

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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The Struggle is Not Over

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Sunday, June 27, 2010 is National HIV Testing Day. In many of our communities we will be educating, lifting awareness, and testing. Some of our churches will be joining in the plight to continue the fight against this disease, stand with and support those that are infected and affected and to eliminate the continuous stigma that is associated with HIV/AIDS. I have served as an HIV/AIDS educator for over a decade and I still sit in awe at the ignorance and apathy of the African American, especially the faith community.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “there are more than 1 million people in the United States living with HIV.” One-fourth of them do not know that they are infected with the HIV Virus. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one out of five people living with HIV in the U.S. are unaware of their HIV status. Could you be one of them? The only way to know if you have HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is to get tested. National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) is an opportunity for people nationwide to learn their HIV status and to gain knowledge to take control of their health and their lives.

This week I was engaged in a conversation with a beautiful young African American woman that is living with the disease, and she stated the struggle is not over. Even though she’s been undetectable for several years there are still those, many among her own family members that are just not getting it. They continue the whispers, stares, and asking questions that are hurtful and leave her feeling isolated and alone. In spite of it all, she’s been blessed to have two beautiful daughters that have been tested negative, maintain a job, and is traveling around the country sharing her story, and educating people. Nevertheless, she says, “there are those that just don’t get it, the struggle is not over.” She gives credit to God, a strong support system, and groups such as

UCAN (United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network, Common Thread, AIDS ministries in the churches and other groups that realize that, “The Struggle is Not Over.” Take the time to get tested. The life you save could be your own!

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,300 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.