

Ted Turner to Fight Malaria in Africa with Christian Groups

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by Michael Ireland

U.S. media mogul Ted Turner, who once called Christianity a “religion for losers,” has announced he is joining forces with two Christian organizations to combat malaria in Africa.

According to Louis Charbonneau, writing for Reuters news agency, Turner’s United Nations Foundation will together with the United Methodist Church and Lutheran World Relief, try to raise \$200 million to fight the disease.

Media Mogul Ted Turner

“Together, we are announcing a new initiative to contribute to the internationally agreed goal of eliminating malaria death,” Turner said in remarks prepared for delivery at a meeting of the U.N. General Assembly.

“Stopping malaria will go a long way toward giving people of all countries new hope and confidence that we can succeed in the fight against poverty,” he said.

Reuters’ reporter Charbonneau, with additional reporting by Patrick Worsnip, said Turner, 69, was attending a debate on the slow progress being made toward meeting U.N. Millennium Development Goals aimed at halving poverty by 2015.

According to the Reuters report, Sub-Saharan Africa is the region worst hit by malaria. Most of the world’s malaria deaths of more than one million occur there every year, the news agency says.

Economists say combating Africa’s epidemics—HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—is vital to improving the continent’s economic growth, Reuters said.

Turner said his alliance with the two churches would enable the initiative to reach out to their combined 25 million members to raise a targeted \$200 million. The money would be used to strengthen individual and church health systems in African countries.

Turner was asked why he had decided to team up with the churches after once dismissing Christianity as “a religion for losers” and suggesting observers of Ash Wednesday were “Jesus freaks.”

“I don’t know,” he said. “As I get older ... I get, you know, more tolerant.”

Turner is chairman of the United Nations Foundation, created in 1998 when the CNN founder pledged \$1 billion to the United Nations. f

Is This the Beginning of a New Era in Kingdom Work?

For years now Ralph Winter has called on the Church and mission communities to recognize our obligation under the Great Commission to follow the example of Christ in destroying the works of the Devil as part of building the Kingdom of God. Meeting the needs of hurting people is an essential part of establishing the Church among all peoples.

President Bush has allocated federal funds for the elimination of malaria in Africa. The Bill Gates Foundation has allocated funds as well. Ted Turner has wisely recognized that it is best to work with Christian missionaries in the field because they are the most trustworthy agents to see to it the work is effectively accomplished and the funds wisely used. Perhaps this signals a new era in cooperation between the secular forces of benevolence and the Church’s Kingdom purposes in destroying some of the most demonic pathogens on earth.

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