

:// April 25, 2010



: / YOUTH . CONNECTING _ FAITH / AND . LIFE

_ VOLUME 16 SPECIAL EDITION

:// Imagine No Malaria

Imagine no malaria? That's not hard for those of us who live in the United States because the disease was eliminated in the 1950's. The possibility of becoming infected with malaria is minimal. Unfortunately, this is not the case for people who live in other areas of our world, particularly nations in sub-Saharan Africa. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports staggering statistics about those who suffer and die from this disease. (See the "Top Ten Facts About Malaria" on Youth Page 6.) The most heartbreaking of these statistics involve children. Every thirty seconds a child in Africa dies from malaria.

On April 24 and 25 congregations from throughout the United Methodist connection will participate in an event called Change the World, a concept that originated with Rev. Mike Slaughter, lead pastor at Ginghamburg United Methodist

Church in Tipp City, Ohio, and author of *Change the World*. Slaughter challenges congregations to take the church into the world instead of coaxing the world into the church. Inspired by his concept, the Rethink Church campaign, in partnership with The United Methodist Publishing House, created the Change the World event. This weekend will bring together United Methodists in the fight against malaria.

Malaria is a disease caused by parasites that are transmitted from one human to another by infected mosquitoes (or by blood transfusion). A mother also can transmit the parasites to her unborn baby. When the parasites (sporozoites) enter the body, they migrate to the liver where they mature and release another form (merozoites) that enter the bloodstream and infect red blood cells. These infected red blood cells rupture in forty-eight to seventy-two hours and infect more blood cells. Symptoms of malaria usually begin to show anywhere from ten days to four weeks after infection, and may include chills, fever, sweating, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain, anemia, bloody stools, jaundice, convulsion, and coma. The symptoms can range from very mild to very severe, and left untreated can result in death.

Fortunately malaria is preventable and can be cured if it is promptly and correctly diagnosed and treated. This fact makes the high number of

victims that the disease claims all the more tragic. It also fuels the hopes of those involved in efforts to fight malaria. What better legacy could we offer to those who suffer from this disease than to help create a future in which their children can say, "It's not hard to imagine no malaria; it's been eradicated"?

Sunday April 25 is World Malaria Day, a day instituted by the World Health Assembly in May 2007 to recognize and encourage global efforts to prevent and treat malaria. On World Malaria Day, The United Methodist Church, which has already been fighting malaria through its ties to the Nothing But Nets organization (which provides bed nets to protect people from infected mosquitoes), will increase its efforts by launching the Imagine No Malaria campaign to eradicate deaths caused by malaria. Even the names of the campaigns and events that have come together around World Malaria Day pose challenges for all United Methodist Christians: We must Rethink Church; we must Imagine No Malaria; and we must Change the World. If we respond to these challenges, we will be responding to Jesus' commands to heal the sick and love our neighbor. We also will be showing the world what is possible through Christ.

In this issue of LINC, we teach youth about malaria and what they can do to stop it. In Program A, "Nothing But Nets," we encourage youth to love their neighbors by working to eradicate malaria. In Program B, "Change the World," we ask the question: How does serving others enrich your relationship with God?



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Purpose: To encourage youth to love their neighbors by working to eradicate malaria.

Program B_Coffee Talk: Change the World

Question of the Day: How does serving others enrich your relationship with God?

Devotion: // GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU

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A Handful of Meal and a Little Oil

1 Kings 17:8-24

She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days.

—1 Kings 17:15

Commentary: First Kings 17 tells the story of Elijah and a desperately poor widow. When Elijah asks her for a drink of water and something to eat, she tells him that she has only a handful of meal and a little oil to make the last bread for her and her son to eat. She expects that, after running out of food, she and her son will die.

Nonetheless, this poor widow does what Elijah asks her to do. Much to her surprise (and delight), through this little bit of meal and oil, God provides enough bread to sustain her, her son, and Elijah through the drought.

