



Message from Pastor Tim

August 2011: Be Made Well, and Live

"Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.'" Mark 5:22-23

We don't know a lot about Jairus. We know that he lives near the Sea of Galilee, and he is a leader in the synagogue. We don't know much else, his age, his wife, if he has other children—we only know that he has a daughter who is very ill, even to the point of death.

Now imagine for a moment thousands of parents like Jairus. They are a reality. They live in Africa, where malaria still infects and kills. Parents who watch their children lie in bed—often a mat on a floor—as they shiver from fever, vomit and ache from muscle spasms. Almost 3,000 children die every day from malaria. Every day. That is one child every 45 seconds. Everyone is at risk of being exposed to malaria, but pregnant women and children under 5 are most at risk.

And the frustrating part is that all of this begins with a simple mosquito bite.

Let's use Jairus's daughter as an example. A mosquito lands on a young girl's arm. It plunges into her skin and begins feeding off of her blood (any of you who spent any amount of time in the Midwest will recognize this part). The saliva from the mosquito squirts into her arm carrying the malaria parasite into her body. The parasite rides the girl's bloodstream until it ends up in the liver and begins to multiply in her cells. Two weeks later the symptoms begin.

The girl needs medical treatment immediately. If she doesn't receive correct treatment in time she could slip into a coma and suffer brain damage. It's possible that within the first 12 hours of symptoms, she may be dead.

All from a mosquito bite.

The ELCA Malaria campaign seeks to bring hope to the thousands of Jairus's who are watching their children die each and every day in sub-Saharan Africa. The goal is to join with our companion churches in Angola, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe as they work to prevent and treat malaria. These efforts will include emphases on health care, education, advocacy and providing malaria-containment supplies to affected communities.

The ELCA Malaria campaign has set a goal of preventing, treating and containing malaria by the 2015. It is possible. Malaria has been virtually eliminated around most of the world. More than 85% of the world's malaria deaths occur in Africa. If we provide the support and resources this can happen.

All of it starts with a mosquito bite.

For \$10 an insecticide-treated bed net can be purchased that not only stops the mosquito from having contact with humans, but it kills the mosquito when it comes in contact with the net. When that happens it breaks the cycle of transmission and moves us closer to eliminating the disease itself. The problem is that in most of these countries the average family income is something like \$50 a year. A \$10 net is an expensive luxury.

All of it starts with a mosquito bite. \$10 saves a child's life. Simple stuff.

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When our Bishop, Murray Finck, was with us recently he talked about his own experience with malaria. His son works in Uganda doing ministry. Bishop Finck's son contracted malaria, but he was able to obtain prompt medical treatment and returned to his job in three days. The Bishop of our companion synod, the Mekane Jesus Lutheran Church in Ethiopia, had a son that was almost the same age as Bishop Finck's son. The Ethiopian Bishop's son contracted malaria and died. One man's son lives, another man's son is dead.

The Church Council of LCOS has set a goal for our congregation of \$5,000 to raise in August for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. \$5,000 is 500 nets. 500 nets is 500 children that will live. Simple stuff. Watch for more information on the website, in the newsletter and during the worship services in August.

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Jairus is asking us, inviting us to help his daughter. How will we respond?

Pastor Tim