

hope is in your hands

DVD DISCUSSION GUIDE



HOPE
FOR AIDS

**SIM Australia**

PO Box 42
Penshurst, N.S.W.
Australia 2222
Phone: (61-2) 9580-1422
Fax: (61-2) 9580-1477
E-Mail: sim.australia@sim.org.au

SIM East Asia

116 Lavendar St.
#04-09 Pek Chuan Bldg.
Singapore 338730
Phone: (6) 298-3611
Fax: (6) 298-6751
E-Mail: info@simeast.com

SIM Brasil

Rua Líbero Badaró, 142
86015-570 - Londrina - PR
Fone: (43) 3342.8685
E-mail:
diretoria@simbrasil.org.br

SIM France

Quartier Les Mians
84860 Caderousse
France
Phone: +33 (0) 4-90-51-00-69
Fax: +33 (0) 4-90-51-00-69
Email: sim.france@sim.org

SIM Italia

Via Rana, 386
IT-15040 Cascinagrossa (AL)
Italy
Phone: +39 0131 61 09 79
Email: sim.italia@sim.org

SIM Korea

#602 Econo-Charmant B/D
#166 Kumkok-Dong
Boondang-Gu Sungnam City
South Korea
Phone: (82) 31-719-5314~5
Fax: (82) 31-719-5313
E-Mail: sim@simkorea.org

SIM New Zealand

P.O. Box 38 588
Howick
New Zealand
Free Phone: (0508) 47 46 69
Fax: (64-9) 535- 0061
E-Mail: info@sim.org.nz

SIM South Africa

P.O. Box 30027
Tokai
Cape Town 7966
South Africa
Phone: (27) 21-7153200
Fax: (27) 21-7153220
E-Mail: simsa@sim.org.za

SIM Southern Europe

Société Internationale
Missionnaire
Case Postale 4051
CH-2500 Biel/Bienne 4
Switzerland
Phone: +41 (0)32 345 14 44
Fax: +41 (0)32 345 14 54
E-Mail: postmaster@sim.ch

SIM UK/Northern Europe

Wetheringsett Manor
Wetheringsett
Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 5QX
Phone: +44 (0)1449 766464
Fax: +44 (0)1449 767148
E-Mail: postmaster@sim.co.uk

SIM USA

P.O. Box 7900
Charlotte, NC 28241
USA
Phone: (704) 588-4300
Fax: (704) 587-1518
E-Mail:
postmaster@simusa.sim.org

WEB: www.hopeforaids.org

Thanks for watching the HOPE for AIDS DVD

There are a number of ways in which you can use this DVD - with a church using the summary section as a short introduction to HIV/AIDS in Africa and India, with a youth group or a house group over the course of a few weeks, or perhaps with an adult Sunday school class.

Hints for the Leader:

1. Questions for you to ask are in **bold** type.
2. Possible answers follow some of the questions.
3. Questions are provided for each one of the themed sections on the DVD.
4. If you only have time to use the summary section, a few questions from each section have been selected for you to use.





What are some of the circumstances that make home-based care a necessity in both Africa and India?

- There's no universal health care so people have to pay for hospital care
- HIV+ people are stigmatized by their families and hidden away from the public

What are some of the advantages of home-based care as far as Dr. Nirmala Varghese was concerned?

- Volunteers get a complete picture of what the patient is going through
- They can educate the family, and can come alongside those who are dying to give them support without discrimination
- They also see other needs, like children not going to school, and can connect families with other organizations that can help

How does God expect us to care for the sick and suffering? Let's look at Galatians 4:14(NIV): "Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself." What does Paul acknowledge about his illness?

That it was a trial for those looking after him.

How did they welcome him?

As if he were an angel of God, as if he were Christ Jesus himself.



How do we generally treat sick people in our culture?

The oft quoted scripture verse, *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"*, from Matthew 26:40 has a different slant in The Message:

"I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me - you failed to do it to me."

Who are those being overlooked or ignored in our towns and cities? Who are the untouchables in our own lives, like Dr. Varghese talks about on the DVD?

Homeless people, prostitutes, abused women and children, drug addicts, those we are prejudiced against, people we consider "abnormal", etc.

When you ignore them are you ignoring Jesus?


