

# Town Hall Meeting, April 17, 2007

## *Remarks by The Rev. Randy Day, General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries*

### **RANDY DAY:**

Greetings to all of you who have joined us for this Town Hall meeting. We are a church with global vision, global mission and a global presence. Through the General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church has personnel and projects in more than 125 countries.

We are a growing church in Africa, parts of Asia and Eastern Europe. I believe that this growth is helping the entire denomination to reconnect with our roots in the theology of John Wesley, who taught that personal holiness, the private side of faith, is never complete unless it is also expressed in social holiness, including social ministries and mission. This combination of personal and social holiness is very evident in the lives of new United Methodists in places where our church is expanding.

The initiative to be in ministry with the poor and to reduce poverty and the causes of poverty is not only a call to the general agencies but also to individual Christians, to congregations, and conferences. It is an area of ministry that applies to all of us. More than 800 million people in the world go hungry every day, many of them are children. In a world of unparalleled wealth and food production, people are still hungry, not because there is a lack of food, but because there is a lack of access to resources and there is unequal distribution based on geography, regional economic crises, or political systems.

As your international mission and humanitarian assistance agency, Global Ministries is already laying the ground work for this initiative. Since the causes of poverty are multiple, the ministry to counteract poverty must also have many parts. It includes:

- Economic opportunity and justice which is addressed through education and training, microcredit and enterprise development. We applaud the leadership of United Methodist Women in their advocacy for debt relief for impoverished nations and their opposition to sweatshops and child labor.
- Alleviation of hunger by mobilizing resources for sustainable agriculture, supplemental food programs, and food resource banks, clean water and an accessible water supply, as well as fair trade for farmers and their families.
- World migration and immigration are examined and supported as people move to find safety and new opportunities for their families as they flee from wars, natural disasters and poverty.
- Health risks and poverty are often bound together. Many of you have already joined us in our efforts to reduce what the World Health Organization refers to as “diseases of poverty:” malaria, TB, AIDS. Our newest efforts in Mongolia include hospice care for the very poor.
- Networking and organizing are a hallmark of our ministry, whether in community institutions, Shalom Zones, or community development.

I hope that every United Methodist will be asking questions like these:

- Where are the poor in our community and what are their most pressing needs?
- What can our congregation do to minister with the poor and bring them into the life of the church? What happens in countries that have extreme poverty? How can the children be fed and how can they get an education in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty?

John Wesley taught us that loving God means loving our neighbors in this “world parish” that is ours. We can multiply the good we do through our collaboration and common focus on ministry with the poor.