

## ORPHAN-CAUSING ISSUE: DISEASE

AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases caused more deaths worldwide in 2010 and 2011 than cancer, car accidents, and heart disease. To put this into better perspective based on percentages, check out the list below from the World Health Organization's (branch of the United Nations) report.<sup>i</sup>

Furthermore, what is tragic about many of these deaths is that many of the cases are largely preventable through the modern technology and medicine of this current day and age. However, because of the lack of awareness, resources, and distribution, particularly in poverty stricken countries, avoidable deadly diseases are contracted daily that fuel the unnecessary loss of millions of lives. The aftermath of the massacre caused by AIDS and other diseases every year creates one of the largest and most devastating spokes in the cycle of the orphan.

As the fourth leading cause for death in the world, AIDS cannot be ignored when talking about the most dangerous diseases affecting vulnerable orphaned children.<sup>ii</sup> There are currently 33.2 million people living with HIV with 22.5 million of those infected being located in Sub-Saharan Africa, 61% of which are female.<sup>iii</sup> The ONE Campaign estimates that 15.2 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS worldwide.<sup>iv</sup> Many HIV positive men will prey upon orphaned children, especially girls, out of the belief that having sex with a young virgin will cure them of their illness. In some cultures, it is thought that the younger the virgin the more likely a cure will ensue. Other orphans become infected as a result of being forced to prostitute themselves after being sold by their family, abducted by pimps, or even voluntarily out of not knowing of any other way to survive. Other orphans or impoverished children will enter into sexual situations that they are manipulated or driven to out of desperation, and the cycle continues.<sup>v</sup>

The ONE Campaign has made great strides toward breaking this spoke of the orphan cycle particularly through bipartisan lobbying efforts in the United States government and other awareness efforts abroad. Both Republicans and Democrats alike have been able to unite to make an impact that will greatly reduce the number of people suffering from AIDS and other diseases in the future. According to ONE, both Bush and Obama have continued to keep the United States committed to tackling the disease since Clinton pushed it to the forefront in the 90's. The impact has been exponential as there are now 6.6 million people receiving treatment as opposed to a much smaller 100,000 in 2002. The ONE campaign has not relented in their determination as they note that, "...despite great progress, for every person who goes on treatment, nearly two more are infected. There are an estimated nine million people still in need of treatment."<sup>vi</sup>

While it can be somewhat common to hear about the AIDS epidemic, there are other deadly diseases that are wrongly overlooked. One such disease is mosquito-borne malaria that runs rampant, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Americas. About one million deaths occur every year due to malaria. In Africa it kills more children than any other disease, but **malaria is completely preventable**. Bed nets and insect repellent alone would greatly reduce the risk of obtaining this sickness. Other control measures include spraying insecticides or draining the still water in which the mosquitoes breed. It can be extremely complex for

impoverished peoples who lack necessary resources or education needed to gain access to these simple protective devices. Children often become orphaned by losing their parents to this illness and become more susceptible to also becoming infected because they no longer have someone to look after them or teach them how to protect themselves from it. Thankfully many organizations are working to provide treated mosquito nets to needy families. One such organization is Nothing But Nets, which has been able to provide over four million life-saving nets to at-risk families.<sup>vii</sup> Other organizations effectively meeting this need for many individuals are Netting Nations, Compassion International, and Nets for Life Africa.

Among other purely preventable killers are food-borne and water-borne diseases that combined cause the death of 3.6 million people each year.<sup>viii</sup> About 2 million babies under the age of five are taken all too soon because of acute respiratory infections and another 1.5 million to diarrhea-related illnesses.<sup>ix</sup> To a typical American mind, this magnitude of death due to food and water alone seems unfathomable. But the natural disasters, inadequate health care, wars and poverty that many other countries face all contribute to these devastating numbers becoming a reality. These are not just numbers. These millions are all God's children that may be missing the knowledge of their Savior and a chance at an abundant life that God desires for each one of them.

<sup>i</sup> "TLC Family "15 Most Common Causes of Death in the World"" *TLC "Guides" World Health Organizations*. Web. 30 Dec. 2011. <<http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/15-most-common-causes-of-death-in-the-world.htm>>.

<sup>ii</sup> "HIV/AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases | ONE." *ONE | International | Fighting against Extreme Poverty and Preventable Disease*. ONE. Web. 30 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.one.org/c/us/issue/187/>>.

<sup>iii</sup> UNODC. [www.unodc.org/pdf/research/wdr07/WDR\\_2007.pdf.23](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/wdr07/WDR_2007.pdf.23) January, 2008.

<sup>iv</sup> The ONE Campaign. [www.one.org/aids\\_poverty/.28](http://www.one.org/aids_poverty/.28) January, 2008.

<sup>v</sup> "Orphan Issues: The Spokes of the Cycle." Letter. World Orphans. Web. 30 Dec. 2011. <[https://mailhost-3.tamu.edu/service/home/~/Orphan\\_Issues.pdf?auth=co&loc=en\\_US&id=90321&=2.2](https://mailhost-3.tamu.edu/service/home/~/Orphan_Issues.pdf?auth=co&loc=en_US&id=90321&=2.2)>.

<sup>vi</sup> "ONE and (RED) Call on President Obama to Be Bold in the Race to Defeat AIDS | ONE." *ONE | International | Fighting against Extreme Poverty and Preventable Disease*. The ONE Campaign, 11 Oct. 2011. Web. 31 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.one.org/c/us/pressrelease/4084/>>.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.nothingbutnets.net/>

<sup>viii</sup> The ONE Campaign. [www.one.org/aids\\_poverty/.28](http://www.one.org/aids_poverty/.28) January, 2008.

<sup>ix</sup> Compassion International. [www.compassion.com/child-advocacy/find-your-voice/quick-facts/health-quick-facts.htm](http://www.compassion.com/child-advocacy/find-your-voice/quick-facts/health-quick-facts.htm). 28 January, 2008.