

the beneficiaries of this largesse are now having to repay their debts through “World Bank-IMF sponsored structural adjustment programs in which services to the poor were cut, dramatically worsening their health and longevity.”

No part of the world today is further than 36 hours away from any other part of the world.

The other chapters cover “the financial forces that foster an unequal and unsustainable world economic order” such as trade barriers and subsidies. They elaborate on how maintaining the inequality between rich and poor everywhere leads to vastly differing incidences of disease and life expectancy. Poor governance, racism and sexism further exacerbate this difference, and these issues are clearly explained and elaborated. One has just to look at examples such as Zimbabwe or Afghanistan to see how these forces have worked for so long to keep so many mired in misery. The plight of children is outlined very well. Then there is the terrible quandary of women in so many countries as the most discriminated-against group in the world right now. Stephen Lewis has been very vocal on this issue in the light of the disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among women in developing countries, and this book forcefully supports his statements.

Population growth is another area where the poor suffer most. In order to have at least one child grow up and get a job so that you have someone to care for you in old age in countries where the death rate among children under 5 is often around 50% and unemployment is even higher, people have to have 10 children or more. How can you escape poverty in a situation like that? Then there are the immovable forces of nature and geography that often contribute to the perpetuation of poverty. Diseases

such as malaria, tuberculosis and a host of others sicken and kill the poor and undernourished in much greater numbers than others and slow the economic growth of entire world regions. HIV/AIDS has its own chapter in the book, for obvious reasons, as

does Ethics, Human Rights and Religion — all of which have for so long been instrumental in both helping and harming mankind.

The book ends with excellent synopses of the lives of medical legends

such as Drs. Albert Schweitzer and Tom Dooley as well as those lesser known, but equally deserving of praise, such as Drs. Bill Fryda, Peter Allen and Thomas Durant. Role models are valuable for all of us, and reading of these doctors’ accomplishments overseas will be an inspiration to many in the medical profession who want to work where the need for them is so desperate.

I hope this book will help move many to do just that, while providing an excellent understanding as to just why this help is needed.

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REFERENCE

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Poem

The mother

She huddles by the roadside
Scared of the sleek, passing limousines

Her clothes have seen better days
The child on her hips, clothed in rags

The child howls, her brow clouded with sweat
The mother tries to comfort, offers a chunk of jaggery

The child is feverish, her breathing rapid and shallow
Clinics and hospitals with their imposing glass facades line the street

The best modern medicine has to offer beneath their roofs
The mother, poor, by the door; money is a cruel gatekeeper

Tools for eternal youth and beauty, everlasting health
The wretched mother too poor to afford even a bottle of paracetamol

She gently rocks the child, sings a lilting lullaby
The child slowly sobs herself to sleep
Will she wake up to see another day?

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