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My Church

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Imagine no Malaria and make a difference in God's world

by Richard Hearne

Lay Leader and Co-Chair Imagine No Malaria Campaign

As I have the opportunity to speak at churches across the North Texas Annual Conference as the Conference Lay Leader, I always begin my talk with the statement that "I am so proud to be a United Methodist!" There are many reasons for my feeling this way (theology of grace, for example) but a major reason for this pride is that we are a denomination that is committed to making a real difference in the world. United Methodist churches continue to lead the way in supporting various ministries and outreach programs across our communities and the world.

A great example of this commitment is the decision several months ago by the Global Health Initiative of The United Methodist Church to eliminate malaria in Africa by 2015. This is taking the Nothing But Nets program, which has been successfully embraced by so many of the churches of the NTC, to the next level. For example, and this is critically important to be understood by all, if the Nothing But Nets campaign was able to put a anti-mosquito net in every hut/home in every village on the continent of Africa, we would have to repeat the process in three more years – the effective time of the mosquito repellent in the net.

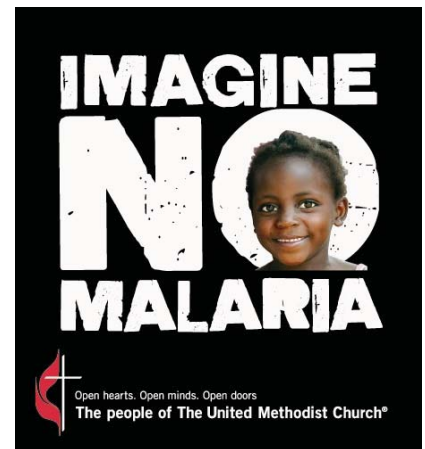
To achieve a sustainable victory over malaria it is critical that we provide:

1. Continuing prevention – we must continue to get nets to every hut/home in every village in Africa.
2. Treatment – provide or improve clinics and hospitals, deliver better medicines and educate and train community workers.
3. Education – teach persons more effective means of protecting themselves from malaria such as clean water supplies and destroying the breeding grounds of mosquitoes. (like we have done in the U.S.)

4. Communication – use all forms of networks, radio and/or cell phones, digital, etc to get the message out to all people.







The United Methodist Church was chosen to be a partner in this effort because our denomination has an intact infrastructure for health-care delivery systems in Africa. Our "connection" is a powerful weapon in the defeat of malaria.

You might ask why are we, the NTC, undertaking this project at this time – especially in light of the horrific tragedy in Haiti and this is not a time to debate the



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Imagine no Malaria...

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merits or needs of one tragedy over another. The answer is simple although the solution is very complex – a child dies every 30 seconds in Africa which results in only one in five African children living to celebrate their fifth birthday from a disease that is totally treatable and preventable. That translates to over 100,000 deaths each month – the estimated death toll of the earthquake in Haiti at the time of this article being written. Our world experiences the Haiti earthquake 12 times a year with little notice or acknowledgement. I think all deaths, but especially of children, grieve God and He calls upon us, each of us, to do all that we can to stop the dying.

Our Bishop, W. Earl Bledsoe, was invited to New York City to the United Nations to witness a presentation on this problem and the solution offered by the Global Health Initiative several months ago. Bishop Bledsoe was touched by this message and has committed, “I, for one, will do all I can to join with others in helping to eliminate this disease.” Bishop Bledsoe is speaking of his and Leslie’s personal commitment to work for this cause.

Bishop Bledsoe has also asked Rev. Judith Reedy, Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church of The Colony and me to serve as co-chairs of a North Texas Conference Initiative of Imagine No Malaria. A task force has been recruited and will meet on January 22 to map out a strategy of involving the members of our churches in sharing in the elimination of malaria. Our goal is to provide the information that will hopefully inspire and

motivate our individual members to become active warriors battling this disease. We hope each person, family, Sunday School class, United Methodist Women, children and youth groups, etc will make a conscious decision to save a life, or lives of children in Africa.

We will continue to use the cost of a mosquito repellent net, \$10, as the agreed donation to save one life. Thus, \$100 saves 10 lives and \$1,000 saves 100. Our task force will be focusing on providing innovative and fun examples of fund raising programs that will work in churches of different sizes and locations. This is your campaign, it is designed and will be a “grass root” or “bubble up” process with no pressure placed on the local church by the annual conference. You will determine your level of involvement.

