Network of African Congregational Theology (NetACT)
Conference on HIV/AIDS, Poverty, Congregational Ministry, and
Theological Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Global Stewardship Implications
Justo Mwale Theological College – Lusaka, Zambia / 4-12 August 2007

Presentation Submission
by
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Title of Presentation: BALM IN GILEAD: Cross-cultural and Interdisciplinary Collaboration Concerning Urban Theological Education, Poverty, and HIV/AIDS in Africa and in the African Diaspora

Presentation Focus: Talking points regarding possible action-steps to establish a cross-cultural collaboration among pastors, faculty from various theological and non-theological disciplines, students, and laypersons to enhance the effectiveness of ministry outcomes regarding poverty and HIV/AIDS.

Audience: Theological educators, pastors, theological students, public health and medical professionals, social work and other educators, and representatives from business, government, and journalism.

Content Level: Intermediate

Presentation Abstract:
This presentation will examine the theological significance of the city in analyzing the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS and poverty to theological education and congregational ministry. Possible collaborative strategies of institutions and individuals will be explored with a goal of enhancing the ability of schools and churches in Africa and the African Diaspora to address the overlapping public health, economic, social, and spiritual scourges of poverty and HIV/AIDS.

Presentation Description:
In the urban centers as well as in rural villages where the spread of HIV/AIDS is a critical issue, what does our theology have to say about this pandemic? Pastors, seminary faculty, and other church leaders along with professionals from public health, medicine, social work, and a variety of non-theological disciplines must help prepare current and future church leaders to address this challenge in light of the “Balm in Gilead” we know as Jesus Christ. Can cross-cultural collaborations be formed to help reframe theological education to better address these critical public health and economic issues in Africa and globally?

Learning Objectives:
1. Examine theological education realities in the USA concerning HIV/AIDS and poverty.
2. Dialogue concerning appropriate pedagogical strategies for theological schools working with congregations and communities to eliminate the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS as a means toward improving prevention, treatment, and pastoral care.
3. Explore possible strategies that encourage curriculum refinements so as to strengthen the ability of theological schools to prepare future leaders to serve the congregations and communities more effectively in light of the challenges of HIV/AIDS and poverty.