

Lutherans in Medical Missions 2011 Needs and Resources Forum

The Lutheran Malaria Initiative

Friday April 1 and Saturday April 2, 2011

Forum Notes

Friday April 1

Rev. John Nunes, President and CEO, Lutheran World Relief, Speaker

Rev. Nunes started his discussion by identifying diseases that are intensified by poverty – measles, tuberculosis, malaria and others.

He spoke about Dr. Peter Agre who remembered his mother reading Bible stories in Swedish when he was a child. He grew up wanting to be medical missionary but is now the director of the John Hopkins Malaria Research Institute. Dr. Agre visited the LWR office in Baltimore two years ago. He felt that LWR had the “trust quotient” needed for LMI to succeed and reach people on the grass-root level.

LWR believes that life matters and that every person is special. LWR was begun in 1945 when eight Lutheran church bodies in the USA decided, that in spite of theological differences, they could not stand by and watch people suffer through the post-war winter in Germany. They collected goods and sent them to Germany—including quilts for which LWR is well known even today. As Germany improved, LWR provided services in other needy areas of the world. Today the private sector still needs to offer assistance as less than 1% of the US budget goes to international foreign aid.

Many people who live in poverty live in agricultural areas. 80 percent of farmers are female. LWR can invest in communities where work means income and provides opportunities for women to go to school. When asked about malaria, people in endemic areas think it is a “way of life” and unavoidable. LMI will be able to save lives and change a way of living.

In convention, 98% of ELCA voting members selected LMI as a project. 97% of LCMS members voted to support the LMI project at the 2010 National convention in Houston.

International Lutherans

- Every baptized member is a believer/witness to the Gospel
- They believe in ministry to the whole person
- Lutherans have been in spiritual revival since birth
- Lutherans are willing to suffer for their faith

US Lutherans

- The average Lutheran in the US invites someone to church every 30 years
- US Lutherans let social agencies do the work

Rev. Nunes graciously signed copies of the book he authored with his wife, Monique, “Little Things Make Big Differences-A Story about Malaria.” The book was presented as a gift to each Forum participant by LIMM.

Friday Evening Closing Devotions were led by Rev. Keith Kohlmeier, President, LCMS Kansas District.

Saturday April 2

Rev. Keith Kohlmeier led the Bible Study using the readings from the Fourth Sunday in Lent- the story of the healing of the blind man by Jesus.

Rev. John Nunes, President and CEO, Lutheran World Relief

Rev. Nunes asked the group to name emergent realities that lead to a disease like Malaria.

What are the causes of Malaria?

- Poverty – Malaria was in the US but we conquered it because the US is rich
- Lack of Education, Educational deficit – if you have no idea what causes malaria, you do not have the ability to fix it
- Lack of transportation – can’t get to where you need to go for early treatment
- Lack of available access to health care
- Spiritual poverty – they make “sacrifices” to the spirits to cure children
- Water control – mosquitoes breed in the water
- Political Unrest – corruption, lack of care for the people that are hurting the most
- Apathy – HIV is in the US so the US is apathetic to countries that have HIV. Malaria is not here so people may not be as apathetic
- Mosquitoes
- Stigma
- World economy – malaria is not OUR problem
- The mindset that malaria is a way of controlling population allowing “natural” population control
- Fear of follow-up treatment
- “Their” problem
- Inadequate supply of malaria treatment
- Brain Drain
- Choice / we have problems in the US too that need attention

Causes are complex and many. Solutions require networking and the involvement of many partners.

Bill & Melinda Gates are philanthropists who choose to be smart donors. They thoroughly investigate where they will send donations and they chose the United Nation Foundation. They felt that this group would best be able to help end AIDS, TB and Malaria. (The UN Foundation is not the UN.)

The UN Foundation was founded 12 years ago to help meet the UN's goals. Bill Gates would not give money to the UN directly. Ted Turner also gave a large amount of money to the UN Foundation.

The UN Foundation began a process of interviewing organizations who had the capacity to work successfully in the US and Africa. They chose the Lutherans because they are a large group and are strong in their convictions.

