

**Institute for the Study of the Bible  
&  
Worker Ministry  
Project**

**School of Theology  
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**Annual Report  
2003**

## **A Word from the Director**

### **Gerald West**

This year has seen the end of our transitional phase of integration. The ISB&WM worked hard during 2003 so that we could begin 2004 as a new, fully integrated organisation. We even began the search this year for a new name, a name that would capture both our past and our future.

It is not a new name, however, that is important. What is important is the reality of a unified and integrated project. This we have achieved. We realise that there is a great deal of public relations work to do to inform and educate our partners. Many of our partners only have knowledge of aspects of our work and so will have to be introduced to the fullness of our programmes. We also need to find ways of reporting that satisfy the various needs of our different partners. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to find ways of preparing our financial reports that satisfy the different expectations of our different partners. To this end we have decided to employ a full-time Administrator. The ISB&WM has until now worked with a part-time Administrator, and we want to take this opportunity of thanking Ms Sanele Mngadi, whom many of you have come to know, for her hard work over the years. We can report that Sanele Mngadi will be staying on with the ISB&WM in 2004 in a new capacity, as our Fieldworker in the Empangeni rural region. She will be replaced by Ms Comilla Laban, who starts our full-time Administrator in April 2004. We know that her appointment and her considerable financial experience will enable us to provide better reporting to our partners.

This is also the last year of the University of Natal. From 1 January 2004 we will be the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville is going well and we look forward to the opportunities that the new University will bring to us.

## **Economic Justice Programme**

### **Sibusiso Gwala**

#### **1. Introduction**

This programme remains an integral part of the project's ideological and theological commitment to grassroots communities particularly the unemployed youth. Economic Justice Programme focuses on three areas namely Training, Advocacy and Lobbying. Unemployed youth are the forgotten majority of our society at present. Frustrations are high as there is no stable future for a population that can neither get married nor become independent because they have no income.

In this project Worker Ministry attempts to be a service provider. Our key strategy partner in this endeavour is the Ecumenical Young Christian Workers organization. We attempt to provide economic literacy, organizational skills development, negotiation skills and solidarity for youth who want training so that they can cope with their existing unemployment and find way of working with others to transform the economic system, which is generating unemployment at this time.

## **2. Progress towards meeting objectives**

### **Training**

#### **Economic Literacy Workshops**

The special focus of this is training young unemployed people for leadership in order to enable them to take their rightful place in society. In 2003 alone, the economic justice program was able to run 11 workshops on various topics for the unemployed youth. Topics ranged from skills transfer workshops on how to be a leader, how to speak in public, facilitation skills and report writing skills. Workshops were also held on economic literacy and issues like what is an economy, the effect of budget on the unemployed, neo-liberal economy and alternatives thereto.

### **Advocacy**

It in this area of our work that we shall deal with the questions of justice in the economy. Critical analysis of the neo-liberal economy shall be done. Biblical and theological resources are made available to participants. Contextual Bible Studies shall be conducted so shall the Gospel Inquiry method be used. This programme also touches on HIV and AIDS as economic justice concern.

### **Lobbying**

Basic Income Grant and Worker Sunday Campaign

## **3. Activities**

### **Industrial Mission 250**

This is a course that we offer to the undergraduate students within the university of KwaZulu-Natal with a view to introducing them to issues of economic justice in the bible and also issues of worker theology. Themes such as Jesus and Economics shall be covered, GEAR, NEPAD, Socialism Capitalism and so on

### **The Worker Sunday Campaign.**

This campaign is organized by the Industrial Mission Network, which consists of Pacsa, Workers Ministry, Esset, Industrial Ministry South Africa and Church and work (SACBC).

Worker Ministry together with Pacsa took responsibility for the distribution of the newspapers and poster in the Province of KwaZulu Natal. We also edited the newspaper on behalf of the network and published it in both English and Zulu.

This year there was a lot effort put into the campaign by the young Christian Workers special because the campaign dealt specifically with the basis income grant. The Workers Sunday campaign was celebrated in 23 Main line churches (Those includes; The Methodists, Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational and Roman Catholic churches).

There were 38 student of Industrial mission class at the University of Natal who all organized Worker Sunday services in different part of Southern Africa during term and holiday time. There were also 13 undergraduate students registered for Industrial mission who also organized Worker Sunday services.

In Churches where we have worked for some years, Worker Sunday celebration have become part normal liturgical for the year. Distribution of the poster and newspaper through Challenge magazine also helped to get information in far away places that would be normally out of reach.

### **Unemployment Survey**

An unemployment survey was conducted in Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg and Durban on the impact of unemployment on the youth. A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed to unemployed people who were interviewed by trained interviews in major cities and many rural areas of the province.

This survey was followed by an analysis of the questionnaires and the findings formulated in the form of a manifesto. A rally was held at Koinonia, Botha's hill where more than a 1000 young unemployed people were present and made their voices were heard by business, government, political parties, families, churches and whole community.

### **4. Outcomes**

- Workshops on the Basic Income Grant and other campaigns were held with a view to capacitating the youth on lobbying and advocacy at the local, provincial and national levels.
- There will also be workshops on data transfer where issues like what is the economy? How does economy work? What is GEAR? What is NEPAD? and what is Socialism?
- Lobbying will happen at two levels, namely at the level of the unemployed youth and also at the level of the pastors and leaders of churches.
- Two campaigns will be used namely the Basic Income Grant Campaign with the unemployed youth and also the Worker Sunday Campaign with the church leadership.

### **5. Achievements/highlights**

#### **Survey**

The unemployment survey was a resounding success. It trained young people on the necessary skills of doing surveys analyses results and present findings to relevant authorities. It also gave a voice to the unemployed people to express their feelings about the neo-liberal economics system. The various leaders present also received first hand what the young people where saying.

**Thukela-Mzinyathi Region:** A new initiative for unemployment youth was launched in December 1999. This was followed up by many workshops conducted in Ladysmith and in Estcourt. These workshops concentrated on looking at the needs of unemployed youth.

We are happy that we have been able to facilitate the launch of a region of the YCW in Thukela-Mzinyathi because it is a region of our province, which has been identified as lacking the NGO and CBO structures, which exist in other areas. These are the forgotten towns and areas of KwaZulu Natal. Our strategy as worker ministry is to work together with the Christian Council in this region in order to multiply contacts with our target audience.

## 6. Indicators

- Attendance register
- Reports on base groups meetings and consultation
- National and Provincial meetings with YCW members
- A survey document on unemployment

## 7. Proposed work plan for 2004

### Training

Trainings will focus on the following themes: Leadership, fundraising, social analysis, nutrition, contextual Bible studies, positive living and voluntary counselling plus testing. Four major workshops on '*The impact of unemployment on youth*' and '*Apathy among youth and the hope for the future*'. These will be attempts to restore hope among youth using theological and biblical resources to achieve that objective.

*"Theology of HIV/AIDS"* and *"HIV/AIDS and Economic Justice"*. These are three-day residential workshops, targeting youth leaders, PWA's and HIV/AIDS practitioners.

### Campaigns

Basic Income Grant and Worker Sunday

## Theology of Work Programme Mzwandile Nunes

### 1. Introduction

The South African economy has been unable to generate sufficient work for all its citizens in spite of the right to work being enshrined in our constitution. In our materialist society the value of a person is seen in monetary terms. If one does not earn a salary then one is not really considered to be fully human. In our own theological tradition what makes people to be made in the image of God is the fact that they are co-creators with God in transforming our physical world to be at the service of humanity. Our government has not yet acknowledged the right of the unemployed to receive damages or compensation for its inability to provide jobs for all. We do not yet have an unemployment benefit (dole system) in place for those who have never worked. The working-class is affected by mass unemployment especially amongst the youth. The youth are frustrated because they do not see a reason for their existence. Unemployment demoralizes them; they become discouraged and passive in front of the problem.

The Christian church in general does not understand the causes of this problem. Our Christian faith teaches us that we are co-creators with God, that we have a legitimate place in the world as creators but unemployment denies us this right. The philosophy of neo-liberalism, which is driving economic globalisation at the moment, puts the emphasis on profit and efficiency of the enterprise. It wants to shrink the size of the state sector (cut-back on welfare, public education, health etc.) thus limiting the redistribution of wealth through state institutions. This international economic philosophy has been adopted by our government as the Gear (growth, employment and redistribution) Macro-economic framework for our country.

This policy has not been able to soak up unemployment instead there are indications that it is getting worse as older industries like textiles, garment manufacture, shoe ware, the railways etc. shed many jobs while the newer industries are unable to create enough jobs to make an impact on youth unemployment. Kwa-Zulu Natal province in particular with its history of political violence does not attract enough investors as a result youth unemployment remains at around 80%.

The theology that is taught in Seminaries and Schools of Theology does not help and prepare those who are in training to cope with the current economic situation. Unemployed youth present in all churches are not guided or supported to social analyses and reflection in order to gain more meaningful understanding of our economic context, which impacts heavily on their lives as well as the future.

### ***Economic Restructuring:***

Neo-liberal economic policies continue to affect the availability of work in different sectors. Women are often the victims of restructuring. The clothing and shoe industries have been decimated by the import of cheap « fog Kong » products. These are often made with un-unionised labour in countries where local laws do not protect against « starvation or slave » wages being paid. In our country we are faced with unfair competition on prices because many of the imported goods are manufactured under conditions, which do not allow for full respect for the human dignity or even the viability of the humans involved in the manufacturing process. Because of this the rights of workers are constantly under attack and there is pressure for wages to be lowered over time.

### ***Theological context:***

Jesus Christ, the son of humanity [the son of man], preached good news (clothing for the naked, food for the hungry, housing for the homeless, employment for the unemployed and spiritual healing for the afflicted [victims of exclusion from society through virtue of HIV status, poverty, education, gender and sexual orientation, racism etc.]) to the poor {families of the unemployed, the working-poor and all in the working-class for whom there is no adequate or egalitarian sharing of the material resources of the earth}.

