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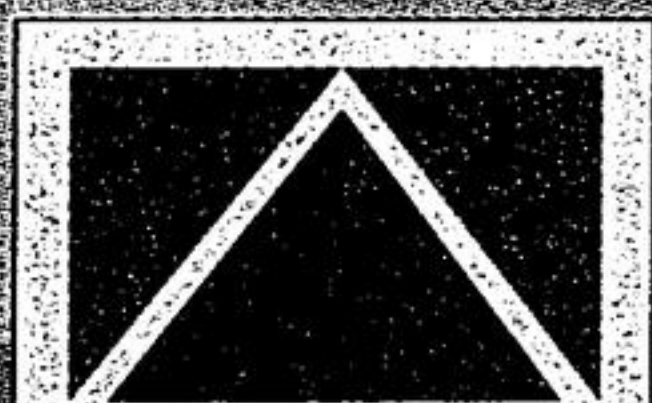
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# Family planning, condoms unheard of in Ethiopia

From page 11.

family planning or the use of condoms as a westernized evil.

"Children secure food for them, the more workers they have, the better they are taken care of when they're old.

"Children are weak here, many die, so the more children they have, the more prosperous they are.

"Family planning, condoms, these are foreign concepts to what they've known all their lives.

"We're dealing with people's mind-set and the Ethiopian culture is far more binding than others."

More than 30 per cent of the country is Muslim and the practice of polygamy is widespread in that community, increasing the risk of contracting HIV.

"If a Muslim man has four wives, he has likely infected all



**KULENI BERHANU:** Ethiopian men often see family planning or the use of condoms as a westernized evil.

four, plus the children," Ms Berhanu said.

Prostitution is, by far, the overriding factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Prostitution is legal in Ethiopia; it's an accepted prac-

tice. Men are not shunned for using prostitutes and selling sex is often the only way a woman has to earn money to feed her children.

When your children are crying with hunger, contracting AIDS seems a far-off threat.

Ms Berhanu said aid organizations are trying to help, but it's a slow, costly process.

Securing basic health services to treat AIDS-related infections, pneumonia and diarrhea is important and will help thousands of people, she said.

But reaching prostitutes remains a necessary, challenging goal.

"People go out at night, talking to women one at a time, inviting them to rehabilitation centres for counselling and skills training," she said.

"One person at a time takes forever, but at the moment, it's the most effective way we have."

## Bereaved Families of Ontario



Founded in 1978, under the auspices of the Hospital for Sick Children, Bereaved Families is a self-help organization staffed by bereaved persons. Specialists in the area of grief and bereavement from the professional community serve as a resource both in the development of on-going programmes and in the supervision and training of self-help group leaders.

This co-operation between lay and professionals has enabled Bereaved Families to better respond to the needs of the bereaved and has helped guarantee that the best support is provided.

**1-800-969-6904**

York Region An association of families who have lost a child through death.

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