LMI initially started with LCMS, LWR & ELCA in partnership. The ELCA decided they did not want to work the UN Foundation and dropped out of the LMI project.

The Global Fund/Geneva monitors LMI funds.

The 2015 date to end malaria will need multiple partners--empowered individuals and groups—to have success in reaching the goal of .the elimination of deaths from Malaria in Africa.

Why work in Africa first? Malaria deaths here are higher than anywhere else in the world.

How is information being disseminated to LCMS congregations?

- Pilot projects
- June and September meetings are planned
- Getting the information out about LMI
- Engagement of Lutherans in a global problem
- Get information out to 3 main groups: major donors, congregations/engaging them (learning about malaria), schools
- Website will be initiated April 15th

How does LWR plan to get information out about LMI?

LWR is getting in front of groups like LIMM. Materials are available to start LMI Committees in congregations & schools. Information will be available on the website- LutheranMalaria.org. LWR hopes that LIMM will advocate for LMI in LCMS congregations.

Dr. Ruth Goehle, Former LCMS Medical Missionary in Nigeria, African Disease Expert

The initial program against malaria was “Roll Back Malaria”

- 1998 - Roll Back Malaria was founded
- 2002 - Global Fund founded, HIV was first to be attacked
- 2005 - PMI is launched, 1.2 billion over 5 years
- 2005 - Gates Foundation pledges \$258.3 million support for research and development
- 2007 - The G8 countries pledge 60 billion for Health System Development

- 2008 - UN Secretary General calls for Universal Health coverage by end of 2010

What are ways to protect people from Malaria?

- ACT – is a good medicine
- A pregnant women needs 2 doses and a net for protection from malaria
- Nets and the insecticide in the nets target the mosquitoes
- Indoor spraying of walls
- Environmental efforts such as draining swamps

The goals to be met by 2015 include

- 85% of people using nets routinely and correct
- 85% with symptoms of malaria are diagnosed and treated
- 100% of pregnant women receive malaria treatment

Jacob Fiene, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, Speaker

Many at the Forum have had malaria or know of someone with malaria. Malaria mostly strikes pregnant women and children under five.

Jacob reminded the group that the lack of education, poverty and unavailable treatment results in the spread of malaria. Malaria can be treated, prevented and can be eliminated.

The LMI is an effort of global proportions to mobilize US Lutherans in the fight against malaria. Joined with other groups, we can help provide protection for millions of people and restore the health of many more.

Where we are today: program activity exists in the following countries:

- Tanzania - LWR & LCMS
- Niger - LWR
- Ethiopia - LWR
- Nigeria - LCMS
- Kenya - LWR & LCMS

LWR has touched the lives of 1.9 million people in Tanzania. Pastors and volunteers are trained to raise awareness regarding malaria and to link congregations to health services available in their areas.

In Nigeria, the LCMS involvement is in the beginning stages and a needs assessment is planned.

What can you do? Talk about Malaria to anyone who wants to listen:

- Difference that one net can make
- The impact of poverty
- Knowledge needed about malaria

- How to be a spokesperson for malaria
- LCMS is looking people with knowledge and experience regarding malaria

LMI Committee, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, Panel with Bobbie Lautenschlager, Moderator

“What did you know about malaria before you were on the LMI Committee?”

- Kent Stephens – knew little about malaria, intrigued to become involved
- Beth Stephens – she thought you had to get a shot
- Brian Amey - knew a missionary that had it
- Amber Fiala – knew that it came from mosquitoes and that she didn’t need to worry about it in the Midwest
- Scott Snow – He knew the people that know lots of information about malaria

“What did you learn through this experience about malaria?”

- We knew much more about it now
- People in these countries need mosquito nets
- Malaria is much more widespread than we thought
- It’s important to help, it’s a way to show God’s love to those that are hurting
- We should care about those in Africa – empathy

“How did you set up a committee?”

- LWR provided information, websites, responded to questions
- Learned through videos
- Had member in the congregation that had contracted malaria and heard their stories

“What about the youth in the congregation?”