How did the scene of the two women, one a caregiver and the other an obviously ill woman, affect you (the caregiver was in black and white and the sick woman remained in colour)?

What kind of care did the caregiver extend in the next scene?

She carried the sick woman on her back.

What does this scene say about their relationship?

On the part of the sick woman, a willingness to depend on another



and, on the part of the caregiver, a willingness to be depended on and to physically carry the full weight of the one she was caring for.

Have you ever carried another adult on your back? What other ways have you cared for people?

Shobana Vetrivel, one of the home-based care volunteers in India, said that “The most important thing people with HIV need in India is care and someone to be there for them and I think as the church, this is a need we can really meet - just being there for them.”

How can we, the church at a distance, “be there” for those with HIV in India and Africa?

Some of us can go and help in person.

Those who can't physically go can support those who do or support projects enabling home-based care.

We can also raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in Southeast Asia and Africa by becoming advocates – arming ourselves with information and stories that will encourage Canadians to take on the challenge of caring for people with HIV/AIDS.

We can also learn from people, even those on the DVD, about how a life lived caring for others is a life lived caring for Christ. We cannot use the excuse that HIV/AIDS is “over there” and therefore not our responsibility. HIV/AIDS is here and so are many other diseases, both physical and spiritual, that we need to be addressing.



According to Faith Liyena, what often happens to orphaned children in Africa?

- They stop going to school because there's no one to pay for their school fees
- They are often malnourished because there's no one to provide food for them and they don't have proper clothes

What might happen to children who don't get an education or proper nourishment?

It will be difficult for them to escape the cycle of poverty and sickness and they will be more susceptible to HIV/AIDS in the future.

What is the future for countries where whole generations are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS?

These countries may fall even farther behind in developing their economic and social systems, and struggle to provide basic services to citizens.

What do Samuel Sveharan and Faith Liyena suggest as the most effective way to care for infected and affected HIV/AIDS orphans?

Having them cared for by family or community members rather than be taken to an institution.

Why would this be important?

- Children would stay in home-community with similar culture
- Children would remain as a family unit

Presently there are 15 million children worldwide under the age of 18 who have lost one or both parents to AIDS. That's almost half of Canada's population.





What challenges may family and community members face in taking on the care of an orphan?

There's no social assistance so the cost of food, school, and clothing would generally have to be carried by those willing to care for the orphans.

What would you have to consider if you were to take on the responsibility of caring for an orphan here in your country?

On the DVD Esther Gitani, who works at Rafa House where HIV infected orphans live, spoke about the importance of prayer - praying for the boys and teaching them to pray. How seriously do we take the role of prayer in caring for orphans?

What would you need to pray more effectively?

Information, names, list of particular requests, visiting Rafa House.

Esther spoke about the boys who asked her one day when they were going to stop eating medicine. She told them "We should thank God for the medicine but we should pray for your healing." When you think of praying for people with HIV/AIDS, do you often think of praying for healing? Why or why not?

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27.

How do we look after the orphans and widows where we are today?

What is our responsibility towards HIV/AIDS orphans and widows?

Additional information:

Some 15 million children under age 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS. The vast majority- more than 12 million- are in sub-Saharan Africa, where the weight of numbers puts an enormous strain on the traditional family safety net.

In addition to psychological trauma, evidence shows that orphans living with extended families or in foster care are frequently subject to discrimination and are less likely to receive health, education and other needed services. The situation is yet more desperate for those living in child-headed households or on their own on the streets. The vulnerability of these children represents part of a vicious cycle: their circumstances put them at high risk for exploitation and abuse, and therefore exposure themselves to HIV, and lack of access to health care, education and social support perpetuates the conditions of poverty.

Despite advances in HIV treatment and access to anti-retroviral drugs, the number of AIDS orphans is projected to exceed 25 million by the end of the decade, and the need for programs that address this crisis already in short supply will only increase.

Source:
<http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/>



“In India people don’t have any clear understanding about HIV. We have a fear factor here so we have to equip them”. What might be some of the things that cause there to be a “fear factor” about HIV/AIDS in India?