The programmes of the Isb Worker ministry Project all attempt to be good news to the poor. Some of the activities deal specifically with the question of spiritual healing. It is a liberating experience for an unemployed youth to discover that permanent unemployment is a by-product of Global capitalism rather than a punishment from God for the individual acts [or sins] of an individual unemployed person. Knowing the real cause of unemployment can help the person to survive cruel comments from family members and the society at large.

Persons do not easily commit suicide when they know that the cause of their unemployment is not due to personal sin but rather the structural sin which is imbedded in an imperfect, unjust and unequal economic system which rewards a small elite and punishes the majority by withholding the basic material resources of the earth which are the fruits of God's creation and destined to be enjoyed by all of humanity. [No person, no elite, no nation, no group has the right to privatise ownership of the resources of God's creation because God intended their use for all of humanity regardless of nationality, race, continent of origin etc.]

### ***Political Context:***

The Isb Worker ministry project embraces the concept of African Renaissance with vigour. The industrial revolution with its technological and scientific discoveries was used as the vehicle to determine the unjust and unequal society we live in today. Elites in England who owned land and factories were the first to appropriate to themselves the material fruits of the new society. Elites in Europe and North America benefited also. War between industrialised nations in Europe (1939-1945) destroyed historical advantages that their elites had enjoyed. From the end of the war until the present it is elites within the United States of America who have continued to appropriate wealth to themselves and also power to control the distribution of this wealth in the world. Africa in pre-industrial revolution times had already been plundered. Human beings from Africa were captured and sold by slave-traders to elites in many countries of the world. This haemorrhaging weakened the continent. It lost its human resource.

From the time of the industrial revolution until the present it has continued to be plundered, to be stripped of its natural resources; in a context where humanity in Africa has not benefited materially from these resources. Colonial society has given way to neo-colonial society with not much difference in the amount of resources available to the poor. It was said at the time that the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war was a fight by the allies for democracy and against the “herrenvolk” ideology of the axis powers. In the world today we have neither achieved economic democracy where the majority of humanity has a say in the distribution of material resources and products of the earth nor have we achieved the non-racial society which was supposed to be the fruit of the fight against the “herrenvolkism” of the nazis. People of goodwill need to recognise the fact that the poverty in Africa is the consequence mainly of the greed of elites who live elsewhere. For Africa to be born again (renaissance) it will need the solidarity and joint action of the poor of the whole world and their allies. These are the reasons why we participate in the programmes of Jubilee South Africa and why we also support international networking to fight for the abolition of immoral and unjust debt.

### **3. Progress**

#### ***Main Objectives***

We want to give people basic knowledge about how the economy works so that they can equip themselves to gain access to resources that they are normally denied. Our faith tells us that the world was created for all of humanity and through bible studies and faith reflections we try to get people to realize their social responsibility to fight for justice for all the poor of the earth.

#### ***Joining Hands Against Hunger Initiatives:***

An important initiative concerning youth unemployment was launched in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This involved a partnership between Joining Hands Against Hunger (JHAHKZN) and the South African Young Christian Workers (SAYCW). Unemployed Youth were recruited from the YCWKZN to undergo training as action-researchers. After training these youth conducted structured interviews with other unemployed youth. Over a two-month period almost 3000 unemployed youth were interviewed.

The theology of work desk helped with the training of the action-researchers and the formulation of the questionnaire. The results so far disturb our understanding of the world-view of the unemployed. Many youth feel guilty and believe that unemployment is a punishment by God for their own personal conduct. There is little faith shown in God as a creator God. Christianity is just seen as another fatalistic religion. Hunger is seen to be part of a normal life experience and nothing can be done about it according to some.

In contradiction to the above some of the results do show a change in consciousness among the leadership of the unemployed youth. Those youth who have benefited from courses on economic justice run by the ISB/WM, PACSA, JHAH, YCW and others do show some belief in the causes of unemployment being related to unjust structures, which can be changed. This gives us as change-agents a lot of hope for the future. As a program we are convinced that we need to continue to be involved with the training of trainers in this field.

### ***Basic Income Grant (B.I.G.) Campaign***

Most of the NGOs involved in Economic Justice activity have become involved in the Basic Income Grant Coalition. This coalition is trying to persuade the government to give an unemployment benefit to those who have never worked. The amount that is suggested is a very modest R100 per month. The role of the Theology of Work program in this has been to persuade as many church people as possible to get involved in the campaign. BIG in itself will not solve the unemployment problem. However it is the start of a process of conscientization, which mobilizes people around the cause of the unemployed.

### ***United States of America (U.S.A) networking:***

The co-ordinator of the program is also the Chairperson of Joining Hands Against Hunger South Africa (JHAHSA). I was invited to visit JHAHUSA and did so in March/April 2003. It was a painful experience to discover that the poor everywhere have common problems. In visits to a centre for women who are victims of domestic violence, a soup kitchen and discussions with many ngos I discovered a lot about the many inequalities in American society and mechanisms that are used to under resource the poor and unemployed. This visit helped me to understand the extent to which neo-liberal capitalism is able to control the lives of all the poor both in the third world and in countries of advanced capitalism like the U.S.A.

### **Campaigns**

ISBWorker Ministry takes part in many networks and participates in their campaigns.

The Worker Sunday Campaign is organised by the Industrial Mission Network. In the theology of work programme students come from all over South Africa and Africa. It is this programme, which has a national focus at present. It is also exploring the possibility of limited involvement with the rest of Africa.

All the other programmes function mainly in the Province of KZN and particularly in the region called KZN Midlands. Working-class youth and adults feel uncomfortable in church as the sermons seldom address what are burning issues for them. They never hear sermons about worker rights or issues like that.



The project runs an industrial mission course in different seminaries of the Moravian, Lutheran, Anglican, Evangelical and Methodist churches with a view to helping future pastors minister to the world of work. Workshops are held on contextual bible studies for economic justice for local church leaders.

#### **4. Outcomes**

- Some ministers and local church leaders become sympathetic to the plight of the unemployed and workers and are prepared to help with their integration into the life of the churches so that their voice is heard.
- More chaplains are recruited to work with unemployed youth especially through the YCW.
- Seminarians and pastors are prepared to commit more of their time to working with the unemployed.
- Training of more theologians in Economic Justice and Industrial Mission.
- Training and workshops of lay ministers and integration of African Independent Churches (AIC's)
- Spreading Contextual Theology in the curriculum for training

#### **5. Indicators**

- Class attendance register
- Class assignments
- Reports
- Reading reaction
- Field-work experience report
- Implementation of Worker Sunday
- Class evaluation report
- Exam results

#### **6. Achievements**

##### ***Teaching Industrial Mission Course:***

In 2003 an undergraduate and postgraduate course was run at the University of Natal. Our first Mth in Industrial Mission graduated in December. This is an important event. Most of the teachers of Industrial Mission are of a certain age. At age 53 the writer of this report is one of the youngest experts in Industrial Mission. The others are in their 60's and 70's. It is therefore very important that we have now a young graduate in the form of the Rev Dixie Mashigoane from the Lutheran church who has reached masters level. There is real hope that the species will not become extinct like the dodo. (As dead as a dodo!)

At Honours and Masters level At Honours and Masters level there are 11 students taking the course. We look at the spirituality and economics of Ujamaa (African Socialism). How can Nyerere as a Christian and a Socialist have something to say to us in our context of mass unemployment? We look also at the writings of Amilcar Cabral and Kwame Nkrumah as examples of great African thinkers who tried to grapple with the problems of poverty and unemployment in a world of plenty.

We try to understand the YCW movement in Africa today as an example of African Socialism that takes forward the ideas of people like Nyerere. We look at those economic justice texts in the bible, which the missionaries were not allowed to teach to our ancestors. We try to understand the bible as a faith document, which speaks to our neo-liberal, individualistic world and issues, challenges about solidarity and sharing. The same course is taught at seminaries and bible colleges throughout South Africa.

## **7. Plan for 2004**

- 27 students have regular formation workshops at the College of the Transfiguration (Anglican; in Grahams town) 6 sessions per year.
- 11 students have had an introductory course at St Francis-Xavier major seminary. (Catholic-Cape Town.)
- 20 students from the Moravian seminary in Cape Town will have 3 workshops over the year to equip them to be of service to unemployed youth.
- 8 students at the Lutheran Seminary at Maphumulo will have a course of 3 hours every 14 days for the year.
  
- Follow up workshops will be held with those students who are now ordained and are out in the field. (2 workshops in the second half of the year.)

### ***Post-training networking:***

In the last 5 years more than 200 theological students have been trained in industrial mission in the following training institutions: Moravian Seminary (Heideveld Cape Town), College of the Transfiguration, CPSA, (Grahams town), Umpumulo Theological Seminary, ELCSA, (Maphumulo), ETHOS and the University of Natal.

In the past year attempts have been made to contact those who have been trained in order to ensure that theory gets put into practice at congregational level. The vocational training workshops of IMSA have proved to be good opportunities to gather former students together to review industrial mission activity. This work will continue in 2004 with workshops planned for the second half of the year.

## **Solidarity Programme for People Living with HIV and AIDS** **Bongi Zengele**

### **1. Introduction**

This is a brief annual report on progress in the Solidarity Programme for People living with HIV/AIDS. The year is quickly coming towards the end, while we are happy for the tasks well done we are concerned about the slow progress in the field of HIV/AIDS to enable more positive people to access treatment. As a result we are faced with high levels of unnecessary loss of lives through pre-mature deaths, if generic drugs were freely available people's lives would be prolonged. The main argument is that of preserving life and extent life span if this is possible with the availability of treatment, this is where our emphasis needs to be vehemently directed. It is important to note that AIDS is labelled as a bigger threat to the world security than terrorism.

In Pietermaritzburg 150 funeral directors are doing booming business, reflecting back in the 60's there were only 10 funeral parlours, this shows the seriousness of the pandemic. Concurrently in the city there is an escalating number of loan sharks stores with slogans 'rest in executive style'. The irony of it is the fact that funerals are becoming more and more flashy. The poor and the unemployed are unable to deal with these exuberant costs of funerals when they do not have food to eat on daily basis. These funerals leave deprived families even poorer; in some instances the deceased is normally the sole breadwinner of the family. Then his/her death is detrimental to the economy of the country as whole as well as that of the immediate family.

