

Support Groups Connect HIV Patients to Christ

Supposedly, only six degrees of separation stand between any two human beings on the planet. With that being said, how many stand between people who are HIV-negative and those that are positive?

Within the crisis center in Kathmandu, many men, women and children from ages 2 to 60 come through the doors representing over a dozen different people groups, and over 50 percent of the districts of Nepal. They are farmers, truck drivers, small business owners, drug users, husbands, mothers and sons. They are Christian pastors, Buddhist monks and Muslim leaders.

In fact, there aren't many communities that could say they don't have a connection to HIV.

Therefore, it's pretty convincing to believe it takes much fewer than six connections to connect someone living with HIV to someone who isn't—and not just in Nepal.

Mahesh* is typical of those who come to the care center. He contracted HIV as a migrant laborer in India. He came to Kathmandu when he needed to start the Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) treatment, an HIV medication.

Unfortunately, when he heard he would need to take ART, he said he would rather die than take the medication. The Care Centre team encouraged him to wait and meet the support group who all go through similar things.

While sitting with the support group, Mahesh shared his story and let people ask him questions. Not only that, but he heard about **God's love** as the support group prayed and supported him.

He shared with everyone, "I was ready to die three times because I felt that I am the only one who has this HIV. Because of my HIV status, my whole family is rejected by society. But now, I will say that I will not die soon. I will live. I will look after my family and my father."

He has begun to give of his time to help people who are HIV-positive in his area, which is far from Kathmandu.

Even though HIV is preventable, it crosses socioeconomic, political and national boundaries with ease throughout the world. It is present in all genders, ages and belief backgrounds.

It is an unfortunate and powerful equalizer that brings those affected to a place of need and desperation—this is the place where believers can be as the body of Christ. Those that love God can meet needs, bring comfort, and speak the gospel to those in desperation. And no one has to go very far to find them.

For more information about how to get involved, contact: *info@*.

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