

May 2009

*For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ... and find out what pleases the Lord.* Eph 5:8,9

## HIV&AIDS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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The critical role of HIV prevention is reinforced by the reality that for every two people who commence antiretroviral treatment, another five are newly infected. Yet much debate continues around prevention and behaviour change! AIDSLink 81 explores this area and invites you to participate in our discussion.

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## 1. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS: HIV&AIDS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

To what extent do you link prevention with behaviour change, and what are the implications of this? Dr Peter Okaalet addresses behaviour change and the role of the church towards reducing and eliminating risk in *HIV Prevention: A Global Theological Conversation* (2009). Here he identifies three drivers of HIV which increase risk of transmission: (1) *biological drivers* such as the presence of other sexually transmitted infections, an immature or injured genital tract, and pregnancy; (2) *behavioural drivers* connected with individual risky behaviour such as unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, intergenerational sex, early sexual debut, alcohol and drug use, and situations of violence; and (3) *cultural drivers* that are so much taken for granted in particular groups or communities that they come to be part of a cultural identity, such as widow inheritance, dry sex and delayed marriage for economic reasons. These drivers each have implications for behaviour change.

We seek the physical and spiritual transformation of whole communities (as well as individuals) in the context of HIV&AIDS – transformed by Jesus the King and his kingdom values. To do this we need to strategically maximise our “comparative advantage” as a people of faith by deeply understanding our community and the drivers of HIV&AIDS influencing it. In Christian ministries we are generally most familiar with Peter Okaalet’s second category: prevention strategies targeting individual behavioural drivers. We assume that the changes will filter beyond individuals to make a difference in Okaalet’s third category: in families, local communities and beyond.

Commonly we work hard to ensure that individuals have access to accurate knowledge, we utilize personal stories and testimonies, and we train and empower church leaders in good communication and counselling techniques. But are we overlooking Okaalet’s first and third categories? For example, while biological factors are often *treated* in a clinic or hospital, attitudes toward these by the community are fundamental to change at the community level, and here the church has an important role. But what about the third category? These drivers cannot be changed by individuals, but the church-as-community can tackle these. Jesus often worked at this level.

In the gospels we frequently see Jesus radically challenging the social and cultural issues of his day – Okaalet’s third category – in his encounters with the vulnerable and marginalised (Jn 8:3-11; Jn 4:1-30), with professionals and businessmen (Luke 17:18-27, 19:1-9), and with the religious elite (Luke 18:9-14). He addressed drivers and practices that damaged and destroyed human beings made in the image of God. To what extent do we, as a community of faith, follow the example of Jesus?

For reflection and discussion: Read Jn 8:3-11. This is much more than a story about an individual caught in her sin being rescued from the full weight of the law. Jesus is single-handedly tackling issues of power and gender in front of society’s leaders (and he will pay a high price for this):

1. The religious leaders set a trap for Jesus using a high profile incident with moral, legal and theological implications (v.3-5). In what ways can the issue of HIV&AIDS become a trap for followers of Jesus today with moral, legal and theological implications?
2. How does Jesus' interaction with the woman demonstrate God's grace and truth (v.6-9)?
3. To what extent is spiritual transformation necessary for sustained behaviour change (v.10-11)?
4. What do you consider to be the drivers of HIV&AIDS in your community in each of Okaalet's categories?

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## 2. QUESTIONS TO ELICIT FIND ANSWERS

Youth and Young Adults Champion, Sean Marston [sean.marston@sim.org](mailto:sean.marston@sim.org) challenges us to ask questions of young people (NextGen newsletter Issue 13, Oct 2008). Sean writes, "One of the best ways to understand the young people where you are is to become like a sociologist. You see, sociology is about asking the right questions and making use of the answers you get. It is also about watching people. Some questions to be asking and things to be looking for with young people are:

- What are the three biggest influences in young people's lives?
- What type of music do young people listen to?
- How do they talk about their parents, church and their lives?
- How do young people spend their free time?
- What types of media do young people spend their time connected to? (ie: internet, music, movies, mobile phone, online games, social network sites)
- What are the major issues that young people are facing?
- How much influence do religion and religious leaders have on young people?
- Who do young people talk to about their issues and struggles?
- How do young people act at church or youth group?
- How do young people spend their money?
- Where do young people hang out?
- What questions are young people asking?
- How do young people learn about sex and sexuality?
- What words do young people use to describe HIV & AIDS?
- How do young people talk about people who have HIV & AIDS?
- Who are the heroes ("people of influence") that young people look up to?
- What gets young people angry and frustrated?
- What do they understand about the life of Jesus, the church, and the Gospel?

See: [www.youthmesh.org](http://www.youthmesh.org)



Start asking young people around you questions. Most often young people are keen to share their thoughts and ideas. As you spend time watching and asking questions then you will start to understand the world into which you need to bring Jesus Christ and clues on how to do this.