## **2. Aims of solidarity programme:**

1. To instil hope and nurture positive living among the infected people, by creating solidarity that promotes ongoing loving care and support.
2. The formation of community based support groups is aimed at creating a conducive environment that would encourage, affirm, strengthen and restore human dignity within the lives of HIV positive people thus cementing their support system.
3. To remind people living with HIV/AIDS that they are also made in the image of God, as they are suffering, they are part of the suffering body of Christ and they need to keep their faith strong in God.
4. To enable people living with HIV/AIDS to interact with the Bible through the Bible Study and express their own interpretation and experience as individuals, and as a group. Thus receiving spiritual support to nurture their well being in a more holistic way.
5. To enhance solidarity within the support groups and assist them to lobby the government for the recognition of their rights and access to treatment at a low and affordable price. As the majority of the infected population lives below poverty line.
6. To prompt the involvement of local churches in the struggle towards positive living through the formation of church-based support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS.

## **3.Objectives:**

- To facilitate the establishment of Community Based Support Groups for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- To facilitate community based basic education and training in HIV/AIDS using vernacular language and personal testimony.
- To facilitate the formation of peer-counsellors to provide needed support from the group itself.
- To facilitate train the trainer course in positive living, to enable the implementation of the well-ness programme and basic home-base care.
- To facilitate life-skills programme to assist and support people living with HIV/AIDS in their daily living as they struggle to come into grips with their status.
- To facilitate update workshops on treatment campaigns and passing on of new information to the support group members.
- To run Bible Study programme with the support group as means of nurturing them with spiritual fulfilment.
- To enhance legal knowledge on issues pertaining HIV/AIDS thus empowering the support groups to know and safeguard their basic human rights, which are normally violated.

- To assist support groups to identify at least one potential project they would like to embark on at community level or as a support group.
- To identify existing talents and promote them through networking and referrals.

#### 4. Key performance areas:

##### 4.1 Outreach, care and support

At present there are eighteen support groups that receive training and mentoring from the Solidarity Programme. This is one of the arms of the programme to do outreach, care and support in the community. They are as follows:

1. **Siyaphila** Support Group in the City Centre of **Pietermaritzburg** there are 30 members and they meet bi-weekly.
2. **Mpumuzu** Support Group in Kwa-Mpumuzu area, there are 10 members and they meet bi-weekly.
3. **Thokozani** Support Group in **Richmond**, there are 18 members and they meet bi-weekly
4. **Howick** Clinic Support in Howick and Merrivale areas. There are 13 members that meet bi-weekly.
5. **Khululeka** Support in **Embalenhle** Clinic, servicing Imbali area. There are 20 members and they meet bi-weekly.
6. **Izandla zothando** Support Group in **Mbali stage 1 and 2**, there are 20 members that meet bi-weekly.
7. **Sinothando** Support Group in **Ashdown**, there are 30 members that meet bi-weekly.
8. **Ilanga** Support Group in **Mpophomeni** and there are 10 members that meet bi-weekly.
9. **Thandukuphila** Support Group in **Nseleni** and there are 25 members that meet once a month.
10. **Sinenhlanhla** Support Group in **Mt.Elias (kwa-Njengabantu)** there are 7 members that meet once a month.
11. **Mpilonde** Support Group in **Willowfontein**, there are 20 members and they meet bi-weekly.
13. **Ixopo** Support Group in **Buddhist Centre** and **Christ the King** hospital. There are 15 members and they meet bi-monthly.
14. **Zimele** Support group **kwa-Dambuza**, there are 15 members.
15. **Sukumani** Support group in **Willowfontein**, with 12 members.
16. **Peace Makers** Support group in **Edendale Hospital VCT**
17. **(WAWi) Wathinta Abafazi Wathint'imbokodo** Support group at Section **13 eMbali**, they meet weekly.
18. **St Martins' Church** support group in **Edendale valley** with 12 members, they meet weekly.

##### 4.2 Capacity building, education, training and job-creation

ISB/WM provides basic training in capacity building; one cannot assume that PWA'S have needed skills to run support groups. Initiating these groups need a specialised skills and capacity to maintain them. A committee need to know the roles and responsibilities of each portfolio and support it. They need to understand organisational development dynamics in order to grow and strengthen their involvement in community.

This is possible because of basic support and mentoring role played by the solidarity programme. We offer specialised training that is aimed at facilitating positive living attitudes and motivation needed for PWA'S through life. Education and training ensures that members of the support group are provided with updated information on HIV/AIDS issues, as they need to be well aware of the virus inside their bodies. We live in a context where there is a lot of information on AIDS in the media, but it is basically in the form of warning statements that there is no cure for AIDS. While this is true it is a negative message with detrimental results to the infected.

This leaves no hope for those who are HIV positive; some go to the extreme of committing suicide as they think they are dying anyway, wanting to speed up the process. The reality remains that people who are tested HIV positive, are not dead. But are living with an incurable virus. This is where the heart of the solidarity programme lies, by providing means of support where there is despair. Without being in denial, facing the harsh reality of death, PWA'S need to hear life giving messages and support. So in solidarity with the infected there is a for a transformative empathy. It is important to open the eyes of the people through life by creating awareness about their context and how other stakeholders impact on their lives given the reality of HIV/AIDS. The programme enables members to go beyond themselves but look at socio-economic factors, political situation with regards to HIV/AIDS as well as cultural dimensions that exacerbate the spread of HIV. This level of knowledge is transferred during workshop sessions, that is why these became tools of impacting our skills and expertise to our constituency. Individual group as to where they would want to embark on as a group determines Job creation and they have capacity to make it possible. For an example Siyaphila Support group has identified a programme of Community Motivators as tool of doing outreach to PWAS in community. While it is an identified need especially to newly diagnosed members, it serves as a job creation initiative as there is funding available for this kind of outreach. So the PWAS have identified their strength and are using it to help others. Community Motivators programme is very powerful tool to teach counsel and support PWAS and their families at home. It has really helped in fighting the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. The strength of this intervention lies in the fact that the motivators are confident and are living positively with HIV/AIDS.

#### **4.3 Mobilising, lobbying and advocacy**

Our focus this year was to strengthen mobilization, advocacy and lobbying through already existing initiatives, thus enhancing the spirit of activism within the support groups as they are directly affected. These will inform underlying values that influences the following:

- Forming strong partnership with all the community-based support groups
- Bi-weekly field visits by the Co-ordinator
- Monitoring and support for all Support Groups
- Ongoing support through Campaigns such as Basic Income Grant, Treatment Action Campaign and Poverty Alleviation Grant.
- Holding monthly and quarterly workshops with the support groups from all areas of operation, to provide space for feedback and evaluation of their impact in communities
- Approaching local churches for long term support in the fight against hunger and stigma attached to PWA'S
- Running conflict management workshops with all support groups, as part of capacity building

- To strengthen job creation initiatives as practical sustainable support for individuals and groups
- To run more Bible Studies with PWA'S as means of equipping and empowering them to use the Bible as a tool for spiritual support and challenging the injustices imposed on the poor and marginalized
- To organize more workshops on economic justice issues as means of equipping PWA'S with broader knowledge in the world of the economy. So that they can take an active role in challenging economic policies that are detrimental to the working class and the unemployed.
- Embarking on HIV/AIDS campaign, as a tool to challenge cultural tendencies/practices and myths that impacts badly in fighting stigma and promoting positive behavioural change in communities.

## **5. Networking**

- Solidarity Programme hosted two major awareness events with the local support groups. These took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February: 'STI'S /Condom week' and 16<sup>th</sup> of May: Candlelight Memorial Day for all who died of AIDS. These were followed by public demonstration in the city centre; other organisations were invited to take part.
- Treatment Action Campaign organised a mass demonstration in Durban as means of putting pressure on the government to give ARV's to PWAS, the Solidarity Programme played key role in organising support groups, fortunately four members were interested in being involved in the trials facilitated by TAC using their own capacity as an organisation.
- In partnership with PACSA, and KZNCC we organised a public consultation on raising issues pertaining people living with HIV/AIDS. The local support groups wrote a memorandum, which was given to Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize. This is one initiative towards the struggle for the betterment of the lives of the PWAS and this time they are given a voice, a positive strategy towards empowerment of PWAS.

## **4. Progress:**

The special attention was given to 'Wellness Programme' where the focus is directed to HIV positive individuals to take care of their wellness. This is a holistic approach looking at a person in his/her context, i.e. spiritually, emotionally, psychologically and physically. This programme links directly to 'positive living programme' although there is additional information on preparing for the future. Where participants are encouraged to plan ahead on their lives for 'peace of mind' should death come. This approach has been enriching in the fact that participants are urged to look towards the future positively without necessarily spend more time in denial. Through training workshops we are able to reach-out to 500 and more HIV+ people per month.

One can argue as to how can we expect people to think positively when they are battling to make sense of their lives in the trauma of knowing they are infected with an incurable disease and there is no cure available so far. Through my involvement in Solidarity Programme for People living with HIV/AIDS I have learned that in this field it is powerful to deal with issues raw as they are without escaping reality. It is true that there is no platform or space for PWA'S. They are often dealt with from a distance.

The media portrays them as invalids, full-blown AIDS patients. While in reality there is a big difference from one who is HIV+ and the one who has full-blown AIDS.

The fact that the virus stays in the body of the person for a very long time, this could be three to ten or more years depending on the health of an individual infected. This exposes us to fact that there is many infected people who are physically active and do not feel any pain or illness at present. So not all people like to go for an HIV test, thus for the few that have been tested need support at all levels.

Almost all programmes on HIV/AIDS say nothing or little to those who are infected, they are on prevention and awareness that AIDS kills! While this is true there seems to be less attention given to those who are HIV +. There is a tendency of using 'us and them attitude'. I want to argue that in our programmes in the field of HIV/AIDS not so much will be achieved if we are trapped in the stigma attached instead of embracing AIDS raw and harsh as it is and learn to live with it positively. No matter what is our attitude against AIDS it is affecting us and those dear to us. So it is important to promote positive messages, enhance on-going learning on coping with HIV/AIDS, explore advocacy partnerships with other civil rights or human rights organisation and fight stigma around HIV/AIDS.

