis, the extraordinary director of Open Arms, a transitional orphanage that GAIA has supported for many years. Rosemarie left a remarkable legacy and her work continues at the facility in Blantyre under the direction of her husband, Neville, and the capable new administrator, Bronnie Driscoll. Open Arms is home to 40 orphaned babies, including the child at right. Most are re-integrated back to village life through adoption by age 2, but those who are not are given a loving home in the Harrogate Toddler House, adjacent to the original building. The advent of antiretroviral treatment for children has dramatically reduced death rates at Open Arms, and HIV positive infants now have a chance of living. Open Arms has been so successful in its work that another branch will be opening, again with our support, in Malawi's central region at Nkhotakota.



Youth HIV Prevention



HIV prevention is woven through all of our programs, and youth are especially targeted. Peer education on the facts about HIV and encouragement to seek HIV testing are key strategies. Youth programs also provide constructive activities such as community gardening, sports, and drama clubs.

Home Based Care

This conveys help to people ill with AIDS in their homes. Volunteers provide assistance with physical care, household chores, and bring food and simple medicines, and offer emotional, psychological, and spiritual support. Volunteers at one of these projects, Mpatsho home care, in Malawi's central region, provide, food, comfort and companionship to 63 patients including the woman at right.



Women's Empowerment

When women are financially empowered they become less dependent upon men and thus are at less risk for contracting HIV. They obtain greater resources for care of their children. GAIA works with several community based organizations to help women grow their own businesses. One intervention is goat husbandry. Through our partnering organization, Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), we trained 60 households in this. Below a woman proudly shows off her goats to GAIA visitors.



We also use microloan schemes to empower women. Over 225 women in the extremely poor, high HIV prevalence, tea growing area are organized into loan clubs. They receive training in basic financial management, business practices, and group dynamics. The women received their initial loans and are building successful small trading businesses. The loan payback rates are meeting expectations.

Nursing Scholarships

The 37 young women who are GAIA scholars continued their nursing training in 2006 at the Malawi College of Health Sciences and Kamuzu College of Nursing. Some of the students are themselves orphans caring for younger siblings. Below, Ellen Schell, GAIA's international Programs Director, is pictured with a nursing student at a reception for GAIA visitors.

Support For Hospitals And Clinics

GAIA funded specific hospital-based projects related to HIV. We helped to build an HIV testing room at the Baptist Medical Clinic in Senga Bay and we enabled an education program boosting access by villagers to the anti-retroviral treatment resources at St. Luke's hospital in Malosa.



HIV and AIDS Training Conferences

GAIA sponsored a conference for 200 Baptist pastors on HIV/AIDS and Gender Based Violence. The pastors were trained in basic counseling techniques, human rights, and de-stigmatization.

Progress In Antiretroviral Treatment

Through the UN Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, antiretroviral therapy became available to increasing numbers of Malawi people in 2006. GAIA assisted Community Based Organizations and St. Luke's hospital with community awareness campaigns on the availability of treatment and with education concerning therapy. Many stories describe the experiences of people fortunate enough to receive antiretroviral medications. The following is typical of them:

One woman's husband had been ill for months, consulting one traditional healer after another. Although he knew about HIV, he was reluctant to be tested. He became very ill and was admitted to the hospital. He was finally tested and found positive, but it was too late and he could not be saved. After his death, his widow found the courage to go for testing herself. She learned she was positive and began antiretroviral treatment. She told her 5 children, "God will take me when he takes me, but I am not going to let him take me because I was too afraid to be tested." She has now become a powerful witness, speaking openly about her experience and giving her fellow villagers the courage to go for testing and treatment.



This year we also welcomed the advent of antiretroviral treatment for children living with HIV, though it is still only available at a few central hospitals. For many children too poor to afford the bus fares for travel to the central hospitals, treatment remains only a dream. We helped the Mvera AIDS Support Organization to transport children living with HIV to treatment at the Abbot-Baylor Paediatrics Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi's capital city. We also enabled the children to receive vital nutritional supplements that are an essential precondition for the medications to work at all. GAIA's Central Region Program Manager, Gertrude Chipungu reported on the effect of this intervention:

There has been a tremendous improvement in the children. In short, the small amount of money has brought back life to the little ones. The children now can play, eat and enjoy their food, sleep well, and go to school, things they were not able to do before commencement of antiretroviral treatment. It is amazing to see that new life and hope has dawned again on a whole village.

Special Initiative: Food Relief

A severe drought during the 2005 growing season continued to affect food security through much of 2006. At the end of 2005 we launched a food relief effort in an especially hard-hit 37-village cluster. That intervention continued into early 2006, assisting over 1600 families caring for orphans and home based care patients. We also provided food relief in other hot spots through some of our partner community based organizations.

One report of food relief said this:

Children, no longer hungry, have returned to school. The guardians who care for children are now able to tend to their own gardens and are planting next year's crop instead of searching for piecework to buy food for the day. Home based care patients have more energy, and people have stopped going into the bush to look for wild plants to eat, some of which were poisonous and were making people sick.



Summary of Accomplishments in 2006

(Totals from all programs combined)

Orphan Care	
Orphans cared for	6925
Orphans assisted with secondary school tuitions	299
HIV Prevention	
People tested for HIV	2762
People reached with prevention messages	10,000+
Youth prevention clubs established	18
Youth served through clubs	1262
Home Based Care	
Caregivers trained in homebased care	170
Patients cared for	751
Women's Empowerment	
Families receiving goats	100
Women receiving microloans	265
Number of community income generating projects	28
Nursing Scholarships	
Students supported	37
Hospitals and Clinics supported	
Number of hospitals and clinics supported	4
HIV and AIDS Training Conferences	
Number of clergy trained	200
Food Relief	
Number of individuals assisted	2360

HIGHLIGHTS FROM GAIA US PROGRAMS

US Advocacy

Congregations, Resource Groups, volunteers, and schools ensure the success of GAIA and its Malawi partners through their generous donations of time and resources. These wonderful U.S. Partners organized auctions, dinners, presentations by GAIA trustees and staff, a dance performance, and a photo exhibit.

