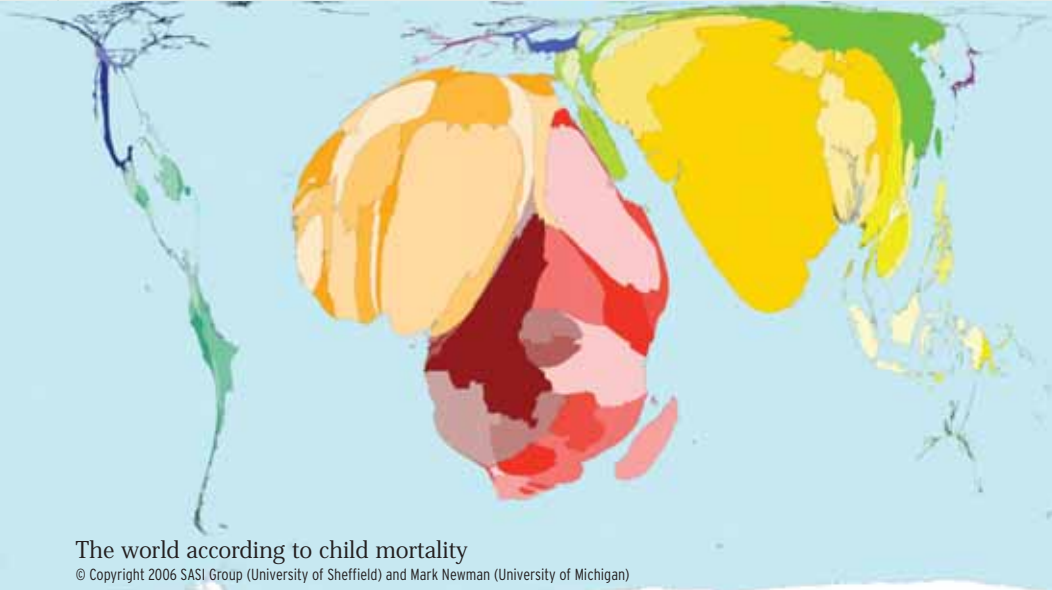


the wider horizon

Is this how God sees the world?



The world according to child mortality

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More than 2,000 verses in the Bible speak about God's special concern for the poor. This map shows where the poor of the world's children are: territories have been resized according to the proportion of all deaths of children aged over 1 year and under 5 years old.¹ In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, 20% of children do not live to see their fifth birthday. The world turns a blind eye, but God does not:

But you see, O Lord; you take notice of trouble and suffering...the helpless commit themselves to you; you have always helped the needy... You will listen, O Lord, to the prayers of the lowly; you will give them courage.

You will hear the cries of the oppressed and the orphans; you will judge in their favour. (Psalm 10:14,17,18 GNB)

The map effectively shows the enormous gap between rich and poor. As I write, the BBC News website reports:²

This year's harvest in Zimbabwe has been the worst in the country's modern history. Some Zimbabweans get by on one meal a day if they are lucky, but there is a growing sense of desperation. Farmers are without seeds, fertiliser and fuel. Next year's harvest is already being written off as a disaster as well.

Reported on the same page is news of the \$700 billion which the US government is finding to rescue its financial system. Rich and poor seem to inhabit different worlds – but those who are starving in Zimbabwe are our brothers and sisters. Wendenda, a woman from a village in Burkina Faso, is featured in a Tear Fund film.³ She says

To British people I say – on this earth we are far away, but in heaven we won't be far apart

As the new Head of International Ministries, I want to see CMF reflect God's heart for the poor. Christian doctors have enormous potential to serve in many and various ways – there are opportunities for juniors and seniors, specialists and generalists, researchers and teachers...and all others in between.

What could you do?

- Give a week to go and teach with PRIME
- Give a week to go on a summer team to Eastern Europe, to encourage students and juniors in less well established fellowships
- Give two weeks to use your skills as part of a specialist team
- Give two weeks to go on a 'mission exposure trip' to see and understand the needs
- Give six months, or a year, or more, to serve in a poor country
- If you can't go, could you fund someone else who can?
- Be a 'buddy' for a CMF member overseas, keeping them up to date on professional issues
- Encourage your hospital/practice/trust to form a partnership with a hospital in a needy place
- Sponsor a medical student in a developing country through the Medic-to-Medic programme www.imet2000.org/medictomedic/index.html
- Encourage your church to sign up to Micah Challenge

The HealthServe website www.healthserve.org is the place to go to look at opportunities and find details of organisations working in needy places. We have recently had requests for help from Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Peru and Mongolia – there are needs in all directions!

And from somebody who did it:

Retired GP John Baigent, now working in West Africa, writes in *Re-tired not Retired*:

So many times in Mesikine I have felt like I have been walking on the water of God's faithfulness. I have so often been out of my depth, but leaning on him have been able to make a difference in the lives of many people.

Vicky Lavy is CMF Head of International Ministries

references

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3. Tearfund. Step up to the plate film. www.tearfund.org/Churches/Harvest+-+Step+up+to+the+plate/Step+up+to+the+plate+film.htm