Given this perspective HIV/AIDS becomes more of a social justice issue as one person who is poor from working class background, cannot afford treatment let alone sufficient balanced diet to fight against the spread of AIDS inside his/her system...this result in tragic situation where eventually a person dies of AIDS related illness. The opposite is true, where the infected is from middle class background and is financial secure and can afford necessary diet and possible antiretroviral therapy...this particular person can prolong his/her life span. These two scenarios are exposing us to harsh realities of inequality and imbalances that highlights the impact of HIV/AIDS in the lives of the people in different contexts. Where access to health becomes a privilege and not as a right of every human being regardless their economic background.

Solidarity programme engages the participants in these debates and encourages enquiring minds to search possible positions for lobbying and advocacy in the context of HIV/AIDS. This helps people to look at the bigger picture and learn more about other dynamics that shape their present reality. For an example the issue of unemployment, most of the people tend to blame themselves as not good enough or somehow failures. But when dealing with economic justice concept and analysing issues of GEAR and it's impact on South African economy. As well as how globalisation impacts on the country as a world and how individuals at family level feel this. In the same way we encourage people to analyse their present life situation through 'see, judge and act' method and contextual bible studies these tools served as catalysts as participants grapple with harsh realities and challenges brought by unemployment and exacerbated by escalating AIDS pandemic. In a nut- shell all the contents of the report reflect the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of the people as well as the economy.

#### **Priorities for 2004**

Our focus in the year 2003 was to strengthen mobilization, advocacy and lobbying through already existing initiatives, thus enhancing the spirit of activism within the support groups as they are directly affected.

In 2004 we carry over this vision as these are stepping stones towards reaching our ideal goal in the life of the project. These are underlying values that influenced the following:

- Forming strong partnership with all the community-based support groups
- Bi-weekly field visits by the Co-ordinator
- Monitoring and support for all Support Groups
- Ongoing support through Campaigns such as Basic Income Grant, Treatment Action Campaign and Poverty Alleviation Grant.
- Holding monthly and quarterly workshops with the support groups from all areas of operation, to provide space for feedback and evaluation of their impact in communities
- Approaching local churches for long term support in the fight against hunger and stigma attached to PWA'S
- Running conflict management workshops with all support groups, as part of capacity building
- To strengthen job creation initiatives as practical sustainable support for individuals and groups
- To run more Bible Studies with PWA'S as means of equipping and empowering them to use the Bible as a tool for spiritual support and challenging the injustices imposed on the poor and marginalized
- To organize more workshops on economic justice issues as means of equipping PWA'S with broader knowledge in the world of the economy. So that they can take an active role in challenging economic policies that are detrimental to the working class and the unemployed.

Embarking on HIV/AIDS campaign, as a tool to challenge cultural tendencies/practices and myths that impacts badly in fighting stigma and promoting positive behavioural change in communities.

## **Women And Gender Programme Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela**

### **Introduction**

The aims of this programme are mainly to empower women, conscientizing them about the impact of gender inequality and suggesting ways of addressing it, using especially theological and biblical resources. It is also important that the workshops we facilitate provide women with a safe space to articulate their own theology, therefore the Bible is specifically read from their perspective. We also work with churches, community groups and other NGO=s and CBO=s, challenging and empowering them to openly discuss these issues and finding ways of eradicating gender inequality and its consequences which also include gender violence.

Issues of gender violence are mainly part of the Tamar Campaign which is a campaign against all forms of gender violence.



## **Contextual Bible Studies**

### ***Siyaphila Support Group***

Siyaphila which means >we are alive= is the name of a support group of People Living with HIV and Aids. It is part of the support groups which are supported by the ISB/WM=s Solidarity with PLHWA Programme. These bible studies were done twice a month. The focus was on making sense of our faith in the fight against HIV and Aids. Most of the texts which we used were suggested by the members of the group. Most of them came either from sermons in churches or funerals whilst some of them were texts which were commonly used in our communities to condemn or judge PLHWA=s. The group also made a conscious decision to read texts that will give them hope, this meant avoiding texts that talk about disease and suffering. Texts that were studied were Deut 28, John 9, Mark 3, John 5 and others. It was clear from our reading of all these texts that Jesus chose the side of the despised and neglected. This meant that after each Bible Study, PLHWA went home with messages of hope and life.

### ***Uniting Presbyterian Church Of Southern Africa Conference - Thekwini Presbytery***

In this conference we were invited to come and facilitate a Bible Study that will challenge the members of the Women=s Christian Association to be more involved in dealing with issues that affect our communities. We facilitated a Bible study on HIV and Aids using John Chapter 9. It was clear that there was a lot of pain around this issue. Most of the women who were present were nursing their sick children who were dying of Aids, but found it difficult to openly share their pain because of the fear of stigma and discrimination. Most of them also blamed themselves and were not sure where they had gone wrong. The fact that Jesus clearly refutes the link between sin and disease in this text, brought about relief. The members who were present committed themselves to creating a welcoming environment for PLWHA and also to be more involved in the visiting of the sick and dying.

### ***Sobantu Old Age Home***

This desk has facilitated many Bible Studies for this group in the past four years. We were invited back to facilitate Bible Studies on Faith and Healing. We used Mark 5, the healing of the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years and the healing of the leader=s daughter. The grandmothers were devastated by the death of their children. Aids was taking away all the bread winners and they were left with grandchildren which they could not afford to raise. They were encouraged by these two texts not to give up. They were also encouraged to educate their children about sexuality, HIV and Aids. They were also referred to other organization who can facilitate workshops on these issues in their churches, schools and communities.

### ***Teacher Training Workshops - Phakama***

Phakama, which is a women empowerment and gender equality project of Youth for Christ, organized these workshops for teachers. There were two groups one from Pietermaritzburg schools and the other from Schools in Durban. The focus of these two workshops was general gender awareness and the exploration of the role of the teachers in perpetuating gender inequality in schools. They were exposed to examples of how culture, religion and education are used to promote and justify gender equality. They were also exposed to the different kinds of gender violence and helped to identify their roles as male and female teachers.

When these teachers left they had concrete plans of action like the inviting of School Governing Bodies to discuss these issues and together designing a way forward that will promote equality and decrease the condoning of gender violence.

### ***Easter Service Preparation***

The coordinator was invited by three congregations to train women leaders on how they can use the Easter message to facilitate gender equality within churches. We focused on the role of women in all the texts which are used during the Easter weekend. The issue of gender violence was also discussed. Women felt equipped after these workshops to preach messages that will encourage women to take their rightful place within the church and community.

### ***Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - Berlin***

The coordinator was invited by this international organization to facilitate a workshop on Gender and HIV/Aids. This was part of a consultation which was held in Berlin, Germany. This consultation was attended by representatives from churches, FBO=s and NGO=s which were members of EAA. The actual workshop on Gender and HIV and Aids was attended by about twenty participants. It transpired that most organizations concentrate on dealing with the symptoms of the problem. A decision was made to deal with the root of the problem by educating leaders and exposing our children to the reality of the impact of gender discrimination. We all agreed that reviewing our notions of masculinity and femininity would curb the spread of HIV and Aids, and the vulnerability of women and children.

### ***Young Women Workers Formation***

The South African Young Christian Workers Organization has been in existence for a long time. Women were also members and took part in their programmes. In order to be in line with the International YCW it was important for a women=s sector to be developed. The coordinator was invited to facilitate this process. Women representatives were invited to a workshop that dealt with the reality of being a women within the Worker=s movement and also identified specific women=s needs. This process involved both secular and Biblical reflections on the role of women and helped the representatives to set goals for their relative base groups. The role and status of the Young Women Workers as a sector within YCW was also discussed in length in the presence of the National YCW Executive. It was clear after this workshop that there was a lot of ground work that had to be done before the launching of this sector.

### ***Circle Of Concerned African Women Theologians= Workshop***

This workshop was held at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The coordinator was given a slot to expose the members to the Contextual Bible Study Methodology which is used by the ISB/WM. We used one of the Tamar Campaign texts, 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Due to time constraints we had to do both at the same time, the actual Bible Study and the methodology. I believe this worked out very well and the participants felt they would be able to use this methodology. There was also a sense of amazement and excitement about this method, which gave the readers power over the educated theologians. It was also powerful to see that some of the participants felt this was an opportunity for them to share their own experiences of pain and felt this was a wonderful way of providing space for other survivors to do the same.

### ***Youth For Christ National Staff Training Camp***

The coordinator was invited to this training camp to facilitate a workshop on Faith and Gender. The process of the workshop began with a general gender awareness exercise, then we discussed the creation stories focusing on how the different stories are told. The biases of the narrators were debated by both genders. We also discussed a few texts where God is portrayed either as a man or a woman. We also briefly looked at the issue of gender violence and how the creation story and God's gender are used to justify it. There was a lot of discomfort and unhappiness which was expressed by the participants, most of them had never been exposed to this way of reading the Bible. Most women participants, clearly learnt a lot and felt empowered to challenge any misuse of the Bible or theology to justify gender inequality or violence.

### ***Phakama Schools Camp***

This camp was held in the South Coast Area of KwaZulu Natal. It was attended by about 190 high school learners who came from 6 schools which are in the Durban area. The coordinator was invited to facilitate a session on Masculinity for young women. The main aim was to challenge some of the myths young women believed about men. Some of their responses to what their ideal would be, were shocking. The young women also believed they were inferior to boys their age. After the workshop, these women were quite angry about the way they had been socialized. They committed themselves to supporting each other, promoting equality and challenging the societal gender stereotypes. The notion of being incomplete without a man was also firmly denounced.

### **Speaking Opportunities - HIV and Aids**

The coordinator, who is openly living with HIV, has been invited to many churches and meetings to share her own story. The main aim for these talks, sermons and devotions are to challenge the church to be sensitive to the reality and struggle of PLWHA and their families, to expose the misuse of the Bible within our churches and how Contextual Bible Studies can empower the infected to live positively. The empowerment of PLWHA to read the Bible from their own perspective also helps them to challenge those who misquote the Bible to judge or discriminate against them. These opportunities have given PLWHA's courage to openly live their lives without fear and have also gone a long way towards the destigmatization of HIV and Aids.