Tragically, the woman's son later becomes ill and dies. In her grief, the widow cries out against Elijah and his God. Elijah, in turn, cries out to God. God listens and restores the son's life. We may not feel as though we have much to offer—especially in the face of poverty, disease, and death—but God can use whatever we have, no matter how small it seems.

Questions to talk about:

- ➡ When has a small amount of something (whether money or food or another item) been more than enough for you?
- ➡ The desperately poor widow offered what little she had to

Elijah and discovered that it was more than enough to sustain him and her household. What does this action say to you about what we might offer to help in the campaign against malaria?

- ➡ What does the story say to you about honest prayer? What does it say about God's power to give life when all seems hopeless?

With a Little Help From Friends

Mark 2:1-12

Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.

—Mark 2:3

Commentary: In **Mark 2:1-12**, Jesus heals a man who is paralyzed. This, in itself, is remarkable. Perhaps equally remarkable is the role that the paralyzed man's friends played in bringing the man before Jesus. The foursome had faith that Jesus could heal their friend, but they couldn't carry their friend through the dense crowd. Still, the paralytic's faithful companions did not give up. Instead of going through the crowd, they took their friend up to the roof, then lowered him to Jesus. Jesus was so impressed by the faith and persistence of the four friends that he offered the paralyzed man grace and forgiveness and healed the man of his condition.

Questions to talk about:

- ➡ When have your friends gone to great lengths to help you? What was that experience like?
- ➡ What can we learn from the paralyzed man's four friends that we can apply to the fight against malaria?

You Are the Body of Christ
1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

—1 Corinthians 12:27

Commentary: In one of his letters to the church at Corinth, Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians that everyone has something to offer and that the church functions best by honoring the diverse gifts of its members. He uses the image of the body and its parts to make this point vividly clear.

All members of the church are important to the functioning of the entire body, no matter how minor their role or how small their gifts may seem to us. God uses who we are for the good of all. From eyes to ears to hands, the body functions best when all its parts are in good working order. Paul says that when one member suffers, we all suffer (see verse 26). When humans anywhere in our world suffer, whether we know them or not, we all suffer. And when healing happens, we all are healed.

Questions to talk about:

- ➡ Imagine yourself as an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, or another body part. Which part best describes your gifts and how you can use them to serve God and others? Why?
- ➡ What does this Scripture say to you about our unity with people who are suffering from (or are at risk of being infected with) malaria?
- ➡ How are we healed when someone in another part of the world is healed?

The purpose of LINC is to help youth develop Christian identity and live the Christian faith in their contemporary culture.

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PROGRAM A: JUICED UP! NOTHING BUT NETS

Purpose: To encourage youth to love their neighbors by working to eradicate malaria.

Getting Ready: You will need Bibles, copies of the Youth Pages, copies of Bible Talk, drawing paper, markers, scissors, tape, a large sheet of paper, and a markerboard.

Optional: A multimedia computer with Internet access

Bugs, Bugs, Bugs! (10 minutes)

Ahead of time, draw a large fly-swatter shape on a large sheet of paper. Before the youth arrive, place the large fly-swatter poster on a wall or table top for all to see. Set out paper, markers, scissors, and tape.

As the youth arrive, ask them to imagine the bug they most want to swat and why they want to swat it. Is the bug ugly? Is it scary? Is it annoying? Does it sting? Does it make disgusting noises? Tell them to draw this bug on a sheet of paper. Allow about five minutes for youth to work. As they finish, tell the youth to cut out their bugs and tape them to the fly-swatter poster. Give youth who wish a chance to explain why they would like to swat the bugs they drew.

Say: "We have all sorts of reasons to dislike different bugs. But most of the world's people have a specific reason for disliking mosquitoes: In many parts of the world, mosquitoes transmit a deadly disease known as malaria.

Top Ten Facts About Malaria (10 minutes)

Gather the youth in a circle. Hand out copies of Youth Page 6 and ask them to read aloud the "Top Ten Facts About Malaria." Go around the circle and allow each person to read one of the facts. When the group has read all ten facts, ask:

- ➡ Which fact stood out the most for you?
- ➡ Which facts surprised you?
- ➡ What feelings or thoughts do you have after hearing these facts about malaria?