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## 2. HIV&AIDS KNOWLEDGE, SEXUALITY & SPIRITUALITY OF CHURCH YOUTH IN BURKINA FASO

HOPE for AIDS Burkina Faso Coordinator Moïse DIABRI [moisediabri@yahoo.fr](mailto:moisediabri@yahoo.fr) and Technical Advisor Marcus Baeder [baeders@mac.com](mailto:baeders@mac.com) contribute below a summary of their research, *Youth and HIV/AIDS: An overview study on HIV/AIDS knowledge, sexuality and spirituality of the EE/SIM church youth in the Eastern Region of Burkina Faso* (2008). The full report is available in French and English on request, or from <https://simnet.sim.org/Countries/BurkinaFaso/>

A recent survey of unmarried church youth in the Eastern Region of Burkina Faso highlights the need for behavioral change. The majority of the young people who participated in the survey attended church regularly. About 3/4 participated in youth activities at their local church. Out of the 272 youth who completed the questionnaire, 31.6% admitted to having had sexual intercourse at least once, and the mean age at first intercourse was 16.6 years. Older respondents tended to have their first sexual intercourse at a later age than those who were younger.

Understanding of HIV/AIDS was weak with nearly half of the youth not knowing the difference between the virus and the disease. In addition, 37% believed that HIV can be transmitted through mosquito bites, and 32% thought they could avoid getting AIDS by not kissing. However, 90% of youth did know that the virus is transmitted through sexual intercourse. Avoiding contact with people living with HIV was listed by 47% as a way of avoiding infection with HIV.

Many of the respondents indicated that they pray frequently, but only 34% read the Bible regularly. Over half of the youth indicated that they would confide in their pastor if they had questions regarding sexuality, but only one fourth had actually had a discussion with their pastor about sexuality or HIV&AIDS.

Although the church teaches abstinence, it is clear that many young people have sexual relationships, putting themselves at risk. Many of them indicate that HIV&AIDS is a problem in their community and in the nation, but only 44% think they are in danger of being infected by HIV. This survey shows the need for improved behaviour change strategies including teaching on HIV&AIDS and a focus on discipleship.

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## 4. GENDER, HIV AND THE CHURCH

How do social stereotypes affect how boys and girls are brought up? What is the role of the church in changing harmful stereotypes? These are examples of questions posed in activities described in *Gender, HIV and the Church* by Mandy Marshall, Idrissa Ouedraogo and Maggie Sandilands, and edited by Maggie Sandilands. (March 2009).

This case study outlines work done over the last 3 years with Tearfund UK and two local faith-based partner organizations – Christian AIDS Taskforce (CAT) in Zimbabwe and Vigilance in Burkina Faso. The programme took a ‘whole-life’ approach working through the local church to challenge and change attitudes on gender and sexual rights in the context of HIV&AIDS. The case study outlines key aspects of the program for replication, challenges faced, and future issues to consider. Copies can be accessed at; <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Topics/Gender/Research+and+case+studies.htm>

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## 5. HIV PREVENTION: A GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL CONVERSATION

*HIV Prevention: A Global Theological Conversation* (2009) edited by Gillian Paterson wrestles with the complex and sometimes controversial intersection of belief and HIV prevention. It is now available from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. This book comes out of a consultation held in early 2008 of 35 theologians and practitioners, including people living with HIV, from five continents and many church traditions. Participants sought to identify areas of common understanding by sharing, from diverse traditions, the moral, theological and ecclesiological challenges raised by HIV prevention. While you may not agree with all the authors, it will help you to understand the wider debate.



Part One of the book explores what it means ‘to do’ theology in HIV prevention. Part Two consists of essays by distinguished individuals from the consultation who set out their own distinctive and challenging positions. Part Three proposes a range of practical measures available to churches, their leaders and their members. It is a thought provoking resource for church leaders, theologians, teachers and strategists who are committed to a positive, informed and compassionate engagement with HIV prevention. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in recommending the publication, emphasizes, “Every church leader, pastor, preacher, theologian, should take the first step towards joining a global theological conversation by reading this groundbreaking new volume on HIV prevention. Then take the second step ... begin your own theological reflection and engage others in the discourse of life.” The book (168 pages) is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded in parts at: [www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/publications/theological-conversation](http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/publications/theological-conversation)

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## 6. FURTHER THOUGHTS ON INCOME GENERATION

In response to AIDSLink #80 HIV&AIDS and Income Generation, Richard [riclai@gmail.com](mailto:riclai@gmail.com) writes:

“Indeed, generating an income just to cover basic living is so necessary in the part where I am ministering. I don’t know if I am correct to suggest that given the available treatment to ‘prolong’ life-span, which is very much welcomed, that for some, this has resulted in extended suffering in living without a sense of pride or purpose. I am trying out a micro-enterprise type of work - the rearing of pigs. The basic idea is to help villagers to buy piglets and have them rear them for sale at a profit. With the money earned, they are required to first buy new piglets for continuity into the next cycle and use the remaining ‘profit’ for their living expenses, etc. The idea is that this will not only allow the villages to become ‘self-sufficient’ but also give them pride and reason for living. Richard asks:

1. Prolonged living means extended suffering. Is this comment fair?
2. The pig-rearing issue is something that I am only beginning. How can we make this work?