### **Networking**

The coordinator organized a workshop which was attended by representatives from churches, NGOs and FBOs to find out what kinds of resources were needed to adequately address the issue of HIV and Aids. All the participants were given an opportunity to share exactly which resources they offered. This was an initiative of World Vision International and Strategies for Hope, which is a organization based in the United Kingdom and specializes in the production of written resources on HIV and Aids. This workshop exposed the enormity of the HIV and Aids field and the importance of each partner. The participants agreed that the church needs a comprehensive tool kit. This kit will be called the 'Called to Care' kit, the production of which will be facilitated by Strategies for Hope.

The coordinator was also invited by the Norwegian Church Aid to take part in the 2004 Lentern Campaign.

This gave the coordinator opportunities to speak about all the ISB/WM programmes and also specifically help the Norwegian Church to understand the Struggle against HIV and Aids in South Africa. There were also opportunities to expose church leaders to the Contextual Bible Study Methodology. It was amazing to see that there were groups in Norway which are already successfully using this method of reading the Bible. It was clear that groups which felt marginalized by the church felt more at home within groups which used this methodology.

The coordinator also read a paper at the Norwegian Church Synod which was held in November on >How the church can serve effectively during the HIV and Aids pandemic.@ This also involved private meetings with different church leaders, and the training of deacons on how to use the Contextual Bible Study Methodology.

This programme has also been very much involved in the activities of other local partners like the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness and the five regions of the KwaZulu Natal Council of Churches.

### **The Tamar Campaign**

This campaign on gender violence is part of the Women and Gender Programme. It was launched in the year 2000 and is growing in popularity within churches and communities. The World Council of Churches has shown interest in making this campaign continental. All interested parties are involved in discussions on how this can be achieved. The aims of the campaign are:

To encourage churches to openly speak out against abuse.

To promote Bible Studies on violence against women.

To conscientize women to the fact that different kinds of abuse exist and suggest ways of dealing with them.

To encourage ministers to preach against abuse especially on the sundays of Activism against women abuse.

To create an awareness of the link between gender violence and HIV and Aids.

### **Staff**

The campaign this year was driven by the coordinator, two student workers and a men and gender student worker.

### **Resources**

Improvements were made on last year=s poster. The pamphlets were redesigned and translated to match the new poster. The format of the presentations differ according to the needs of the groups that invite us and decisions are made based on the availability of time. With HIV and Aids becoming such a burning issue within our churches and communities, creating awareness on its relationship to gender violence has become priority.

### **Workshops and Presentations**

The coordinator has been teaching at a Lutheran Centre called Kenosis, which is committed to the empowerment of women lay leaders, for the past 5 years. These students come from the whole of KwaZulu Natal. This year the main theme was the Tamar Campaign. This year there were six women who will go back to their churches and use these resources.

Facilitated a Bible Study for 20 church leaders (including, unfortunately, only 3 women) from KwaZulu Natal at a Theology and Democracy Consultation which was organised by the Kwazulu Natal Council of churches.

Spent two days training ministers- in- training at the College of Transfiguration which is in Grahamstown. This College trains Anglican ministers from the whole continent. 21 students (2 women) were involved in this training.

7 pastors who attend the Pastors Upgrade Programme run by the Evangelical Theological House of Studies were also exposed to the Tamar Campaign.

The Campaign team has visited about 5 churches( including Kristu Msindisi at KwaMashu, Imbali Methodist Church, Sweetwaters Assemblies) where resources were made available during and after sermons on gender violence and HIV and Aids.

We have facilitated workshops for groups that are members of Young Christian Workers and Young Men=s Christian Association (Amanzimtoti Branch).

About 20 students who are doing their Post Graduate Studies through the School of Theology=s Block Release Programme were also trained on how to use the campaign in their churches.

About 15 students who are part of the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa=s Christian Aids Programme were also exposed to this campaign, their main focus was Gender violence and HIV and Aids.

The Campaign was launched in Zambia on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2003. This initiative was facilitated by Aglow International with the support of the Justice, Youth and Sports Desk. The training workshop was attended by about 50 participants and a march that was held the following day by about 200 people.

The KwaZulu Regional Council of Churches organized a workshop for rural church leaders with the theme,=Men, Gender and HIV/Aids.= This workshop was attended by 15 ministers and two women lay leaders from different churches in the North of KwaZulu Natal. This group was the most conservative and defensive of all the groups we have ever worked with. Amazingly, they all committed themselves to using the campaign in their churches.

The coordinator was invited to facilitate two sessions on Gender and HIV and Aids for a group of 45 nurses which were about to graduate. This was part of a two week training on HIV and Aids which was held at Edendale Nursing Training College. The coordinator had previously done a very short presentation on the campaign for the tutors.

Practical Ministries invited us to conduct a Tamar campaign workshop for an interdenominational group of women that meets on a regular basis. This workshop was attended by about 35 women. It took some time for this group to respond to the questions that we use in our Bible Studies. After a lot of persuasion and frustration they eventually opened up. At the end of this workshop, we felt we had achieved very little.

We were pleasantly surprised when a follow-up workshop was organized this year and it was attended by about 50 young people, more older women and ministers who had heard about the campaign from the interdenominational group.

The men and gender worker did presentations for a group of 10 ministers in Johannesburg. This was part of the Industrial Mission Vocational Formation. These ministers were happy to have biblical tools which they can use to address abuse in churches and communities.

Two workshops were conducted for members of the Young Christian Workers in Port Elizabeth and Port Edward, the total attendance was 22.

Students in Biblical Studies 220 worked in local communities, both conducting and then reporting on their experiences. Some of this work reflected on the impact of the Campaign.

#### **Plans for 2004**

The coordinator will be on sabbatical for 6 months (April to September). A student worker will continue with the workshops as usual until her return.

#### ***Bible Studies***

These are conducted as per invitation. The communities and organizations that invite us usually give us their own themes. We then prepare and facilitate Bible Studies on those specific issues. The reading of the Bible with Women=s groups and People Living with HIV and Aids which is done on a regular basis will also continue. This is ongoing work.

#### ***Tamar Campaign***

Workshops and presentations on this campaign will continue as usual. There will be two major workshops which will focus on issues of masculinity and its links to the spread of HIV and Aids. The first one will be held in March and the second in October. We are also hoping to secure a regular slot in the community radio station, to introduce the Contextual Bible Study Methodology to the listeners. This will be done both in Zulu and English.

#### ***Networking***

In collaboration with PACSA and PRACTICAL MINISTRIES this programme will be involved in workshops that deal with the issue of gender violence. Ministers and youth leaders will be trained on how to use popular resources like stage plays and sermons to fight against gender violence and eliminate the vulnerability of women and children to abuse and HIV and Aids.

#### ***Research***

With the help of the Research and Pedagogy Programme, an indepth impact assessment of the Tamar Campaign will be conducted. The final report has to be ready by the end of July.

## **Community Development and Leadership Training Programme Solomuzi Mabuza**

#### **Introduction**

The growing interest in our work within the School of Theology amongst students has cemented our resolve to maintain it as our common cite. In the coming year we are looking forward to continue our involvement within the School of Theology with great confidence. Through this continuous collaboration we can truly be of service to the wider community. More so that the School of Theology will finally merge with our sister University of Durban Westville and have a broader focus within the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

## **Dedication**

It was a sad day when the School of Theology lost one of her fine students in Reverend Edwin Smith Banda (who came from Malawi) in the first term of the first semester. I rated him as one of the best students who took his work seriously within our Solidarity with the PLWAs Programme. When the Systematic Theology 320: Theology and Society Class took off to do their Community-Based Service Learning Placements in the Community – he was one student who managed successfully to integrate in his final report most aspects of the course. Edwin Banda will be missed by those of us he touched.

## **Community-Based Service Learning**

This year we focused more strongly in Systematic Theology 320: Theology and Society Module as the whole School of Theology went through an interesting experiment called a Block Release. Through this system many of our students who normally would not have access to tertiary education due to work commitments are enabled to enrol and study in a more interactive manner. It was within this context that our community-based service learning had to take place.

There were two weeks in the first semester put aside for our ST320 Class to carry out their Community Placements. Five themes were explored in the following order HIV/AIDS, Development, Gender, Democracy and African Traditional Religion. Students were to work closely with their lecturers and the coordinator to blend their experience into a theological reflection.

Two organisations added colour to our placements. For the first time we were able to work with the Youth for Christ in our Gender Theme and Church Land Programme in our Development Theme.

Those students who focused on HIV/AIDS took a different approach. Three of them were exposed to HIV+ Motivators who are Field Workers within the Solidarity with the PLWAs Programme. They were taken to three communities where Black people live in Pietermaritzburg. These communities were a combination of rural and semi-urban areas. On their return they had incredible experiences to share with their colleagues.

What was very striking for me and one of these students was the encounter she had. She was taken to one of these communities by an HIV+ person whom she had gone to school with in the mid-1980s. For a very long time they had not met. Our student did not know that this young person had become infected. Neither did the infected motivator know that the student we would allocate her is someone she grew up with. Both of them went to the community and visited some families. In some of these families they met old pupils at school who were their peers who were now infected. For this student this was a turning point in her life and studies. As a result she undertook to further her theological studies at honours level focusing on issues of HIV/AIDS.



Another interesting group of three students went to Ladysmith to look into the work done by Church Land Programme. They met people who live on the Land that they are trying to claim back through the legal processes set by our government. In their encounter with the community they could not get enough information as they would have wanted. This community was undergoing a lot of turmoil due to the effects of their struggle for land. Our students came back with mixed feelings. It was their view that if more time had been spent with this community they could have gathered more information. Their evaluation pointed out to the limitations presented to our programme by external factors. We limited them by confining them to set weeks. As a result, they felt they were disadvantaged.