Use the information on Page 1 to provide additional information about malaria: its cause, its symptoms, and its consequences. Emphasize the seriousness of the disease and the fact that it is preventable and treatable. Remind youth that in some parts of the world, including the United States, malaria was eliminated as a high-risk disease in the 1950's. People do not have to suffer. We can make a difference.

God "Acts" Through People (15 minutes)

Divide the youth into three teams and assign each team one of the following Scriptures.

- **1 Kings 17:8-24**
- **Mark 2:1-12**
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

Instruct each team to read its assigned Scripture. Hand out copies of Page 2 (Bible Talk) and encourage the teams to read the appropriate commentary. Give the teams a few minutes to read, then challenge them to create skits based on their assigned Scriptures. The skits could be a straightforward retelling of the Scriptures or it could put the Scriptures in current-day settings.

After each group performs its skit, ask:

- ➡ What does this skit (and the Scripture on which it is based) say about how God works through people?
- ➡ What lessons does this skit (and the Scripture on which it is based) teach us that we can use in the fight against malaria?

Young People Make a Difference (15 minutes)

Hand out copies of Youth Page 5, then read aloud **1 Timothy 4:12** and the comment about this Scripture printed on Youth Page 5 (under

"Young People Make a Difference"). Ask a volunteer to read aloud the story of Charles Ssali. Then ask:

- ➡ What did this young person do to help eradicate malaria?
- ➡ Who is helping this young person?
- ➡ How have their efforts made a difference?

Now ask a volunteer to read aloud the story of Elizabeth Clymer. Again, ask the three questions above. Repeat the process for the story of Catherine Commale.

After reading and discussing all three stories, invite the youth to brainstorm ideas of ways that your group (either your Sunday school class or your congregation's youth ministry) could help in the fight against malaria. Ideas might include working with existing ministries in your church or denomination; raising money or raising awareness; or ideas might be completely original. As a group decide on one or two ideas. Talk about the next steps for follow-through and identify persons with whom you will need to work. Allow the youth to take the lead, but be available for guidance, support, and supervision.

Optional: Watch and discuss the video "This Is What We Do" featuring Elizabeth Clymer and her SWAT program against malaria (see <http://ow.ly/1gdpt>).

"Give, and It Will Be Given to You" (5 minutes)

Close using the devotion on Page 4, "Give, and It Will Be Given to You."

Optional: A Mosquito Net Sleepout

Instructions for a mosquito net sleepout are available at [Imagine No Malaria \(http://ow.ly/1gdap\)](http://ow.ly/1gdap). Use or adapt these instructions to hold a fundraiser that features spending the night under bed nets that keep out malaria-infected mosquitoes.

//PROGRAM B: COFFEE TALK! IMAGINE NO MALARIA

Question of the Day: How does serving others enrich your relationship with God?

Cultural Connection: The Program Imagine No Malaria

Topic: Eradicating Malaria

Use the information on Page 1 to relate the cultural connection to the topic of loving our neighbors by working to eradicate malaria and to introduce the individual talk topics you choose.

Questions to Get You Started:

- ➔ What do you know about malaria?

Hand out copies of Youth Page 6 and invite the youth to read the "Top Ten Facts About Malaria."

- ➔ Which fact stood out the most to you?
- ➔ Which facts surprised you?
- ➔ What feelings or thoughts do you have after learning these facts about malaria?
- ➔ Why is fighting malaria something that we should do as Christians? (Emphasize Jesus' teachings to love our neighbor and heal the sick.)

For each Talk Topic, ask:

- ➔ How do the "Read More" Scriptures add to this discussion?

Talk Topic #1: Give What You Have

KEY POINT: The Bible tells us that God is always able to use what we have—even when it seems as though we have little to offer—to do God's work. God does not ask us to give what we do not have, but rather what we do have.

Ask:

- ➔ What do you have that you can offer to God and in service to others? (Challenge the youth to think beyond money and material things and to consider their time,

their talents, and the opportunities available to them.)

