

# meet Vicky Lavy

*Vicky Lavy wants to help us look beyond our borders*

**you've just started working for CMF as Head of International Ministries. What is the job about?**

It's all about raising the profile of global health issues in CMF and getting people interested in what's going on beyond our world of the NHS and the UK, particularly in the developing world where the health needs are so great. It's also about being a resource for those who are already working overseas, or are planning to go - providing information, advice, contacts and literature.

Another part of my job is developing partnerships between CMF and the many other national Christian medical associations around the world that are part of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA).

**why should today's students be interested in medical work overseas?**

I think every single Christian should be concerned about the poor because that's what God has told us. Did you know there are more than 2,000 verses in the Bible about poverty and injustice? For instance, Proverbs 21:13 tells us, 'If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.' Then there is a surprising reference to the wicked city of Sodom in Ezekiel 16:49:



*Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.*

Christian doctors - and students - are in a prime position to serve those who are neglected by others. Of course we can do that in this country, but we simply can't pretend that the medical needs here are as pressing as those in the developing world. Europe and the USA have 20% of the world's disease but 72% of the world's health workers and 85% of the world's health budget. It's a terrible injustice - but as medics, we are in a position to do something to put it right.

**what did you do before you started at CMF?**

My background is in general practice but I spent ten years in Malawi where I did a variety of jobs - including running around after our three boys. I spent the last four years of our time there

setting up a palliative care service for children, which was one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done. Since we came back to England I have been doing paediatric palliative care at Helen House Hospice in Oxford, but I've given that up now to come and work for CMF.

I was also involved in getting a CMF going in Malawi, which was great fun and also very rewarding - it started with a small bunch of students in 1997, and now it's a national fellowship. It's been wonderful to be involved with medical students and watch them as they grow, progress, and qualify, then to see them in leadership positions in Malawi.

## tell us about your family

My husband, Chris, is an orthopaedic surgeon. He works part time for the NHS and part time on various projects promoting orthopaedics in the developing world - such as research, training and also setting up hospitals where disabled children can have surgery to get them walking.

We have three boys who are 13, ten and eight. Some *Nucleus* readers may even remember them from the students' conference this year as they were conspicuously younger than everyone else there! They were the ones playing football and amassing vast piles of glow sticks.

## what would you recommend as a first step for a student looking to get involved in international work?

Electives are a prime opportunity to get a taste of working abroad. There's lots of information on CMF's Healthserve website about planning

electives and lots of useful addresses - [www.healthserve.org/electives](http://www.healthserve.org/electives)

I think everyone should at least consider going to a developing country, even if they have no intention of working overseas after qualifying. The way we live in the UK is the exception rather than the rule - two thirds of the world's population live in the developing world and have a fraction of the resources that we enjoy. It's important that we know what life is like for our brothers and sisters in the rest of the world.

## do you plan to be involved with students in your new role at CMF?

Yes, definitely. I'll be at Swanwick in February for the national students' conference (along with my boys - they're looking forward to it already) and hope to meet lots of students. Then we'll be having an electives day in London (probably in March) where we'll have several experienced people talking about the issues of working in a different culture, and how to go about planning and getting ready. If other student groups want to hold an event like this, we can send a variety of resources from CMF and provide a speaker - if I can't come myself, I'll find someone good who can.

And don't forget, I'm there to answer any questions, big or small, about international issues and options for working overseas. You can email me on [vicky.lavy@cmf.org.uk](mailto:vicky.lavy@cmf.org.uk) - I'd love to hear from you!

**Vicky Lavy** is CMF Head of International Ministries