In our Gender Theme three students were involved as well. All these students were not very fluent in Zulu. Two of these students (one from Zimbabwe and the other from Malawi) worked with the Youth for Christ. They visited schools in the Pietermaritzburg area where they were exposed to workshops on Gender matters. With their limited knowledge of the local language they managed to come up with good reflections. Again, the confines of the Block Release meant that one of these students could not join his two colleagues. He then went through a different experience outside of Pietermaritzburg. His encounter in Durban with the Diakonia Council of Churches enabled him to add more depth in this group.

Our Democracy Theme group were taken through the Basic Income Generation Workshop in a Tribal Land in Pietermaritzburg. It was an exciting experience for them. On their arrival they had to wait for almost an hour for the young people of the area to arrive. They were exposed to a world that is not as organised as the University environment. To get a proper venue for the workshop became a struggle. Eventually the chief of the area sorted the issue out. In the group analysis there was enough to tell that they had taken their placement seriously. In the group there was one student who is married to a Pentecostal Pastor. Normally, the approach of the Young Christian Workers to issues of work and unemployment is not used in her circles. The way in which she dealt with her encounter was very touching. Now, she has been actively involved in our Gender and Women Programme coordinated by Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela.

Lastly, we closed our journey with students by taking three of our students through one experience within the African Traditional Religion. They met with two African Women who both have professional backgrounds before their calling into Ancestral Divinity Fellowship. Both these women have a history with the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

Working with people who are led by their ancestors can be a very unpredictable encounter. We experienced a lot of what they go through during the placement. Getting them to honour an appointment became a hustle. Nevertheless, at the end of the day our students succeeded to get something done.

Read more about our involvement with the Biblical Studies 210 & 220 Module in the Research and Pedagogy and Gender and Women Programmes respectively.

## **Activities**

In spite of our growing presence within the School of Theology we did not neglect our work as well in the community. We did carry out with our usual business of servicing our broader common cites.

## **Laity Training**

A wide range of activities through workshops took place across the country focusing on the laity.

### **Linden, Johannesburg – Methodist Church Central District**

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2003**

Bishop Paul Verryn invited the above programme to work in his district. He invited all laity from all sections of our society to converge in Linden, Johannesburg. There were parallel sessions going on at the same time throughout the day. I had an opportunity of taking one of our Field Workers along with me to Johannesburg. She facilitated her session on HIV/AIDS and the Church without supervision. In her previous life before joining the ISB Worker Ministry – she had worked with ATTIC and was once one of our student workers. The Methodists were moved by her workshop and gave her a lot of credit.

My session focused briefly on Contextual Bible Study Methods. We responded to a concern raised by the Bishop that his people need to learn how to re-read the Bible in a contextually relevant manner. It was very rewarding to see people of all races seating through and participating actively in the workshop. Three more sessions were to follow – but due to financial and logistical problems we were unable to continue with this group. A valuable experience of journeying with them was lost.

### **New Castle, KwaZulu-Natal – Evangelical Lutheran Church South Eastern Diocese, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003**

A group of young pastors in the Lutheran Church meets four times a year to reflect on their ministry and lives. We were invited again to their first meeting of the year. Together with me I took a colleague in the School of Theology who is doing his PhD Research on Transforming Christian Education in South Africa. He was given an audience to present his research and it was a very fruitful exercise. Part of the objective was to encourage pastors to rethink of furthering their studies with the School of Theology.

We facilitated a Contextual Bible Study designed to help the pastors think of the developments within the Diocese. The Lutheran Church took a decision that has financial implications to the pastors and their congregations. Now, all circuits are responsible for paying their pastors salaries directly. It is no longer the responsibility of the Diocesan Office to do so. To the ministry it brings other dimensions and pressures.

Our Bible Study focused on the Ancient Role of the synagogue and what Jesus thought of its practise. Pastors were taken through The Gospel according to Mark to evaluate their won standing within the Lutheran Church. Finally, they were encouraged to start thinking seriously about introducing Contextual Bible Studies in their parishes.

**Collin Webb Hall, University of Natal  
15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2003**

I was invited to present a paper on Student Governance towards the context of the imminent merger between the University of Natal and Durban-Westville. This conference was organised by the Pietermaritzburg Campus Student Representative Council. They invited their colleagues as well from the Durban Campus. Much as it was an induction programme of the SRCs it also was mindful of the changes in Higher Education affecting the University of Natal.

For me it was an exciting weekend to reflect back on the days of student activism with a generation of students that has new challenges.

**KwaCeza, Ulundi – KwaZulu-Natal  
eChibini Congregation, Evangelical Lutheran Church  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

During the Holy Week we were invited for the first time in KwaZulu by a final year Diploma student at the Inaugural Lutheran Theological Institute. He attended one of the very interesting workshops offered by Gerald West assisted by myself to our Biblical Studies 210 Class and other undergraduate students during the Block Release Week. In a very humble way the student asked if our programme does cater for the people in rural areas. It was impossible for me to turn down such an invitation.

The KwaCeza Lutheran youth held a revival and invited us to do Bible Studies. We focused on 2 Kings 5:1-9a. It was for the first time in this community for young people to go through this approach. The Bible Study raised many issues which gave the youth a platform to voice out their own concerns. All the proceedings were carried out in isiZulu (which was a first for me). These young people brought their children along who were kept busy by one of the student workers. It was an amazing turn out.

**Pietermaritzburg, 50 Longmarket Street  
Siyaphila Support Group  
2<sup>nd</sup> May 2003**

A rare experience for this programme was to get an invitation from one of the support groups associated with our Solidarity with the PLWAs Programme. They asked us to facilitate one Bible Study with them. With the assistance of one student worker we focused on Luke 8:26-39. We spent half a day discussing with them the challenges posed to affected and infected people. It was a rewarding experience for all of us. It is amazing how people who know their HIV status think through Biblical passages. Their contextualisation of the text warrants a rigorous study.

**Campsdrift Park, Pietermaritzburg  
Imbali Lutheran Church Youth League  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2003**

A group of young people invited three Lutheran Theologians to come and address them on the Theme – Youth in Christ. They had specific Lutheran Doctrinal questions which they wanted clarity on. My role was to contribute on a few Biblical concepts that they identified. One of our student workers and a volunteer addressed the issue of Biblical Translation by looking at specific New Testament passages juxtaposed with parallel Zulu passages. The volunteer gave an input on Luther as the man who inspired Reformation.

This youth came out very informed on the day. It was bold of them to put up such a programme on their own without the help of their elders in the Church.

**College of the Transfiguration, Grahamstown  
19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2003**

I accompanied my colleague to go and introduce the Tamar Campaign to Theological Students in the Anglican Church. My main role was to introduce to the first and second year students principles around contextual bible study method. We explored the Creation Stories as we have them on the text in Genesis 1 and 2. Students were asked to share in groups their own creation stories as per their tradition/s. What was interesting was finding three students in the workshop who said they had no specific stories to tell except the Biblical version.

Two stories struck us as we listened to them. It was a story from a Sudanese who told two versions – one a pre-modern and a post-modern account. Both these stories demonstrate the journey of the Sudan clan he came from. There was a very interesting story as well that came out from one Tswana student. From these stories we reflected on the Genesis Creation stories which then formed the basis of our approach to Contextual Bible Study Methods.

We closed our session by taking the students through a process of designing a contextual bible study using examples provide on the Tamar Campaign pamphlets. Again, time was the factor here. Students felt that if we spent more time with them they could really mature in the work we do. This remains a constant challenge for our offering/s in the Eastern Cape College.

**Mafikeng, North-West  
Pastors Upgrade Programme  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2003**

The month of May ended with a visit to the former home land town in Mafikeng. There I met a very vibrant group of Evangelicals who enrolled for the Evangelical Theological House of Studies bridging course in Theology. They were fourteen in total and they left a mark in me. After years of working with these groups I had began to think carefully of our involvement within the PUP.

This group came from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Bosnia and South Africa. My drive to such a far away province was not in vain. They took the materials given to them very serious. In their report backs they came out with exciting feedback compared to what I had become accustomed to in the past. For them contextual bible study methods enriched their ways of reading the Bible and fuelled an interest to further their theological studies. It is encounter I relish.

**Africa Enterprise, Pietermaritzburg  
Theology and Democracy Programme  
12<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

We were invited by the KwaZulu-Natal Council of Churches Consortium in collaboration with the School of Theology to participate in the inaugural programme designed for the clergy and the laity. This programme extended beyond the Pietermaritzburg Region.

I facilitated for the first time a session on Practical Engagement – Designing A Liturgy and Service on Democracy. This was a very innovative programme for one to take part in. Democracy is an ongoing issue in our country. To get pastors and faithful laity to think through these issues was not an easy task. In the end those who participated managed to incorporate their learning into practise.

Due to other commitments it was not possible for me to be at the follow-up session.

A word of thanks to my colleagues who graciously gave me time off to concentrate on my long-overdue ordination which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

After my ordination I had a chance to visit Reinbeck in Germany where I learnt a lot about the challenges facing the youth. It was also a privilege to visit our long-standing partners in Hamburg – the EMW. They were briefed about our role in Theological Education specifically.

**Nkandla, KwaZulu Regional Council of Churches  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2003**

My colleague and I were invited by the KRCC to a Men, Gender and HIV Awareness Workshop. It was not an easy week for us as we were scheduled to attend a fund-raising training workshop in Durban on the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>. I introduced a group of old men a few women to our Contextual Bible Study Methods and Social Analysis Tools. Our discussions were very fruitful and the time we spent with the group was very short. However, we were satisfied with our set objectives for the day. This is a region we need to work with very closely with.

**Coastlands Convention Centre, Durban  
National YMCA Youth and Student Summit  
18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

The South African National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association **invited two** members of staff in the School of Theology to lead Devotions and give a Key Note Address.

I led the devotions for the Youth and Student Summit in preparation for the National Summit of the Movement. Historically, the YMCA is known for its very evangelical emphasis. Thus, it was a challenge on its own to be invited by this old movement in the land.

Due to time constraints and other commitments I was only able to spend two days with the young people there. They came from many provinces of the country. There were even a few volunteers from Norway based in South Africa who were at the summit. These devotions were geared towards challenging the movement to think more contextually about the challenges facing the movement in the changing South Africa. The reception of the youth was very profound. We had very good discussions which fed very well in the broader summit.