In the coming months, each church will be receiving information on how they can make a difference in achieving this goal of eradicating malaria in the next five years. You are each asked to prayerfully consider what God is calling *you* to do. I know that if each of us will make that commitment our efforts will be successful beyond belief. I know that we all can do, at least, one thing and that is to pray daily for the children of Africa and all the people of Haiti as well as all persons around the world that suffer from disease and poverty.

Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact either Rev. Judith Reedy, e-mail: judith@fumctc.org or me, Richard Hearne, e-mail: rbhearne@sbcglobal.net.

Bishop Issues Haiti Response challenge

...a message from Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe

As the news reports continue to come from Haiti, it is hard to grasp the magnitude of the destruction following the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated the capital, Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas. The images of death and destruction are overwhelming, but, even as we join in mourning these unimaginable losses, we must be resolute in our response of help in any and all ways it can be provided.

As the opportunity opens up for hands-on mission, we will be there. Our members are busy creating health kits and other badly needed supplies to be distributed through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

The greatest need now is for money to provide medicine and supplies for early responders and to begin to lay the groundwork to help rebuild and restore what has been lost. I issued a Bishop’s Appeal for our North Texas United Methodist congregations to take a special collection for ***Haiti UMCOR Emergency Response*** on Sunday, Jan. 17 or 24, and we will continue to accept contributions for the foreseeable future.

As a reminder, we suggest that churches take up the collection and route it through the conference, making checks out to the North Texas Conference, with “***NTC Fund 277 Haiti***” on the Memo Line and sending it to NTC Treasurer, P.O. Box 866128, Plano, TX 75086.

Windows

January - February 2010

Windows of Opportunity announce North Texas Conference-related leadership events designed to equip church leaders to share in God's continuing process of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Perkins Theological School for the Laity
March 4-6

Sustenance for the Mind and Soul

Panel Discussion on William Young's best selling novel, *"The Shack"*

Panelists - Paula Dobbs-Wiggins, Frederick W. Schmidt and Charles M. Wood

For more information, call 214-768-2251 • smu.edu/perkins/publicprograms

Conference Resource Center

Deeper Connections Series:

"The Last Days of Jesus"

To borrow this resource, please visit
ntcumc.org/resourcecenter

Zan W. Holmes, Jr. African Heritage Lecture Series

The Struggle Continues

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas

Associate Professor of Ethics and Society, Vanderbilt University

February 1 - 3 • 7:00 pm

St. Luke "Community" UMC, Dallas

The 5 day Academy for...

Spiritual Formation

"Markings"

March 7-12, 2010

The Prothro Center at Lake Texoma

For more information, please call Rev. Woodrow Weilage

pastor.woody@verizon.net • 972-492-9393

"Celebrating the Fruits of Non-Violent Struggle"

50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Movement

Jan. 31 • 8 am and 11 am

Feb. 1 • 5:30 pm and 9 pm

...featuring Rev.

James M. Lawson

St. Luke "Community" UMC, Dallas

'Theology, The Basics'

March 5 • 5:30 to 9:00 pm

March 6 • 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Facilitator - Rev. Fred Durham

Wesley UMC, Wichita Falls

\$35 registration fee • Form online www.nctumc.org

John Barham • 972-564-2157

jbconsults@suddenlink.net

Disability Ministry Symposium

Saturday,

April 24

9:00 am to 2:30 pm

Custer Road UMC,
Plano



Doctor of Ministry Program

Free Information Session

Prothro Hall at SMU, Dallas

Feb. 23 • 9 am to 12 pm

For more information or to register, please contact:
advanceministry@smu.edu • 214-768-2124



LIFE STAGE MINISTRIES

North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church

Join the Life Stage Ministries Mailing List

Call Rev. Andy Stoker 972-526-5000 • stoker@ntcumc.org

Register online - www.ntcumc.org

Life Stage Ministries

For information on informal gatherings and sharing of ideas, information and resources, please contact: Rev. Marji Bishir, bishir@ntcumc.org; Rev. Liz Moen, moen@ntcumc.org; Rev. Andy Stoker, stoker@ntcumc.org; or Sally Vonner, vonner@ntcumc.org, at 972-526-5000 or 800-969-8201.