- ➔ How might God make use of these offerings?
- ➔ For what reasons might you be reluctant to let go of your money or possessions or hesitant to use your talents in service of God and others?
- ➔ Read **Luke 21:1-4**. What does this Scripture say about how we use the gifts that God has given us?

Read More: 1 Kings 17:8-24; Mark 6:30-34; Luke 21:1-4.

Talk Topic #2: With a Little Help From Friends

KEY POINT: God created us to live in relationship with one another. Whether they are friends, acquaintances, or strangers, other people are key to our health and wholeness.

Ask:

- ➔ When have your friends come through and helped you in a time of need?
- ➔ When has a stranger (or even an enemy) reached out to you and helped you? Did this person become a friend?
- ➔ How have you used your gifts to help your friends?
- ➔ How have you used your gifts to reach out to people you did not know? Would you now consider these persons to be friends?

Read More: Exodus 17:8-13; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 10:25-37.

Using This Program

- Use Coffee Talk as a discussion starter. Focus the lesson on one section or hit several issues, depending on the interests of your group.
- Challenge students to an in-depth Bible study on one section, using the Scripture verses listed under "Read More."
- Make photocopies of Bible Talk on page 2 and use the commentary and discussion questions for a theological complement to your Coffee Talk discussion.
- Begin or end the session with the Devotion.
- Ask students to think about the Question of the Day and cut out In the Bible (both on page 6) for reflection and independent Bible study during the coming week.
- These topics and questions may be somewhat controversial. Challenge youth to engage in meaningful discussion, realizing that your talk may address sensitive issues. Prayerfully explore these points, asking for pastoral or professional assistance when necessary.

Talk Topic #3: Called and Equipped

KEY POINT: God often calls and equips young people to do the important work of God's kingdom.

Ask:

- ➔ Have you ever sensed that God was calling on you or depending on you for something? How did you respond?
- ➔ Read **Jeremiah 1:1-8**? When have you, like Jeremiah, questioned whether you were old enough to serve God in a meaningful way?
- ➔ How can young people help in the fight against malaria?

Read More: Jeremiah 1:1-8; Luke 1:26-38; 1 Timothy 4:12.

//Devotion: "Give, and It Will Be Given to You"

(5 minutes)

Getting Ready: You will need Bibles and pens or pencils.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 6:38**. Then ask: "What does this Scripture say about giving? What does it promise?" Invite the youth to spend some time in silence reflecting on times when they have experienced joy or reward from giving. After a few minutes, ask volunteers to talk about what they gave, their reason for giving, and what they received in return. Then ask youth to write in the space provided on Youth Page 5 a short prayer of gratitude for all the times they have experienced the joy of giving. If any youth would like to read aloud their prayers, allow them to do so. Then close with the following prayer: "God, we give you thanks for what we have learned about malaria. Guide us as we seek ways to respond. We thank you that we have the power to make a difference. In the love of Christ, we pray, Amen."



YOUTH LINC

:// YOUTH.CONNECTING_FAITH/AND.LIFE

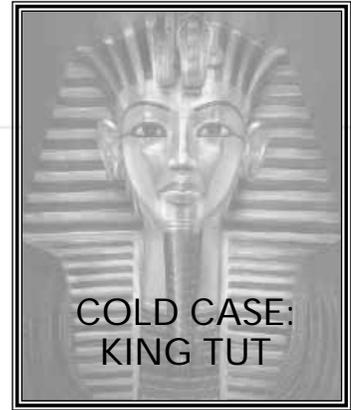
YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As 1 Timothy 4:12 reminds us, “Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example.” In the fight against malaria, three young people demonstrate their willingness to make a difference. We can all learn from their commitment and their hope.

1. Twelve-year-old Charles Ssali, a soccer player and a malaria survivor from Uganda, visited New York City in November, 2009, as an ambassador for United Against Malaria, an initiative to provide universal access to mosquito nets and malaria medicine in Africa by the end of 2010. The initiative will promote awareness of the campaign at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Ssali, who is the leading under-12 goal scorer in Uganda says: “I love soccer and I hate malaria ... I live in Uganda where I love to play soccer with my friends, but, sometimes they're too sick to play. I hope my global journey will help soccer fans all over the world understand this disease that affects my hometown and many others in Africa.”

