

Faith and Facts: Global Health

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- **Genesis 1:31** – God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- **Luke 10:25-35** – Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

- **John 10:10** – I [Jesus] came that you might have life and have it abundantly.
- **3 John 1:2** – Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

- The UMC defines health as:
 - A dynamic state of well-being of the individual and society.
 - Holistic wellness, which is physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social.
 - Being in harmony with each other, with the natural environment, and with God.
- Global health is one of four focus areas of ministry for The United Methodist Church as determined by the 2008 General Conference. The General Agencies, Connectional Table and Council of Bishops are all focusing on implementing this focus area of ministry.
- From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2008
 - Paragraph 162 V: all citizens have a right to healthcare and that it is the government’s responsibility to provide it.
 - Paragraph 162 L: the church supports abstinence from alcohol and drugs and supports the rehabilitation and appropriate mental illness treatment.
 - Paragraph 162 M: the church supports abstaining from tobacco and the restriction of smoking in public areas and workplaces.
 - Paragraph 162 N: the church acknowledges that mental and physical health has been enhanced due to medical science; however, experiments should only be done when full, rational, and uncoerced consent is obtained.
- The United Methodist Church in its Social Principles regards healthcare as a basic human right, as well as a responsibility both public and private. As the position of the Church elaborates: "We encourage individuals to pursue a healthy lifestyle and ... also recognize the role of governments in ensuring the each individual has access to those elements necessary to good health." (Social Principles, ¶162T) The United Methodist

Church's General Conference has also passed a number of health-related resolutions elaborating on the importance of health care for all, and some of the significant issues that keep us from realizing this principle. Healthcare in the United States is beset by three central interlocking problems - cost, access, and quality. Because of deficiencies in the current system, Americans as a whole receive poorer health care than other industrial countries that spend only half as much. The most visible problem is the 46 million Americans who have no health insurance. Each year in May we support Cover the Uninsured Week, which calls attention to this problem.

Resources Available at new.gbgm-umc.org/work/health

- Congregational Health Ministries
 - Parish Nurse/Faith Community Nurse: professionally trained health care providers who use their background to serve the needs of the church community by combining the therapeutic qualities of church, community, and faith in God to strengthen the healing task. They may:
 - Visit church members at home or in the hospital; Provide counseling on health-related issues; Make referrals to community resources; Provide nursing services and health screenings; Teach classes on maintaining good health; Develop support groups; Train and coordinate volunteers
 - Health Advocate: A trained volunteer who serves as an advisor on health education and promotion for individuals and groups.
 - Lay Advocate – may provide screenings, health education – referrals to resources and organize support groups.
 - Stephen Ministers – trained through the Stephen Series courses that equip them to respond to people who are in a crisis, need additional support, or those experiencing particular stresses such as sickness, family crisis, unemployment, financial concerns, loneliness, and aging.
 - BeFriender Ministry – a means by which congregations empower and equip volunteer lay people to meet the growing need for pastoral care.
 - Participatory Health Group – a group that analyzes its problems and develops its own solutions.
- Deaf Ministries
 - United Methodist Congress of the Deaf: advocates for accessibility which includes all persons who live with various degrees and dimensions of hearing challenges. Supports ministries that empower those individuals with hearing impairments to contribute their talents, gifts, and personhood in Christian community within the church and communities beyond the church.
 - United Methodist Committee on Ministries with Deaf, Late-Deafened, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind People: aims to breakdown the sound barrier in congregations so that the Gospel can be inclusive for all persons by using the most effective mode of communications, whether it be sign language by pastors, sign language and/or oral interpreting, and/or assistive technologies.
- Disability Concerns
 - DISC (Disability Concerns): is a resource for persons with disabilities, their families, friends, caretakers, congregations, and clergy. Materials are available on developmental disabilities, mental illness, appropriate language, social and environmental accessibility and resources on disability for individuals and faith communities.
 - Disability Task Force: to identify, develop and communicate about programs and resources for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities within the faith community of each Annual Conference
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco
 - Special Program on Substance Abuse & Related Violence (SPSARV): develops leadership providing ministries of prevention, treatment and advocacy as they respond to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug issues. It provides training and networking opportunities, technical assistance, funding, and serves as an advocate for public policy that protects and restores.

- United Methodist Women push for Tobacco-Free Kids: help children and youth in their communities say no to cigarettes and tobacco products on Kick Butts Day.
- Health Supplies
 - Birthing Kit: provide the basic, sanitary items to aid in safe and healthy deliveries, reducing the risk of Tetanus infections.
 - Health Kits: provide basic necessities to people who have been forced to leave their homes because of human conflict or natural disaster.
 - Healthy Homes, Healthy Families Kits: infection control and basic care kit. It contains essential supplies needed to care for an ailing loved one and prevent the spread of infection.
 - Medicine Boxes: contains 18 essential drugs and medical supplies. The box contents are sufficient to provide a community of about 1,000 people with basic medicines and supplies for 3 months.
- HIV/AIDS: programs of awareness, care, and support.
 - Children Orphaned Because of AIDS
 - AIDS Orphan Trust – supports community efforts to care for orphans by assisting them with their daily needs, school fees, and moral and spiritual support.
 - AIDS Awareness and Children Impacted by HIV/AIDS in Africa – supports HIV/AIDS educational programs to promote prevention, community care programs for orphaned children, health coordinator training, and literature distribution.
 - The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund: a fund that represents the commitment of every United Methodist to put a stop to HIV/AIDS in our world.
- Hospital Revitalization Program: assists Methodist churches in Africa and Asia to assess health-care needs and improve standards of care
- Malaria
 - Nothing But Nets Campaign: provides mosquito nets and training on how to use them. Cost per net is \$10.
 - Make Malaria History Campaign: provides communities with comprehensive plans to combat malaria that are tailored to their specific needs. Includes community training to prevent sickness, free medications and consultations and providing nets to pregnant women and families with young children.
 - World Malaria Day: April 25th. A day to remember the 1 million people that die each year from this preventable disease.
- Preventing Abuse, Creating Safety
 - Do No Harm 2011: is a sexual ethics summit addressing the prevention of and response to abuse, misconduct, and harassment of a sexual nature, particularly by persons in ministerial roles (lay and clergy) within the UMC.
 - Safe Sanctuaries: is about being prepared and thinking ahead, not about limiting ministry. It provides a way to do ministry safely with children and youth for the adults who work with them.
 - Child Protection and Community Assistance: strives to conduct all its ministries, in ways that seek to ensure the safety, well-being, and spiritual health of children, youth, and adults.
- Tuberculosis: awareness and prevention
- Obstetric fistula: awareness and prevention
- Bird Flu: provides awareness and information on how congregations can be prepared.

Additional United Methodist Resources:

- Global Health Initiative at www.umc.org
- Global Health Initiative on Facebook www.facebook.com/globalhealthinitiative
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) at new.gbqm-umc.org/umcor