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***From the Executive Director's Desk***

We have just finished celebrating Christmas. As I gathered together with family and friends to contemplate the greatest gift of Christmas and the expectation and yearning this season brings, I could not help but think of the silent oppression many people experience during this season. I think of the silence being continually felt by those experiencing the tyranny of injustice in such places as Congo, with more than 4 million deaths just in the past six years, or ongoing oppression in Zimbabwe, or the silence being felt by those living with violence in the part of the city where I live. I also think about the silence experienced by women suffering from HIV/AIDS that I have met in Bulawayo, Victoria Falls, and Kinshasa, not sure about the future of their children once they themselves die.

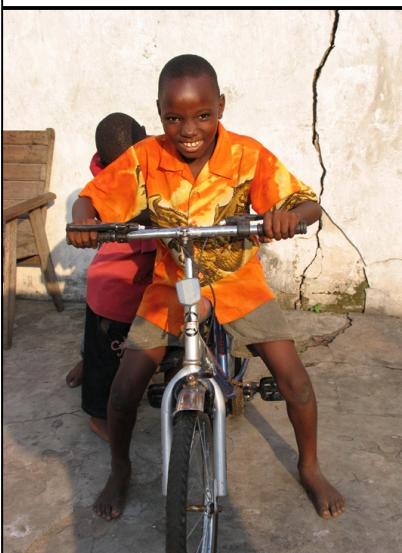
I want to enter the New Year confessing and engaging in our responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." I long for a year full of deep character and quality relationships, a year not only where much will be found in the window but more in the room. Furthermore, I long for a year where it will be possible for people to cross the streets to meet both their local and global neighbors, and to find great joy in doing so.—Pakisa Tshimika

***Grant from Kaiser Opens New Doors***

Mama Makeka House of Hope received a \$2,500 grant from Kaiser Permanente with the goal of studying early exposure to violence in South Fresno. With the grant, MMH Hope established a partnership with McLane High School Medical Academy to conduct the study. Three senior high students are participating in the designing phase of the project. In addition, 15 juniors will be joining the team in January and February for the interview process. This first phase of the project is expected to be completed in April 2006.

***Fresno Medical Community Responds to a Call from Kajiji Hospital***

We reported in the March Newsletter about the lamentable situation at the Kajiji Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Fresno area medical community, with coordination from Dr. Harold Hanson and Dr. Eric Hanson, contributed more than \$30,000 toward the purchase of medicine and supplies for the hospital. Individual doctors, business people, area hospitals, and medical groups participated. IDA, a Non Profit Organization in the Netherlands, is providing the medicine.

***Children Need Real Homes***

Tecla, from Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and Jackie, from Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are two exceptional women who do not let the political and economic situations of their countries affect how they feel about AIDS orphaned children. Tecla, a successful business woman, uses her own resources to locate homes for orphans, purchase medicine for mothers suffering from AIDS, and assist older children in finding stable homes so they can take care of their siblings. Jackie, a single woman in her late 30's, chose to adopt 13 children. She is renting her home but dreams of purchasing a home for long term stability of the children. Tecla dreams of building several three room houses for the dying women and the children who take care of the younger ones. A three room house costs \$1,500 to build using local materials. With \$35,000, Jackie can purchase a comfortable house with enough room for all 13 children as well for additional street children that Jackie attends to although they are not living with her.