2. “This Is What We Do” is the title of a video on the Imagine No Malaria website, and it expresses the belief that teenager Elizabeth Clymer has about her United Methodist church and its efforts to fight malaria. Elizabeth envisioned a “swat team” that uses fly swatters to encourage donations from the members of Messiah United Methodist Church in Virginia. Elizabeth’s efforts have raised \$15,000 so far.

3. Catherine Commale is an elementary school student and a member of Hopewell United Methodist Church in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. With the help of her family, her church, and her community, she has raised \$120,000 for the Nothing But Nets campaign (see Youth Page 6).



The report in *The New York Times* sounds like an episode of *Cold Case*, but this one is thousands of years old. It involves a celebrity for most of us—the boy-pharaoh of Egypt, King Tutankhamen in the fourteenth century B.C.. Even though some scientists speculated that foul play was involved in his death, DNA evidence shows that he was not immune from the parasites carried by the anopheles mosquito that infested the Nile valley. Scientists have recently determined that malaria was probably a primary agent in his death at age nineteen. King Tut was frail and lame, and a severe bout of malaria, combined with a degenerative bone disorder, most likely caused his death.

“GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU”

Dear God . . .

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:// TOP TEN LIST

TOP TEN FACTS ABOUT MALARIA

10. Malaria was considered to be eradicated in the US in the 1950's.
9. About 1500 cases of malaria are reported each year in the US.
8. 3.3 billion people, (half the world's population) live in areas that are high-risk for contracting malaria.
7. Each year about 350-500 million people are infected with malaria.
6. Malaria is the fifth leading cause of death after respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, diarrheal diseases, and tuberculosis.
5. In Africa, death from malaria is second only to death from HIV/AIDS.
4. Each year over a million people die from malaria.
3. 90 percent of malaria deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Most of these deaths are children under five years of age.
1. Every thirty seconds a child in Africa dies from malaria.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are the Top Ten ways you can join in the fight against malaria?

Please e-mail your response to us at pshepherd@umpublishing.org or snail mail us at:

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For LINC-related updates and weekly lectionary tie-ins, join our Facebook group or follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/linc_ay).

NOTHING BUT NETS

The Nothing But Nets website reports that nets save lives. If you eliminate mosquito bites, you eliminate malaria. A meager ten dollars provides an insecticide-treated net that saves lives by preventing mosquito bites. It covers the cost of purchasing the bed net, distributing it, and educating communities on its use. Mosquitoes carrying malaria bite most between 10 P.M. and 4 A.M. The bed nets create a protective barrier. The nets last about four years and those treated with insecticide reduce the number of mosquitoes that enter the house. The nets have been approved by the World Health Organization for safety and effectiveness. The insecticide has a very low level of toxicity for humans but is very toxic for the mosquitos. The United Methodist Church is a strong partner in the Nothing But Nets campaign. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries has an advance dedicated to this initiative: Advance #982015.

:// INHERIT THE MIRTH



:// IN THE BIBLE

- MONDAY:** Read Luke 10:25-28. The Great Commandment reminds us that love of God and love of neighbor go together.
- TUESDAY:** Read Matthew 10:1, 7-8. Jesus sends his disciples, including us today, into a ministry of healing and hope.
- WEDNESDAY:** Read Matthew 25:34-40. Remember that, when we reach out to persons who are sick, we reach out to Jesus.
- THURSDAY:** Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11. When have you been "hard-hearted" or "tight-fisted" toward a neighbor in need?
- FRIDAY:** Read Matthew 7:12. Love involves treating people the way you would like to be treated.
- SATURDAY:** Read Psalm 121:1-8. When we are faced with a devastating disease like malaria, we must remember that our help comes from God.

✂ Cut out and tuck in your Bible for your personal reflection and study this week.