



## **Saddleback Church: Global Summit on AIDS and The Church**

In the 25 years since HIV/AIDS was first identified, there have been countless conferences addressing the pandemic from medical, social, political and religious perspectives by health professionals, NGOs, governments and para-church ministries.

However, the “Global Summit on AIDS and The Church” held at Saddleback Church in 2005, 2006 and 2007 to coincide with World AIDS Day, was strategically and historically unique. No other HIV/AIDS conference has ever been built entirely around a practical “local church-based” strategy designed to mobilize millions of congregations around the world for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

These conferences featured global keynote speakers and informative sessions led by experts in business, government, medicine, non-profits and ministry who are working locally and globally in an attempt to end AIDS. Participation from key influencers increased with each Summit, as did the national and international media exposure.

Participants of the Summit, either as on-site speakers or through providing video messages, have included First Lady Mrs. Laura Bush; Bill and Melinda Gates of The Gates Foundation; Bono of The ONE Foundation; Sens. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Sam Brownback (R-Kans.), Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), John Edwards (D-N.C.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.); Republican Govs. Mike Huckabee (Ark.) and Mitt Romney (Mass.); U.S. Ambassador Mark Dybul, the global AIDS coordinator and highest-ranking AIDS official in the nation; Robert Redfield, MD, The Institute of Human Virology; Christian Pitter, MD, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation; and Richard Feachem, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

The 2007 Summit also included two new components – a pre-Summit featuring seven comprehensive, half-day workshops focusing on orphans and vulnerable children, justice issues, HIV in Russia, HIV in China, HIV in the U.S., HIV in resource-limited settings and accessing government resources, as well as the first-annual Youth Summit on AIDS. The Youth Summit was designed to stir the hearts of students to care for those with HIV, and to strengthen their knowledge, engage their abilities and maximize their potential to assist in the effort to end this global pandemic. First daughter, Jenna Bush, was the keynote speaker at this historic youth event.

For World AIDS Day 2008, Saddleback hosted events on both the east and west coasts. In the morning, the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health was held in Washington, D.C., honoring President and Mrs. George W. Bush and their Administration for their contributions to HIV/AIDS. Later that day, the Civil Forum was rebroadcast at Saddleback Church and a special youth service was also held, featuring several elements geared directly toward young people including a worship service, Q&A with HIV/AIDS experts and an “AIDS in the O.C.” experience.