

Abundant
Health

OUR PROMISE TO CHILDREN

Media Kit



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Media Contacts:

Mary Andreolli of Global Ministries: 919-356-4488 (cell) - MAndreolli@umcmmission.org

Dan Curran for Global Ministries: 770-658-9586 (cell) - DanCurran@CurranPR.com

United Methodist General Conference Affirms Next Global Health Initiative:

Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children

1 Million Children to be Reached with Lifesaving Interventions by 2020

**10,000 UMC Churches in the United States Invited to
Bring Effort to Their Local Communities**

May 18, 2016, PORTLAND, Ore. — Seeking to build on the success of its global health initiative that significantly reduced the number of childhood deaths caused by malaria, The United Methodist Church this week affirmed its commitment to positively impact the lives of children everywhere through the next phase of its global health work. Coordinated by the denomination's General Board of Global Ministries, "Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children" aims to reach 1 million children with lifesaving interventions by 2020.

Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children will be The United Methodist Church's primary global health initiative for the next four years. It will focus on four core areas impacting the health of children throughout the world. The initiative aims to ensure safe births, address nutritional challenges and promote breastfeeding, advance prevention and treatment of childhood diseases, and promote children's health and wholeness.

According to Global Ministries leaders, the motivation to launch the initiative emerged in part from an extensive survey of people in 59 countries. Survey results showed that the top global health challenges are maternal and child health, water and sanitation, hunger and nutrition, and access to health care. The survey also indicated the top U.S. health challenges are mental health, non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, and aging and the elderly.

"As United Methodists, we find care and concern for children rooted in our social principles, where we talk about putting children and their families first," said Thomas Kemper, general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. "This year's conference affirmed that children have the right to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being, as do adults, and these rights are theirs regardless of the actions or inactions of their parents or guardians."

"Our goal for Abundant Health is to promote the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health of children worldwide," Kemper continued. "The initiative's name is derived from the Gospel of John 10:10: 'I came that they may have life, and have it

abundantly.' We are committed to living into our promise to children by imagining abundant health for every child in every place."

"When The United Methodist Church began its work on malaria eight years ago, no one imagined the impact the Imagine No Malaria campaign would have," stated Kemper.

Through Imagine No Malaria, to date:

- 2.3 million mosquito nets were distributed, protecting 4.6 million people
- 300 clinics were improved, equipped and provided with malaria preventing commodities
- 13 health boards were trained to serve the people in 16 countries: Angola, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- 5.6 million lives were impacted

"We've imagined no malaria; now let us imagine abundant health!" Kemper added.

Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children will be led by Olusimbo Ige, MD, MS, MPH, executive director of the organization's Global Health program, and her team. As a Nigerian, Dr. Ige has witnessed firsthand how limited or nonexistent access to medical services can impact a child.

"Abundant Health is a way for us to combine the work we have done overseas, taking care of people who are facing chronic needs, and bring it back to the United States," said Ige. "We are thinking about people in our own communities who lack the healthy qualities of life they need to sustain themselves."

"Globally, we will address malaria, diarrhea, birth complications, and respiratory infections in developing countries where resources are scarce," said Ige. "But even here, in the United States, there is work we can do as a church to respond to health challenges."

"A lack of abundant health is not only when you are sick, it can also mean that your potential for good health is not fully realized," Ige stated. "We want to connect with every child in every place, and we are calling on every church and every individual to join us in this effort."

The Abundant Health program seeks to engage at least 10,000 churches in the United States to develop support systems for treatment, education, and prevention in their surrounding communities. Global Ministries will encourage churches to engage their neighboring communities by promoting physical activities, encouraging healthy diet and nutrition, providing education for tobacco- and drug-free living, and promoting mental health education.

"There are many simple things a church can do to make a difference," stated Ige. "At their potluck dinners, churches can provide more fruits and vegetables. They can also provide opportunities for children to exercise or a space in the basement for a gym. And, churches can host summer food camps or invite someone to come in and talk about substance abuse."

“We want everyone to join in this effort and see what United Methodists are doing to affect their communities for good,” Ige stated.

Global Ministries leaders are available for interviews about Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children upon request.

Donations to support the program are being accepted at https://secure3.convio.net/gbgm/site/SPageNavigator/gbgm_donate.html?type=1001&project=3021770.