I would appreciate comments from those who are more experienced.”

Send your feedback to [riclai@gmail.com](mailto:riclai@gmail.com) or [international.aids-consultant@sim.org](mailto:international.aids-consultant@sim.org)

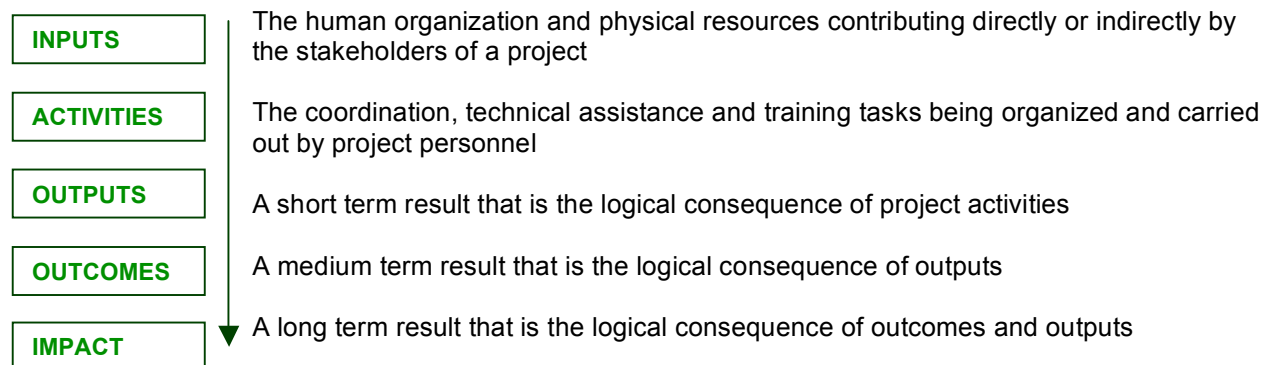
## 7. MAKING IT KNOWN – CONSULTATIONS & COURSES

a. Micah Network invites you to join with church and NGO leaders from around the world in the *4th Triennial Global Consultation on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change*. The consultation will be held outside Nairobi, Kenya, July 13 – 18, 2009. The following issues and more will be tackled and more through bible teaching, plenary sessions, case studies and workshops: climate change and biodiversity depletion; climate change and global economics; stewardship and lifestyle; and prophetic voices mobilizing God's people. There will also be opportunities for face-to-face interaction with the Micah Network HIV&AIDS forum. Keynote speakers include: Bishop Zac Nirinigiye (Assistant Bishop of Kampala), Ruth Padilla de Borst (General Secretary Latin American Theological Fellowship), Dr Stella Simuyu (Rocha International Trustee), Dr Ken Gnanakan (General Director of ACTS), Rt Rev James Jones (Bishop of Liverpool, UK), and Steve Bradbury (Chairman of Micah Network). See: [www.micahevents.org](http://www.micahevents.org)

b. A *Master's Program in Theology: Community Care and HIV&AIDS* is delivered by St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya and accredited by the University of Wales Lampeter, UK. The key objective of this program is to achieve community transformation; it targets church leaders, human resource managers, pastors, teachers, health care workers, community workers, all with experience in HIV&AIDS care at some level in the community. Entrance requirements are a first degree from a recognized university completed at least two years ago or a relevant professional qualification, and at least five years relevant professional experience. For further information: [www.stpaulslimuru.ac.ke](http://www.stpaulslimuru.ac.ke) or contact the program coordinator, St. Paul's Institute of Life Long Learning: [administrator@spill.ac.ke](mailto:administrator@spill.ac.ke)

## 6. TIP of the MONTH – M&E: LONG TERM IMPACT

Impact can be defined as the broader, higher level, long-term effect or consequence linked to the goal or vision. When designing your project there will be only one impact statement which defines the overall "big picture" need or problem being addressed and should be measurable over the lifetime of the project This can be expressed as a verb, for example "To accelerate the response to orphans and vulnerable children impacted by HIV&AIDS in the Southern Province." The chain of cause and effect between activities and impact can be drawn, and both quantitative and qualitative measurements made of the results.



For further reference see the Canadian International Development Agency, *Results-based Management in CIDA: An Introductory Guide to the Concepts and Principles* at: [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218132656-PPK](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218132656-PPK)



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