### **Imperial Protea Hotel, Pietermaritzburg**

#### **Consultation on Homosexuality**

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003**

It was a privilege to be invited to serve on the Consultation on Homosexuality Planning Committee tasked to deal with a sensitive issue by the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. On the day in question – I was asked to chair a session that focused on the Civic Associations Perspectives. For the first time in our history the ISB Worker Ministry read a statement prepared by the Management Committee on Homosexuality publicly. This is an area that we need to work in as well in the near future.

### **Red Acres Retreat Centre, Merrivale**

#### **ELC Loans and Scholarships**

**South Eastern-Diocese**

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2003**

We closed the year by facilitating a contextual bible study with young people who are funded for their education by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. These young people who are pupils at high schools and students at tertiary institutions were gathered together to discuss their experiences. They also met to be briefed about their grants and the situation of funding and/or donations overseas. This was an opportune moment to share with them work done in the sixteen days of activism – focusing on violence against women and children.

This topic was a very sensitive one that they could relate to emotionally. I discovered that many of them knew real life stories within their circles of the violence meted against women and children.

### **Work Plan for 2004**

Our close integration and working together as one organisation with the worker Ministry has brought about very interesting developments. For the first time, this programme has a work plan for the year 2004. We look forward to executing the plan and improve in our work.

More priority will be given to the community-based service learning this year as I will be away on a mission in Palestine. Mr. S'bonelo Zuma will be taking over this aspect of the work in my absence. The other commitments we have made with our partners will be honoured through the help of colleagues in the ISB Worker Ministry and the School of Theology.

### **Conclusion**

This year has shown us that we cannot confine ourselves to only using biblical and theological resources. This clearly is what makes our work unique, but we have realized that groups that have never been exposed to the secular developments on Gender, the emancipation of women and gender violence, need to be educated on these.

Our observations were also that younger men are much easier to work with than older men. Years of internalizing cultural and religious justifications of gender inequality have made them defensive and more reluctant to change their views. Women have also for years been their own enemy and changing this is not easy. We believe the workshops we facilitate are only a first step towards lobbying for equality and the eradication of gender violence.

Young people have given us a lot of hope. Their exposure to different forms of media, makes their awareness on these issues much higher. Our role is usually to encourage them to make choices that will not demean or dehumanize fellow human beings.

We would like to thank our donor partners who have made all this work possible. We hope our contribution to society, especially through the church, will continue making them proud.

## **Research And Pedagogy Report Gerald West**

This year has been another busy year for the Research and Pedagogy Programme. I will begin by reporting on ongoing projects; I will then report on new projects.

### **Collaboration and exchange with Ghana**

Last year it was reported that the ISB&WM had established a number of links with Ghana. This year saw these links being consolidated and expanded. Global Ministries, the Netherlands, provided funding for an exploratory meeting between a number of Ghanaian organisations and the ISB&WM. In December 2003, Gerald West met representatives from the Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre (Akropong), the University of Cape Coast (Cape Coast), Trinity College (Accra), and the Ramseyer Training Center (Abetifi). The meeting was hosted by the Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre.

The meeting was a great success and resulted in the Ghanaian institutions forming a network with its own identity and agenda. It was agreed that this network would hold joint workshops in their different regions in the area of contextual Bible study, would invite the ISB&WM to work with them in Ghana for one of these workshops, and would send representatives to a workshop hosted by the ISB&WM in South Africa. These workshops are all planned for 2004.

Global Ministries has generously agreed to fund this collaboration during 2004.

### **Through the eyes of another: a project on intercultural reading of the Bible**

As was reported last year, this is an ongoing project. Unfortunately, our part-time staff person responsible for the group-work, Thandeka Tshazi, fell ill during the year and was unable to complete the second phase of this project. Fortunately, there were other ways of participating in the project and Gerald West has contributed an essay to the first published volume which reports on this research. This essay is a detailed examination of the facilitation style of the ISB&WM and that of a similar project in the USA, The People's Seminary in Washington State (see last year's report). The essay is entitled: "Artful Facilitation and the Process of Creating a Safe Interpretive Site: An Analysis of Aspects of an Actual Bible Study" (the essay is available on request).

The Director of The People's Seminary, Bob Ekblad, and Gerald West are collaborating on a book which will present and reflect on the work of the ISB&WM and The People's Seminary. This book is aimed as a resource manual for those working in the area of contextual Bible study.

### **Community-based service learning in the School of Theology**

This component of our work, as was reported last year, is central and ongoing. There is not too much to add to last year's report, except that Gerald West has published a major article on this work. His article, "Beyond the 'Critical' Curtain: Community-based Service Learning in an African Context" is published in the journal *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 2004, 7, 71-82 (the article is available on request).

Significantly, the work of the ISB&WM, through this article, is having an impact on theological education in contexts around the world.

Related to this ongoing work has been research on the relationship between the theological curriculum and HIV/AIDS. Early in the year, Gerald West, presented a paper to the International Network for Advanced Theological Education consultation on "Theological Responses to Illnesses, Stigma and Discrimination: Forging Contextual Theologies in an Era of HIV/AIDS" in January, in Pietermaritzburg.

Later in the year, Gerald West facilitated a workshop, sponsored by the World Council of Churches, with the southern African Lutheran churches. The workshop was on the "Training of Theological Educators in the HIV/AIDS Era" and was hosted by the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa in August, in Pietermaritzburg. His paper, "Methods of Teaching the Old Testament in the Context of HIV/AIDS" is available on request.



### **The Bible and HIV/AIDS**

Part of the brief of the Research and Pedagogy Programme is to stimulate reflection and research in the other programmes of the ISB&WM. As part of our consolidation as an integrated project (see Director's comments at the beginning of this Annual Report), Gerald West has been working closely with Bongi Zengele and Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela.

There is increasing need in our society for contextual Bible study work in the area of HIV and AIDS. Bongi Zengele, the Coordinator of our Solidarity Programme (see Annual Report), has founded and facilitated a new organisation, Siyaphila (see her section), in which contextual Bible study is an important component. It was clear from discussions among staff that something significant was happening in the Siyaphila groups, and so it was decided to do some research on this experience. The research found that the Bible studies breed the spiritual resilience necessary to survive in a HIV-hostile world. Member of the Siyaphila groups take courage from Jesus who so often has to walk against the theological grain of his context. Their encounters with different theologies in the Bible helps them to understand the different theologies they meet in the street. This and a number of other significant findings have been published: Reading the Bible in the Light of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, *The Ecumenical Review*, 2003, 55, 335-344 (the article is available on request).

Related to this research, Gerald West has also presented a paper entitled, "Contending for Compassion in the Old Testament in the Context of HIV/AIDS", at the World Council of Churches Workshop on HIV/Aids, Stigma and Discrimination, in Kempton Park, in November (this paper is to be published by the WCC and is available on request).

### **The Tamar Campaign**

As the report on the Women and Gender Programme in this Annual Report indicates, the Tamar Campaign is becoming a significant resource throughout South Africa, Africa, and even internationally. Gerald West and Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela were invited by the World Council of Churches, who hope to make the Tamar Campaign and Africa-wide campaign, to write an article telling the story of this campaign. The article is entitled, "The Bible Story that Became a Campaign: the Tamar Campaign in South Africa (and beyond)", and will be published in *Ministerial Formation* during 2004 (and is available on request).

The ISB&WM is deeply grateful to Australian Aid for its generous support for the work of the Tamar Campaign. Because their funding comes to an end in July 2004 the ISB&WM has embarked on a substantial research project which examines the impact of this Campaign on local communities. We will report on this research in next year's Annual Report.

One of the enduring problems of biblical interpretation in our context is the way in which texts like 1 Timothy are used to oppress women. Having worked with this text for many years now within the ISB&WM, Gerald West presented a paper on how to deal with this text at the annual meeting of the Theological Society of Southern Africa.

His paper, "Taming Texts of Terror: Reading (against) the Gender Grain of 1 Timothy", read at the Theological Society of Southern Africa's conference on Gender and Theology in Africa, in June, in Pretoria, is available on request.

### **Indigenous interpretation of the Bible**

Although not new research, this aspect of the Research and Pedagogy Programme has not been reported on recently. Owing to a shortage of funds, not much new work has been done in the past two years on this research into the interpretive resources of indigenous Africans. However, the lack of funds for new research has allowed Gerald West time to write up the research that has already been done. This research is shortly to be published as "Early Encounters with the Bible among the BaTlhaping: Historical and Hermeneutical Signs" in *Biblical Interpretation* (and is available on request).

Funding has been obtained from the National Research Foundation to continue with this work in 2004.

### **Research by staff**

Two of our staff, S'Thembiso Zwane and Sibusiso Gwala are making good progress on their Masters research, both in the area of economic justice. Gerald West and Mzwandile Nunes are the supervisors of this research. We hope to report on the successful completion of this research in next year's Annual Report.

### **Conclusion**

As this report indicates, 2003 has been a busy year for the Research and Pedagogy Programme. The increasing integration in the ISB&WM has generated plenty of scope for collaborative research. This will continue as we commit ourselves to the cycle of action-and-reflection.

**Ladysmith Office  
S'thembiso Zwane**

### **Economic Justice Programme**

The Economic Justice Programme is designed to work with unemployed youth in rural Thukela - Mzinyathi. Our intervention in this programme is both theological and ideological.

#### **Aims / Objectives**

- \* To facilitate a process of training leaders in disadvantaged communities.
- \* To deepen our understanding on socio - economic issues.
- \* To critical analyze local and international economic policies in relation to our faith.
- \* To help the unemployed to reflect theological on their unemployment situation.
- \* To lobby and network with other organizations who are involved in similar work.
- \* To conduct contextual bible studies on faith, work and economic life.

In the beginning of the year (2003) I attended the National Council of the South African Young Christian Workers (SAYCW) in Johannesburg, which took the whole week in January. The council started on the 06th - 10th of January 2003 at Komdraai, Johannesburg that is about thirty kilometers away from the city.