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About the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church

The General Board of Global Ministries is the worldwide mission agency of The United Methodist Church. Founded in New York City in 1819, Global Ministries today supports 340 missionaries in 60 countries, including the United States. It has personnel, projects and partners in a total of 136 countries. Learn more about Global Ministries by visiting www.umcmmission.org or follow www.facebook.com/GlobalMinistries and www.Twitter.com/UMCmission.

Abundant Health

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FACT SHEET

Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children

Through the Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children initiative, Global Ministries and its partners will work to reach one million children with lifesaving interventions by 2020, through the following:

Ensure Safe Births

Many health facilities in underserved areas lack key infrastructure and equipment for childbirth. The United Methodist Church will provide assistance in places that lack the necessary resources to ensure safe conditions during childbirth.

(Data source: [The Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030](#))

Advancing Nutritional Challenges and Promoting Breastfeeding

Of all preventive interventions, optimal breastfeeding of infants under two years of age has the greatest potential impact on child survival, potentially preventing more than 800,000 deaths (13 percent of all deaths) in children under the age of five in the developing world. The United Methodist Church commits to promoting breastfeeding for infant nutrition and to responding to malnutrition and childhood obesity.

(Data source: The Lancet, 2013)

Advancing Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Diseases

According to the World Health Organization, nearly half of child deaths are linked to malnutrition. Conditions such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria are also leading causes of child deaths. The United Methodist Church is committed to promoting health education along with providing services that place the prevention of priority childhood illnesses at the forefront.

(Data source: The Lancet, 2013)

Promote Children's Health and Wholeness

Limited financial resources and inadequate access to health services often affect the willingness of people to seek treatment for children with illnesses. The United Methodist Church aims to eliminate barriers to health and medical services and encourage people around the world to seek proper medical treatment in these instances.

For more information about Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children visit <http://www.umcabundanthealth.org> or <http://www.umcmmission.org>.



**Thomas Kemper, General Secretary
General Board of Global Ministries**

Thomas Kemper is the general secretary and top executive of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. He is responsible for personnel, projects and mission partnerships in more than 130 countries.

A native of Germany, Kemper is the first person from outside the United States elected to lead a United Methodist agency.

Prior to his position as general secretary, he was mission leader for the German Central Conference of the United Methodist Church and was Director of Ecumenical Learning at the Lippische Landeskirche, a regional church of the Association of Protestant Churches in Germany.

Kemper spent 8 years in Brazil as a missionary from 1986 to 1994, where he taught in the Brazilian Theological Seminary in Sao Paulo and engaged in ministry with the poor and new church development.

He is married to Barbara Hübner-Kemper and is the father of three children.



See more at: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Learn-About-Us/About-Global-Ministries/General-Secretary#sthash.VIa7VCMO.dpuf>

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Olusimbo Ige MD, MS, MPH
Executive Director, Global Health Unit
General Board of Global Ministries

Dr. Olusimbo Ige is the executive director of the Global Health unit of the General Board of Global Ministries. She provides leadership and technical guidance to health programs in 36 countries.

Dr. Ige's career experience spans over 11 years of health services delivery and health program design and management. She worked as a clinician, as a university faculty member and with international nonprofit health programs prior to joining Global Ministries.

During her first two years with Global Ministries, Dr. Ige supported the scale up of the Imagine No Malaria program from 8 to 13 health boards in Africa, while also expanding the agency's health work to address other priority health concerns such as HIV, maternal and child health, and health systems in United Methodist Church central Africa conferences.

Beginning in 2016, Dr. Ige will be leading the process of engaging 10,000 UMC churches in health ministry and reaching one million children with lifesaving health interventions by 2020.



Dr. Ige hails from Nigeria, where she worked with government health programs at the local, state and national levels. She also served there as a consultant on infectious diseases with the World Health Organization, USAID and others, and as a lecturer in epidemiology at the University of Ibadan. Her expertise is in designing and supporting strategies to improve health from the community up.

Dr. Ige is a public health physician, a fellow of the West African College of Physicians in community medicine and received a Master of Science in Epidemiology degree, and a Master of Public Health in Global Health Leadership degree from the University of Manchester, England.

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