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Editorial

The world has recently remembered the tragedy of September 11 last year. I too watched and read the endless coverage in the media and still found it hard to believe it happened. Like most, I could not possibly understand what the victims and their families went through on that day and the following year.

But while listening to the horrific stories and watching yet more footage, only one guilty thought kept replaying in my mind. How glad I was that it wasn't me or someone I loved caught in that horror.

While I sympathise with those involved, that selfish thought creeps in and I listen to myself thinking "Phew, it's not happening to me". I may watch the footage on television and read articles about it, but at the end of the day I go on my merry way and give little thought to what happened.

Yet what really saddens me is that my reaction is normal. How many of us give more than a passing thought of "Oh how awful" or a short discussion about tragedies like this attack or the sufferings of others we

have known about for a long time?

We are safe in our wonderful wee country of New Zealand and even though Switzerland is less than isolated, how many of us wouldn't feel safe there too.

While the world grieved with the United States how many of us gave a thought to the millions of others living a life in fear, poverty, or other unnecessary tragedy? Millions of people live in conditions that would make us sick and angry if it was someone we knew. But let me ask you, how many of us were aware of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan before September 11? I was not. How many of us are aware of the reasons Afghanistan ended up like this? How many of us are aware of the other uncountable injustices and appalling circumstances humans are experiencing every day in our wonderful world?

If it doesn't directly affect us, not many of us know much about it, and even less of us would try and change it.

While no country is guilt-free I do find it particularly interesting that Mr Bush wants

to take down a ruler of another country because he claims it is a threat to the US and its way of life. And this, a year after someone took down so many US lives. Treat others as you would want to be treated?

Yet how many US citizens are homeless in the streets and how many lack access to healthcare? How many US citizens have died because their own country hasn't taken care of them?

Does anyone else see a problem with this? A couple years ago a friend sent me an email that took me by complete surprise. It has been stuck to the back of my door ever since and I read it daily. I keep it there because it helps me to remember how lucky I am and that if at all possible I want to help this world and my fellow human beings. Hopefully you can get something out of it too and it reminds you how fortunate you are to be from two safe and peaceful countries.

If you could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like this:

57 would be Asians; 21 would be Europeans; 14 would be from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south; 8 would be Africans; 52 would be female; 48 would be male; 70 would be non-Christian; 30 would be Christian; 89 would be heterosexual; 11 would be homosexual; 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States. 80 would live in substandard housing; 70 would be unable to read; 50 would suffer from malnutrition; 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth; 1 would have a university education; 1 would own a computer

The following is also something to ponder...

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness you are more blessed than the millions who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep....you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish somewhere....you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married....you are very rare.

If you can read this message you are more blessed than over two billion people in this world who cannot read at all.

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