

If we were to reduce the world's population to a village of 100 people, with all the population figures the same, the demographics would look like this:

The village would have 60 Asians, 14 Africans, 12 Europeans, 8 Latin Americans, 5 from North America and 1 person from the Oceania, including Australia.

51.....would be male and 49 female;

82.....would be non-white people and 18 white people;

67.....would be non-Christian, including 21 Moslems, 15 Hindus and 6 Buddhists, and 33 would be Christian;

14.....would have no religion or be atheists;

80.....would have sub-standard housing;

67.....would be unable to read;

50.....would be malnourished and 1 dying of starvation;

33.....would not have access to safe water;

24.....would not have electricity and, of the 76 that do have electricity, most would use it only for light at night;

7.....people would have access to the internet;

15.....would speak Chinese (Mandarin); 7 English; 6 Hindi - the rest a variety of languages;

1.....could have a university education;

1.....would have HIV;

5.....would control 32% of the village wealth;

33.....would be attempting to live on 3% of the village's income.¹

This is a very simple way to analyse our world but it is telling!

It is the context in which we must discern the lived expression of our charism in the 21st Century. As we can see, this is a hugely diverse global village distinguished by great disparities of wealth and opportunity and by significant cultural and religious difference.

In this village we are greatly privileged. That is our present reality.

It is also in this village that we are invited, by virtue of our vows, to be heralds of the Good News of Jesus for the "poor, the oppressed, the prisoners".²

¹ The original *State of the Village Report* was written by Donella Meadows in 1990; it originally referred to a village of 1,000 people but in 1992 David Copeland revised this to a village of 100. He single-handedly distributed 50,000 copies of a poster containing similar figures at the Rio Earth Summit. The figures above are revised for 2005 but they can vary very slightly depending upon the source used.

² Luke 4: 18-19