

"BROKEN HEARTS FOR A BROKEN WORLD"

{Psalm 142}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

January 13, 2008

Test Your Knowledge

Answers to the questions are in red.

1. Approximately how many people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS?

10.2 million

20 million

40 million

2. What percentage of those infected with HIV are women?

30%

50%

70%

3. Worldwide, what is the age range most infected with HIV?

15-24 years old

25-34 years old

35 years and older

4. Roughly how many people are infected with HIV per day?

1,000

15,000

50,000

5. How is HIV transmitted the most?

Homosexual sex

Drug use

Heterosexual sex

6. An estimated _____ Americans have HIV and don't know it.

10,000

75,000

250,000

7. Is there a cure for AIDS?

No

Yes

8. The virus in an HIV-infected person is present in ...

Blood and sweat

Blood and sexual fluids

Sexual fluids and sweat

9. According to a George Barna survey, what percentage of Christians said they would give to fight HIV?

- ✚ 3%
- ✚ 14%
- ✚ 30%
- ✚ 72%

10. Is there a difference between HIV & AIDS?

- ✚ **Yes. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.**
- ✚ No

Quiz created by Elizabeth Styffe, RN, MN, director of Saddleback Church's HIV/AIDS Initiative

Whenever the subject of HIV/AIDS is discussed in the church one of the first questions is: **WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS?**

...persons usually asking this are those who are ignorant about the subject

...there are those who see this only as a gay men's disease and if people living this lifestyle would alter their ways we would soon have the disease under control

When we first became aware of the HIV/AIDS pandemic the focus was indeed upon the gay community. We became especially mindful of it living in the Silicon Valley.

But the question that we face as a church—and as a society—is **WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT HIV/AIDS?** And...

...**why should the church become involved in this disaster?**

...**why not place our focus on cancer, TB, diabetes, or heart disease?**

...indeed those are excellent questions and they need to be addressed.

Let me give you one simple answer in response to these questions: HIV carries a stigma that other diseases don't carry.

...no one is banished from a neighborhood because they are infected with tuberculosis

...no one loses their job simply because they might contract malaria

...husbands don't beat their wives—or divorce them—for developing the flu, diabetes, or cancer

...no relative refuses to care for children whose parents were killed in an auto accident

But...all of those things—and more—happen on a daily basis where HIV/AIDS is involved!

Not only does HIV carry stigma and shame, but it is preventable. We cannot prevent many diseases that plague humankind, but we know how abstinence, monogamy, and condoms can go a long way toward stopping HIV in its tracks.

I'm sure when I say that you respond, *"It's their own fault then; their own risky behavior led to them being infected. I'm not sure why you're asking me to care about someone else's stupid choices!"*

I know you feel that way for I confess to you this morning that's how I felt at least at one point. The fact, though, is that millions of women receive the disease from unfaithful husbands, millions of babies are born to HIV positive mothers, and millions become HIV positive through tainted blood supplies!

Let me share some information with you published by the World Health Organization..

SLIDE PRESENTATION

I find all of these figures not only overwhelming...but sobering. The real question we should be wrestling with is none of those mentioned before but: WHAT WOULD JESUS DO IN THIS SAME SITUATION?

...the gospels are full of His responses to illness, death, and suffering

...Jesus was moved with compassion and filled with pity.

I remind you, Jesus wept over Jerusalem because its people were so far from the life He had come to offer them!

...He touched the untouchables

...prostitutes

...hated tax collectors

...the blind

...the crippled

...the leprous

...the mentally ill

...the outcasts

...the marginalized

...the despised...and the rejected ones

The Bible says that he willingly took on the pain and sorrow that wasn't His...He chose to bear it!

Jesus' response answers all the questions...clears out the confusion...diffuses our arguments...and destroys any ambiguity. **He**

suffered for hurting people without asking them how they got sick! Can we do anything less?

Jesus didn't ask whether or not these had done something risky or stupid

...whether they were gay or straight

...whether it was their fault or whether they were an innocent victim of someone else's behavior

Jesus just chose to stand with them...shoulder to shoulder! **And, it's our mission...our call...AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY...as His representatives/ambassadors in this world to do what He would do—to go where He would go...and to love as He would love.**

Relief agencies and governments are hard at work attacking this global giant, but it wasn't to any government or relief agency that Jesus said: ***"I will build you...and the gates of hell cannot prevail against you!"***

...Jesus spoke these words to the church

...it is the church that is the most effective distribution channel of help...assistance...care...support...and compassion, and it has the moral authority to call for lifestyle changes!

In some parts of the world...in village after village in Africa...there are no post offices...department stores...hospitals or medical clinics...but there is a church! The members of those churches are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ to the broken world where they find themselves. All the relief agencies and governments combined cannot bring an end to this pandemic...they can make a dent—and oh how we need them—but **the call is for us to respond—to adopt a village—to partner with a church—NOW!**

CONCLUSION

I am going to challenge you this morning to take three action steps with me this coming week...

- ✚ I dare you to pray each day—*"Break my heart with the things that break the heart of God!"*—and don't you dare pray it if you don't mean it!
- ✚ I challenge you each day to take just 5 minutes to pray for those who are suffering with HIV/AIDS.
- ✚ I implore you to ask God—what would You have me to do?