- Not understanding how the disease is caught and transmitted and the myths that arise like not being able to hold a person’s hand, making sure you don’t eat from the same plate of use the same cutlery etc.
- HIV/AIDS is seen as a punishment for the sins of a previous life (Hinduism and Karma) and this causes a huge stigma
- Sex is a taboo subject in the Indian culture. As HIV/AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease it is often not openly talked about

How does Nosipho Bridget Sibiya (a young woman on the DVD who was teaching in a classroom) talk about how prevention has made a difference?

People used to not want to be discriminated against so they were afraid to disclose their status but now they readily ask for help.

How does people infected with HIV/AIDS asking for help qualify as prevention?

Their openness in asking for help means the stigma may be somewhat diminished and that they will be less likely to pass the disease on to someone by getting help.



One of the prevailing themes of this section on the DVD was that of choice and how children are being taught to make good choices now to protect their futures.

At what age did Benson Okyere Manu say they were starting AIDS education for children?

Between the ages of six and 12.

How does it make you feel to think of children having to be educated about AIDS at a relatively young age?

Sad, because of lost innocence.

Glad, because by being educated they have a better chance of being safe.

How much is the media influencing the sex lives of the young people in India?

It seems that many of them are learning about sex from the media, and are experimenting, rather than learning from their parents who, one young woman said, don't tell them about sex and that the children and parents are somewhat shy with each other.

How much do the media influence our perception of HIV/AIDS?

What can you do here in your country to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, India and elsewhere?

Do you have any comments or questions about what you saw and heard in this section of the DVD?



Godfrey Chonde starts this section off by saying that “Stigma comes in the wake of people thinking that HIV/AIDS is a sinner’s disease.”

How guilty are we of this same thought?


Both Godfrey Chonde and Dr. Nirmala Varghese talk about how most of the people they know living with HIV/AIDS haven’t done anything wrong. Who are they and how are they getting the disease?

- As Godfrey put it, “Some of them are victims. Some of them acquired it not because they went out to look for it but it was brought to them.”
- As Dr. Varghese said, “We find most of our patients are widows and there are many children who haven’t done anything wrong. Most of our widows, if you ask them, if you talk to them, they will say they have not done anything wrong. They have got it from their husbands.”

What societal issues may exist that allow the innocent to be stigmatized?

- A lack of rights for women in sex
- Lack of education and knowledge
- Unsafe medical practices

How important do you think it is for the seminary students, who are training to be pastors, to learn about HIV/AIDS and how to care for and counsel those who either have the disease or are affected by it?



Dr. Varghese talks about volunteers coming together from different churches, different denominations, to train to be home-based care workers and visitors. How important do you think it is for the Church to be unified in its response to HIV/AIDS?

What were some of the ways in which those from different churches were meeting the needs of those with HIV/AIDS?

Meeting physical needs as well as providing spiritual support through prayer, Bible reading and teaching.

What else could volunteers and churches be doing on a wider scale?

Advocating on behalf of HIV/AIDS to governments and communities.

How important do you think it is to provide spiritual care to those living with HIV/AIDS?

Godfrey says “We cannot reach out to every body but we can surely make a difference with that one life.”

What is the Church’s responsibility in making a difference with that one life? What is yours?

“In India what I would say is HIV is not far from any of us...We are in the wrong if we don’t help,” says Dr. Varghese. Do you agree with her?

How could or does the Church in your country support African and South Asian churches in the fight against HIV/AIDS?

Home-based Care

What are some of the circumstances that make home-based care a necessity in both Africa and India?

- There's no universal health care so people have to pay for hospital care
- Hospitals may be far away from families, making travel to see the patient expensive and could mean a loss of a day or two of wages for the family
- Perhaps the stigma against the disease would force a person to go home rather than be seen as a HIV/AIDS patient

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Orphans

What was your reaction to the number of children that came out of the grandmother's hut?

What burdens may be placed on family and community members in taking on the care of an orphan?

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What would you have to consider if you were to take on the responsibility of caring for an orphan here in your country?

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Prevention

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there to be a “fear factor” about HIV/AIDS in India?

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- HIV/AIDS is seen as a punishment for the sins of a previous life (Hinduism and Karma) and this causes a huge stigma
- Sex is pretty much a taboo subject in Indian. Being that HIV/AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease it is often not openly talked about

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Enabling

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