

Introduction of the ELCA Malaria Campaign

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Malaria kills. In 2008 there were 247 million cases of malaria resulting in almost 1 million deaths, mostly children. Let me restate these statistics; every 45 seconds a child dies of Malaria. But if that were not heartbreaking enough, the real tragedy is that Malaria is entirely preventable. People get malaria by being bitten by infected mosquitoes. Living in Iowa each of you is already an expert on mosquitoes so you already know that it is mostly in the evenings and at night that the mosquitoes bite. What do we do in Iowa? We go indoors where we have screens on our windows or in our screened in porches. The families in Africa do not have the kinds of housing where screens make sense so a much easier solution is to put nets over the beds so the children and their parents do not get bitten and do not get the disease. Yes, it is really that simple. But when that is combined with some insecticide, education, medication and water treatment where the mosquitoes breed, we can make an impact.

Even when malaria is not prevented it is still readily treatable. The right medication given at the right time will save the lives of parents and children.

We are the church. We already have the infrastructure to distribute nets. We already have congregations in place, mission staff ready to serve; we have the trust of the people. If we act, and act out of love with generosity, we could see the end of Malaria in our lifetime. If we work with other denominations, governments, NGOs we can see the end of Malaria in the next few years.

Many of the people in this room are parents, or siblings. You already know that it is not right, that parents should have to bury their children; or children bury their siblings. But it is an absolute tragedy when parents have hold their own children in their arms and watch them children die of a disease for the lack of a \$10.00 net. As a people saved by grace sent to serve we can do better than that.

So it is with great joy that I am announcing to you that the ELCA has launched the Malaria Campaign. This is just the beginning of our effort and it is only a few eager synods that are beginning now. We are one of those synods eager to save the lives of children. Already several congregations have sold net corsages to raise money for the campaign. In last night's newspaper Pr. McCluskey is quoted in telling the students on confirmation Sunday about the importance the Malaria Campaign. Bethlehem in Cedar Falls has already committed to raising \$10.00 per baptized member. You just saw St. Paul Lutheran Church in Postville give \$1,000.00. Already several of our rostered leaders have already risen to the Bishop's call and pledged their own personal financial commitment to this effort.

Later in this Assembly there will be a resolution presented to you from the Global Mission Workgroup that calls for a synod wide commitment to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. I tell you this now, even though it is before the debate, because in the event

that or a similar resolution is passed volunteers will immediately come around with envelopes and pledge cards so that you can have the opportunity to make a gift or a pledge which will be credited to your congregation. Because you may wish to pray about an amount to give, or because you may want to confer with your spouse before making a substantial commitment, or just so you remember to bring you check book I bring you this announcement this morning.

We truly have within our grasp, with the resources and the influence of the people in this room the opportunity to save the lives of tens of thousands of the children of God.

If the resolution passes, please be prepared to contribute.

It is God's work and our hands.

Pr. Mark Anderson, Assistant to the Bishop