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr

For years the congregation of the Church of the Redeemer addressed the question of how to respond to the poverty and sickness that ravages Africa until they were introduced to GAIA in 2003. Grant Norris coordinates a dynamic outreach group called "African Children's Mission" (ACM) at the Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, which is one of GAIA's most loyal and committed partners.

Grant reminds us that working as a group potentiates the good that can be accomplished. Redeemer parishioners Stephen Billings, Tom Williams, Christina Corcoran, Sara D'Angio, Margaret Sipple, John Wallingford, Dave Schroeder and many others have successfully inspired and engaged the wide support of their vibrant congregation and are working to spread the word to other churches and groups in their area.

The main focus of ACM's thoughtful mission is, "To empower the congregation of the Church of the Redeemer to support initiatives that improve the lives and hopes of children affected by AIDS in Africa." Further in their mission is, "To ensure that funds are applied effectively and efficiently to help the most vulnerable children affected by AIDS and their caregivers."



Since its founding, the ACM has grown considerably, and with it, the involvement and understanding of the Redeemer's congregation. "As we grow, we grow together," says Grant. The creativity and tireless effort of ACM's fundraising has been wildly successful. For example, a "Got Goat" fundraiser provided many Malawi families with goats. An annual "Have A Heart" campaign revolves around Valentines Day, and they have sent books, medicines and other supplies directly to Malawi. In addition to their fundraising, each year parishioners visit Malawi with the support and guidance of GAIA. They return to share their experiences with the congregation. Grant cites the power of personal testimonials between people who know one another as an important key to understanding the situation and prompting involvement in solutions.

On November 17, GAIA trustee Dr. Michael Gottlieb and Wendy Gordon, his wife, hosted a hospitable gathering of the Southern California GAIA Resource Group in their Pasadena home. Dr. David Baltimore, President Emeritus of Cal Tech and a Nobel Prize winning research scientist (pictured at right), was the guest of honor. In terms understandable to lay persons, Dr. Baltimore spoke about his hopes for an effective vaccine against the HIV virus and the daunting barriers that he and other scientists face.



Eighty people were on hand, many of them prominent leaders in the HIV community who were attending a GAIA event for the first time. Prior to Dr. Baltimore's presentation, three volunteers (Dr. Janet Cunningham, Dr. Richard Beatty, and Julie Calderon, RN) who traveled in Malawi spoke briefly of GAIA's work, showing slides of various projects and villages with whom GAIA partners.

2006 marked the launching of the GAIA Alternative Gift Market (AGM) Catalog. The AGM is another way we can acknowledge special occasions or holidays while being charitable to those less fortunate. Congregations and individuals in California and New York organized opportunities to donate to GAIA in honor of loved ones. As our US dollar goes so far in Malawi, the great success of the AGM's first year has a huge impact on supporting many vital programs.

Research Partnership

GAIA launched a partnership with a research team headed by Dr. Sally Rankin, Professor and Chair of the Department of Family Health Care Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco. The 3-year study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. It will examine the response of religious organizations -- Christian and Muslim -- to the HIV epidemic in Malawi. GAIA provides entrée to the organizations and communities, and the research will make recommendations as to how religious communities can strengthen their response and leadership in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

Growth Of U.S. Staff

Meg Styles joined us as GAIA's Community Relations Director, working with congregations and community groups supporting our work. Meg brings many skills from her years in the business world. She has a passion for improving women's health in the developing world. She designed and launched our tremendously successful alternative gift market, which enables donors to make a holiday gift to African people in honor of a friend or family member.

Karen Hayes became GAIA's Southern California Development Officer. She had been a dedicated GAIA volunteer for years, most recently as chair of our Southern California Resource Group. She has considerable professional fundraising experience and has traveled frequently to Africa as the authorized film biographer of Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Ninon Jouanjus became our indispensable office manager. She possesses a background in business management and marketing, along with wonderful energy and initiative. She succeeds Shirley Bickel, to whom we have bid farewell with many thanks for her fine contributions to GAIA and her kind and generous spirit.

Recognition

GAIA's trustee Michael Gottlieb, M.D. was highlighted in publications around the world as the HIV/AIDS community marked the 25th year of the epidemic. In a 1981 report published in the Centers for Disease Control's *Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report*, Dr. Gottlieb first identified a cluster of 5 cases of the syndrome that subsequently became known as AIDS. This year, Dr. Gottlieb's June editorial "AIDS at 25: I knew Patient Zero," published in the *Los Angeles Times* and other national newspapers, named Dr. Gottlieb as a GAIA trustee, and brought valuable attention to our work.

An abstract summarizing our work in 37 villages in Southern Malawi was presented at the XVI International AIDS conference in Toronto in August, and a presentation of our work with orphans was made at the plenary session of the 2nd International Conference on Nursing Science & HIV/AIDS, also in Toronto.

Financial Statement

GAIA’s income in 2006 totaled \$1,387,789 which includes \$280,753 released from 2005 reserves for Africa program expenditures. Expenses totaled \$1,335,171. The remaining cash flow was \$52,618 which has been allocated for Africa program expenditures.

