

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **The Church's Response to AIDS, Poverty & Homelessness** *President of Children's HopeChest Urges Christians to Fight for Social Justice by Living the 'Red Letters' of Jesus*

***"I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."* Matthew 25:42-43 ESV**

Los Angeles, Calif— Red Letters in the Bible emphasize the words of Jesus who called His followers to live in ways that go against natural human inclinations. One example is the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus' point was clear: Love in action, *not* religiosity is what God desires.

In the upcoming book, ***Red Letters: Living a Faith that Bleeds*** (Cook Communications, September, 2007) **Tom Davis** opens with an apology. "The Christian church owes an apology for their slow response to the almost fifty million individuals in our world currently infected with HIV/AIDS, and the countless millions who have died or are dying," says Davis.

Davis, the President of Children's HopeChest, a non-profit agency that helps disadvantaged children around the world, whose personal crusade is for readers to make small changes to assist the following humanitarian crisis in our world:

- The genocide in Sudan, which has taken the lives of 400,000 people.
- 10 million children involved in the sex trade.
- The HIV/ AIDS epidemic in Africa: While 10 percent of the world's population lives in Africa, 64 percent of all people are infected with HIV/ AIDS. Swaziland has the highest infection rate in the world and by 2050 the country will be extinct.
- A staggering 38 percent of the world's population is malnourished.

"How different the world would be if Christians lived a faith that bleeds, one that requires sacrifice but a faith that brought life...if we offered the hungry something to eat, gave clothing to someone who was cold, and truly loved all our neighbors as ourselves as Jesus did?" asks Davis.

*Red Letters* offers simple ideas that can change the world including educating others through a blog, donating five dollars per month to notable charities (several are featured in the book), traveling overseas for five days a year to help alleviate poverty and suffering, or putting a child through primary school for only \$100 per year.

Davis, echoing the words of Scripture, writes that whenever we help the "least of these," we are helping Jesus himself. "The Red Letters life is a journey you will never forget because of the people you meet. And believe it or not, you'll recognize every one of them. They look just like Jesus." A portion of the proceeds from *Red Letters* will be contributed to help feed the hungry in Africa.



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## **Tom Davis & Children's HopeChest**

**Tom Davis** is the author of *Red Letters: Living a Faith that Bleeds* and *Fields of the Fatherless*. He is the President of Children's HopeChest, a Christian organization, and part of the One Campaign, that provides humanitarian aid to orphans around the world, with a particular emphasis on the countries of Russia, Romania and the Ukraine.

Tom had a life-changing experience in 1997 while leading a camp with his wife and son for orphans in Vladimir, Russia. While there, he was struck by the fact that these were innocent children who, through no fault of their own, were rejected and abandoned. Tom felt compelled to do something, and shortly after returning home, he joined the outreach organization, **Children's HopeChest**. Today, Tom is an advocate for orphans worldwide, as well as a passionate supporter of global humanitarian aid.

Tom was a pastor for ten years and has served on staff for several churches in Dallas, Texas. He holds a Business and Pastoral Ministry degree from Dallas Baptist University and a Master's Degree in Theology from The Criswell College.

Tom is also a leadership trainer in professional development and implements training to Fortune 500 CEO's and their executive staff. He lives in Colorado with his wife and six children, one of whom was adopted from Russia.

For additional information on Tom Davis and Children's HopeChest. log on to [www.cthomasdavis.com](http://www.cthomasdavis.com) or [www.hopechest.org](http://www.hopechest.org).



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**Suggested Interview Questions for Tom Davis author of  
*Red Letters: Living a Faith That Bleeds***

1. Why do you believe the church has been slow to respond to some of the epidemics impacting other countries?
2. Why did you feel the need to open your book with an apology?
3. What is the correlation of red letters and your message?
4. How do you define poverty?
5. What is Children's HopeChest and how did it begin?
6. What are some of the little things people can do to help the less fortunate?
7. What do you mean by living a "faith that bleeds"?
8. You believe even young children can help others. In what ways?
9. What is Five for Fifty ([www.fivefor50.com](http://www.fivefor50.com))?
10. People of influence/celebrities are often scrutinized for their charitable contributions to society. What is the reason for this and what do they teach us?
11. What is the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic?
12. Share with us your trips to Swaziland and other outreach trips.
13. How do you know what Jesus would do today, since many of these diseases were not around during His lifetime?
14. Is there a downside to efforts like those of "American Idol" to fight poverty?

