



GLOBAL HEALTH, FAITH, AND PUBLIC WITNESS

A Teaching & Policy Primer for Pastors, Leaders, and Lay People

Why Global Health Matters to the Church

Global health is not an abstract policy issue. It is about people created in the image of God who are living - or dying - because of preventable and treatable conditions. Scripture consistently calls God's people to protect life, care for the sick, and defend the vulnerable.

"I was sick and you looked after me." (Matthew 25:36)

Engaging global health is one way the Church lives out its calling to love our neighbor—near and far—through compassion, stewardship, and justice.

What We Mean by "Global Health"

When NaLEC speaks about global health, we are referring to U.S.-supported and globally coordinated efforts that:

- Prevent and treat HIV/AIDS
- Expand access to lifesaving vaccines
- Protect mothers and babies
- Combat malaria and polio
- Strengthen health systems so communities can care for themselves

These efforts are carried out in partnership with governments, local faith-based organizations, community health workers, and global institutions.

Key Global Health Programs NaLEC Engages

PEPFAR – Fighting HIV/AIDS

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the largest global health initiative in history focused on a single disease.

What PEPFAR does, plainly:

- Provides HIV testing and lifesaving treatment
- Prevents new infections
- Helps babies be born HIV-free
- Trains local health workers and strengthens health systems

Impact:

- More than 25 million lives saved globally since its launch in 2003
- Millions of people are alive today because treatment became accessible
- Strong impact across Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and beyond

PEPFAR is widely recognized across political parties and faith communities as one of the most effective humanitarian investments ever made.



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Gavi – Vaccines That Save Children’s Lives

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance helps ensure children in the world’s poorest countries receive vaccines against deadly diseases like polio, measles, and tetanus.

What this means:

- Vaccines prevent death before illness ever begins
- Immunization strengthens entire communities
- Healthy children are more likely to attend school and thrive

Impact:

- Global immunization efforts have saved tens of millions of lives over recent decades
- Gavi-supported programs save over a million lives each year

Maternal & Child Health

Every day, women die in childbirth from preventable causes, and children die from conditions that are inexpensive to treat.

U.S.-supported global health programs:

- Provide prenatal and postnatal care
- Train skilled birth attendants
- Improve nutrition for mothers and infants

This work directly reflects God’s concern for women, children, and families.

Malaria & Polio

- Malaria remains one of the leading causes of death for children under five, yet prevention tools are inexpensive and effective.
- Polio is on the verge of eradication. So, continued investment ensures it never returns.

Ending these diseases is not only possible, it is within reach.

What Congress Did in the 2026 Budget?

In the 2026 federal budget process, Congress affirmed bipartisan support for global health by:

- Providing approximately \$9–10 billion for global health programs
- Funding PEPFAR at approximately \$5.9 billion
- Making discretionary funds available for Gavi and vaccine programs.

NaLEC is thankful!



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What Does Global Health Actually Cost?

One of the most common misconceptions is that global health is expensive.

The reality is that U.S. global health spending represents less than 1% of the total federal budget.

The return on investment - in lives saved and suffering prevented - is extraordinary.

Cost-Effectiveness Explained Simply

Independent economic studies consistently show that global health programs are highly cost-effective:

- HIV treatment and prevention programs save lives at a modest cost per life-year saved compared with most healthcare spending.
- Vaccines are among the most cost-effective interventions in human history.

Because medicines and vaccines are purchased in bulk, negotiated at reduced prices, and delivered through efficient community-based systems, the average cost per person reached is relatively low when spread across millions of people.

Global health investments save lives at a modest cost relative to their enormous human impact.

Common Misconceptions — and the Truth

- “Global health spending is a big part of the U.S. budget.”
False. It is consistently well under 1% of total federal spending.
- “PEPFAR and global health are no longer needed.”
False. Without continued treatment and prevention, millions would die, and infections would surge.
- “Helping people abroad doesn’t help us.”
False. Global health:
 - Reduces pandemic risk
 - Strengthens global stability
 - Builds goodwill and cooperation
 - Reflects moral leadership



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NaLEC's Role in Global Health

NaLEC engages global health through:

1. Teaching & Formation – Helping pastors and leaders understand global health clearly and biblically
2. Faith-Rooted Advocacy – Educating policymakers with moral clarity
3. Partnership – Working alongside trusted global and local organizations
4. Public Witness – Speaking when life and dignity are at stake

NaLEC's engagement is not partisan—it is pastoral, prophetic, and grounded in Scripture.

NaLEC's Theological Foundation

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves." (Proverbs 31:8)

Global health work reflects:

- Stewardship of resources
- Compassion for the vulnerable
- Commitment to life
- Faith expressed through action

When the Church supports policies that save lives, it bears witness to the Gospel in the public square.

"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:18)

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WWW.NALEC.ORG

EMAIL: INFO@NALEC.ORG

