

## **God's Creation has Given us Incredible Brothers and Sisters in the Faith:**

### **Strong People With A Wonderful Diversity of Talents**

The African Union counts 53 countries as her members. These countries come with strikingly different histories and colorful particularities. Some societies were matriarchal and/or are particularly sensitive to the place of women in community leadership. Many others were patriarchal and/or macho oriented ready to mime military power structures and continue with the insensitive bull in the china shop syndrome.

Each of the following one page country summaries intends to help us see a unique people- struggling with malaria and other health issues, especially women and children's health in a particular relation to poverty, literacy and other constraints of the community.

I challenge you as a small group to consider and reflect on the loss of under five children's deaths (from malaria and other causes) for five to ten minutes for just one country. These malaria deaths are absolutely unnecessary. See the malaria posters. With the cooperation of the churches and the community members, the deaths from malaria can be halved in a span of only 2 to 4 years, and almost wiped out in five to eight years.

Please share your reflections with each other. And finally summarize your concerns in a prayer to a loving and compassionate God.

You may recognize the pain in a mother's heart as she loses between 9 and 22% of her children before they are five years old.

You may recognize the stress in a nurse or midwife's life, as he/she struggles to assist the moms without adequate medications and/or facilities to support the health work.

You may recognize the fear that each of these mothers has as she approaches childbirth. The lifetime of risk of dying from maternal complications in many of these countries ranges from 1 in 8, to 1 in 53.

Check the country summary.

After a number of these reflection sessions, start to make a list of what you can do to support mothers in these situations. Count your personal resources: organizational skills, technical skills, personal motivation and financial resources. What are two or three things you can do this year, starting today.

If you come to a place where you have a number of difficult questions about how to proceed, you may email Pastor Chuck Fluegel: [cfluegel1@new.rr.com](mailto:cfluegel1@new.rr.com).

Or begin a dialogue with someone who knows that country well: a foreign student, a missionary, a church leader or a community development worker.