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### **Quotes from Tom Davis and *Red Letters*:**

“Christian organizations are responding with more and more boldness. Still, we have a lot to learn and a long way to go. We have an opportunity to show the world just what it truly means to be Christ-followers.”

“Bono's life changed in the mid-80's when in Ethiopia he was approached by a father who held his dying child and asked Bono to take him back to Ireland. Bono kindly refused the man, but that decision haunted him ever since. Today he is the most recognized advocate for relieving extreme poverty and AIDS. Bono leads with his heart...there is a deeper, spiritual meaning to our existence. He believes there is a deeper, spiritual meaning to our existence. He believes that everyone has the right to live.”

“One reason we don't act on helping others is because we're afraid. We spend most of our time trying to protect what we have...fearing what would happen if it went away. “

“AIDS is still widely perceived as a disease for homosexuals, prostitutes and drug users...Jesus didn't care how you got sick He had compassion and reached out to them. The numbers are overwhelming but each person can start by focusing on just one.”

“Justice is giving to those who have nothing. It means making wrongs right, bringing blessing instead of curse, and giving our lives to serve others in need. Justice is love.”

“The RED Campaign, Idol Gives Back, and the individual work of so many celebrities should be a wake up call for the church. These efforts are creating hope and light where none existed before. We, as Christ-followers, should applaud their efforts, and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them in the fight against AIDS.”

“We are quick to judge the motives of non-Christians and especially celebrities. We've looked down our noses at their good deeds because they aren't inside the Church. Yet, the Gospel I believe in says that it is our actions that matter—not our words or our “holiness.” We can sit like Pharisees, passing judgment on those who are different. Or, we can kneel with them by the side of the road to bring healing and wholeness to the broken.”

“The disciples asked Jesus to rebuke a man for casting out demons in Jesus' name. Their only objection was that he did not follow Jesus. Jesus rebuked the disciples instead, saying, *Don't forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For whoever is not against us is on our side. For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward.*”

Matthew Monberg, Chief Operating Officer, Children's HopeChest

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## **STATISTICS CITED IN *RED LETTERS***

### **CHILDREN IN NEED WORLDWIDE**

- 17 million children die from malnutrition and starvation each year
- 10 million children are involved in the sex trade
- 100 million children are homeless
- 200 million children serve as child laborers

### **HIV/ AIDS IN AFRICA**

- 2.8 million Africans became infected with HIV in 2006
- 24.7 million Africans are living with HIV
- Africa is home to just over 10 percent of the world's population, but home to 64 percent of all people living with HIV
- Swaziland has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS and according to the UN by 2050 the country will be extinct if remedy is not provided

### **HIV/ AIDS WORLDWIDE**

- There are 39.5 million people worldwide living with HIV
- There were 4.3 million new infections worldwide in 2006
- 2.9 million people died of AIDS in 2006, the highest number ever reported
- 25 million people are known to have died of AIDS since the first case in 1981
- Over a million children in Zimbabwe have lost one or both parents to AIDS
- An estimated 940,000 people in Russia were living with HIV at the end of 2005

### **GENOCIDE IN AFRICA**

- 800,000 Tutsi and Hutu died in the Rwandan genocide in the mid-1990s
- During the Second Congo War, which officially ended in 2003, 3.8 million people died, mostly from starvation and disease, which resulted from the war
- 400,000 Sudanese have died in the genocide there, which continues to this day

### **WORLDWIDE POVERTY**

- 33 percent of the world's population is malnourished
- 20 percent of the world's population has no access to safe drinking water

**“Tom Davis’s book is an indictment against the complacent Church which has failed to be Jesus to the rejected and abandoned of the world, especially the millions of Africans suffering with HIV/AIDS. He makes the mind numbing statistics come alive with the stories of individuals and challenges Christians to be Jesus to them by giving tangible and realistic options for action.”**  
~ **Bishop John Rucyahana, Minister and Author, The Bishop of Rwanda**