- 19 youth got involved in the fundraising
- Children in the school loved the fundraiser and it was very successful
- They could touch a mosquito net
- Monte the Mosquito art work – a great visual for the youth to visualize
- The children begged to bring their chapel money for LMI
- They loved the “Penny Wars” fundraiser
- The older youth group had a weekend where they set up a tent city (they actually slept under nets), hosted a concert by the Tanzanians, and worked with the Tanzanians to serve a traditional meal
- Each youth had a goal to raise \$150--they raised \$5200 or 520 nets

“Who in the congregations can help us raise funds for LMI?”

- Children
- WWII vets that had malaria
- Vietnam vets
- Missionaries

“What will the LMI Committee do now?”

- Holy Cross may be involved with continued support
- Telling others what worked, what changes were made and what they learned.
- Holy Cross has shared information about their LMI Committee to congregations outside of Kansas

To be successful, they had to work hard and make information available. “Being blessed to be a blessing” - LMI is one way to be a blessing to those around the world.

Holy Cross raised \$10000 for LMI. They felt one way they could help was to supply nets to kids and moms in Africa. The committee did a lot of research on whether this was the best way to deal with malaria.

April 25th is National Malaria Day. What can you do in April?

Nothing but Nets was an initiative started by the UN Foundation. Some of the funds will be used to access the nets that are already there and train them how to use them.

Linda Reiser, Board Member, Lutheran World Relief, Speaker

“Look at your hands”!

Linda gave the example of the Panama Canal where 26,000 people worked on it during 1906 and 21,000 people got Malaria.

Tennessee River Valley Authority experienced malaria when building the dam. In 1947, malaria was eliminated from that area when the National Malaria Eradication program was started and the Center for Disease Control was begun. In 1950 there were 2000 cases in the US and in 1951, malaria was eliminated

It is amazing what our hands can do.

Over the years, Linda has met people who have experienced malaria first hand. Joy Mueller – while she was in Africa--witnessed many deaths from malaria. A young lady, Fenda, died in front of Joy. If there was a net or the house had been treated maybe she would not have died. Because we care as a church body, we can help others receive the net she didn't have.

Claude and Rhoda Houge witnessed many children dying. The emphasis was not on prevention but on treating those that already had malaria. Rhoda remembers a little girl, Mercy, who would come to watch her cook. She would not have died if they would have known how to prevent malaria.

Education has to happen; people need to know what causes malaria and how to prevent it with the use of treated bed nets.

After the Earthquake: Community Health Education in Chile – Rita Nickel, RN

Rita worked with Pastor Cristian Lautenberg and his wife and also Valeria/Deaconess, Alicia and Jannet/Midwife. She introduced them to the Community Health Education/Evangelism (CHE) program. Through the CHE program, the church learned that they can spread the gospel to their hurting neighbors.

After the earthquake: World Relief and Human Care Medical Clinics, Haiti – Jacob Fiene

The Emergency Medical Response Team in Jimani after the earthquake .was very intense (two teams kept going day and night). It was bleak at the hospital - 80 patients per nurse. The aftershocks frightened the people greatly.

The teams moved into Haiti and were based at Jacmel & Port-au-Princ. Charter planes brought supplies into Haiti.

After the initial response, they assessed long-term needs and did medical clinic staff training. Jacob showed pictures of the clinics currently created by retrofitting shipping containers. In October, they addressed the Cholera outbreak. LCMS utilized Haitian staff there and LCMS supplied the clinic with drugs to help. Mercy Medical Teams will rotate to these clinics on a regular basis.

Closing Devotions –Rev. Scott Snow, Holy Cross Church

The closing devotion was based on Genesis, Chapter 12, and the Story of Abram. We should be ready to leave things, people and family. God promised to bless Abram.

“I will bless you so that you will be a blessing. What are your hands so tightly grasped around, maybe personal maybe professional? What is God asking you to let go of?”

The monkey and the gourd story--if the monkey would let go of the food inside of the gourd, he could get free but he wants the food and is captured. When we grasp things so intensely, those things have grasped us. We are blessed to be a blessing. We are blessed with the forgiveness of sins.