The Aims / Objectives were:

- \* To get an update on base groups nationally so as to improve the situation at all levels of the movement.
- \* To finalize the constitution of the SAYCW in accordance with the constitution of the IYCW.
- \* To deliberate on four commissions, which were Presidents, Secretaries, Treasures and Publications.
- \* To formulate a plan of action, focusing on campaigns, funds etc.
- \* To elect a new National Executive Committee of the SAYCW, which happens after every two years.
- \* To strengthen working relations between the National Secretariat and Provincial Secretariat.

The council was a success because we had a mediator who was there to try and help as solve the conflict within the movement. Two hundred delegates attended the council from regions across the country.

In February (2003) I attended the budget week, which dealt with Economic Justice issues. The Ecumenical Services for Socio - Economic Transformation (ESSET) hosted the budget week. I was invited to take part in the deliberations on economic policy and budget because I had previously given a presentation on economic policy and social investment investment strategies. The budget took place in Cape Town Ritz Hotel on the 24th - 27th February 2003. The workshop was attended by a wide variety of people from churches, N.G.O's and C.B.O's around the country. The focus of the workshop was on the budget speech by the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel. After his speech we met to discuss fiscal priorities of the budget as churches, N.G.O's and C.B.O's etc.

On the 7th March 2003 there was a National Staff (YCW) visit to Ladysmith region to conduct YCW formations on the orientation, method and the ideological position of the movement with regard to the economic situation. The formation had problems because of the poor planning prior to the visit. We therefore decided to meet with the National staff as the Regional Committee to plan properly. This therefore took some time and meant that the formation itself did not have adequate time. We managed to cover most of the topics and discussions were good. The only problem was on finances because apparently the National Office does not have enough money to support the Y.C.W at Regional / Provincial level. The formation took place at Amakhasi near Uitvaal in Ladysmith and Estcourt on the 10th - 13th March 2003 and we also met on the 14th March 2003 to discuss issues pertaining to the regional committee.

After the formations in Ladysmith and Estcourt respectively we (regional organizers and NEC) proceeded to Pinetown in Koinonia for the National staff meeting, which took place on the 15th - 17th March 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to give reports on our work as organizers and fieldworkers respectively. At a time I was still the organizer so I had to report on behalf of the Thukela - Mzinyathi Region.

After the staff meeting I came back to prepare for the Economic Justice workshop which took place the following day. I came back on the 16th March 2003 to tie up the loose ends for the workshop that took place on the 17th - 19th March 2003 at red Acres in Pietermaritzburg. I had made preparations for this workshop before the National Staff meeting with the help of Financial Director Mzwandile Nunes to whom I am really grateful for his undivided attention.

The economic justice workshop on the 17th -19th March 2003 had a good attendance as I had planned for it in advance. The workshop itself focused on issues like Gear, See, Judge & Act, HIV /AIDS and treatment. The connection between HIV/AIDS and economic justice was discussed in the workshop and it was quite a useful discussion.

Aims / Objectives of the workshop were:

- \* To make follow up to the previous workshop and get a report.
- \* To give information on recent development with regard to Economic Policies and a campaign for Basic Income Grant (BIG).
- \* To demonstrate to the participants the relationship between economic justice and HIV/AIDS.
- \* To introduce ISB-WM programmes to new participants.
- \* To review the actions taken by Y.C.W base groups on unemployed youth.

The people who attended the workshop expected to get information about getting funding for projects and they felt that was going to solve the problem of unemployment. During our deliberations it was evident that ISB-WM is not a funding agency, but rather a training organization, which is concerned about lack of information in disadvantaged communities who are poor and marginalized.

In April there were lot of holidays, but there was no rest for some of us. On the 7th -17th April 2003 I attended the Sub Regional key leaders (SRKLM) of the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW), which was held in Johannesburg. The key leaders took 10 days with delegates from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and the host South Africa. I was invited to the key leaders meeting to represent South Africa in my capacity as Regional Chaplain of the SAYCW. I played a pivotal role in the formation of the sub regional key leaders document on Chaplains and Adult Collaborators (CAC), which didn't exist prior to the meeting.

On the 01st - 04th May I attended the KwaZulu - Natal Provincial Launch of the Young Christian Workers (YCW). This was a historic moment for KwaZulu - Natal as a first Province to launch a provincial secretariate of the Young Christian Workers (YCW).

Then on the 23rd - 25th May 2003 I facilitated an economic Justice Workshop in Bergville and this was a joint venture with KZNCC focusing on HIV/AIDS issues. Thabisile Khoza the former provincial coordinator of KZNCC (CAN) facilitated sessions on HIV/AIDS and also did bible studies on HIV/AIDS positive living. The report from YCW regions indicate that the YCW is involved in community development through the skills they have acquired from ISB - WM. In Estcourt they reported in our previous meetings that their action is HIV/AIDS awareness and drug abuse. They discovered these realities after doing See, Judge & Act and most young people are involved in unsafe sex and drugs. In Ladysmith (Thukela - Mzinyathi) they report that they are involved in women issues and have organized Young Women Workers (YWW) group which deals with women & children abuse, rape etc. They work jointly with the Crisis Centre in Somshoek.

### **Solidarity With People Living With HIV/AIDS Programme**

The Solidarity Programme for people living with HIV/AIDS is designed to respond. Holistically to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. In the beginning of my employment I set myself Aims / Objectives of the programme. The Aims / Objectives of the programme were set in line with the Solidarity Programme Coordinated by Ms Bongi Zengele.

#### **Aims / Objectives**

- \* To instill hope and nurture positive living among the infected young /old people through the establishment of initiatives that promotes living care and solidarity.
- \* To develop and initiative community based support groups, which is aimed at creating a platform that would help encourage and strengthen human dignity.
- \* To encourage people to go for Voluntary Counseling & Testing (VCT) and therefore helps those diagnose positive to believe that they are created in the image of God.
- \* To help people living with HIV/AIDS with skills so that they could be able to lobby the government and have access to treatment.
- \* To encourage Thukela -Mzinyathi Christian Council (TMCC) and its member churches to participate in the struggle towards positive living through the formation of church - based support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS.

On the 2nd January 2003 we had an HIV /AIDS orientation workshop organized by Bongi Zengele, who is now the Programmes Director and Coordinator of Solidarity Programme. The purpose of the workshop was to orientate staff members from Economic Justice Programme who were going to be part of the HIV/AIDS programme in their areas of operation.

On the 11th - 12th March 2003 we had a workshop on HIV/AIDS, which included members of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) and support groups from Thukela Mzinyathi. We had about 25 delegates attending the workshop across KwaZulu - Natal, which includes Pietermaritzburg and Hammersdale. Among the people present as facilitators was Rev. Sibusiso Gwala who conducted a bible study on economic. Then Mzwandile Nunes facilitated the See, Judge & Act method, which is an enquiry, used by Young Christian Workers (YCW) to do analysis.

On the 14th May 2003 I organized an HIV/AIDS strategic planning in Thukela - Mzinyathi's ISB -WM offices. I invited KwaZulu -Natal Christian Council (KZNCC), Church Aids Network (CAN) to be part of the meeting. The meeting was aimed at planning ways of working together as partners in the Region so that we avoid duplication or competition as both organizations are involved in HIV/AIDS work together with Thukela Mzinyathi Christian Council (TMCC). I also managed to invite church leaders and coordinators of support groups in the region, which included people from Bergville, Newcastle, Estcourt and Ladysmith. Thabisile Khoza of the KZNCC (CAN) committed herself and the council to working with the Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry (ISB-WM) on HIV/AIDS in the region.

Following our agreement with KZNCC (CAN) I organized an HIV/AIDS workshop in Bergville, which took place on the 23rd - 25th May 2003, and I invited Thabisile Khoza of KZNCC (CAN) to come and help me with the facilitation of the workshop. The people who attended the workshop were all HIV positive and even those who were not prepared to disclose prior to the workshop eventually decided to disclose their HIV status. This came as a result of information shared and bible studies conducted during the workshop. Bongani Zuma and Masiza Kunene who are both working in the solidarity programme as field workers made valuable input in the workshop. They both used the fact that they are HIV positive to challenge others who are HIV positive to disclose their status so that they could get help. On the 19th of May 2003 at Ekuvukeni Community Hall, I had a planning meeting with the councillors of HIV/AIDS about a candle light ceremony on HIV/AIDS. Another meeting between KZNCC (CAN) Dept. of Health and ISB-WM took place on the 28th June 2003 .The purpose of the meeting was to plan on resources available for Thukela - Mzinyathi region on HIV/AIDS. We agreed that we will draw from each other's strength in dealing with HIV/AIDS and will work closely with the Dept. of Health.

We received an invitation from the Dept. of Correctional Services to come and facilitate an HIV/AIDS workshop among inmates. We agreed and on the 20th 2003 we had a one day HIV/AIDS workshop in Estcourt where we dealt with issues like basic HIV/AIDS education, counseling, testing etc. The Voluntary Counseling & Testing session was conducted in a dramatic fashion where both Masiza Kunene and Philani Ndlovu showed inmates the danger of having multiple partners and having unsafe sex.

After the workshop we planned to have an internal staff meeting on HIV/AIDS in the ISB-WM offices in Ladysmith.

The reports from the Solidarity fieldworkers are that they are involved in the community doing VCT, Positive Living and Nutrition. I also offer them training on bible inquiries that focuses on HIV/AIDS. They both work in rural Thukela -Mzinyathi helping the community to understand and accept the reality of HIV/AIDS in their families, churches and community.

## **Theology of Work**

The University of KwaZulu - Natal offers a programme called Theology of Work with Industrial Mission as its core subject that is taught nationally. The areas that are covered by the coordinators.

### Aims /Objectives

- \* To organize and facilitate Worker Sunday in Churches in Thukela Mzinyathi Region.
- \* To run bible studies in churches with church leaders on macroeconomics and development.
- \* To organize workshop for church leaders which will focus in issues of work in the bible in relation to unemployment today.
- \* To train ministers from disadvantage African Independent Churches (AIC's) in the Thukela -Mzinyathi Region.
- \* To identify potential ministers (AIC's) and other churches who can be part of the theology of work programme at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg.
- \* To contextualize a theological discourse in a working class environment.
- \* To encourage people to read and understand the bible in their own context with the resources they have at their disposal.

The theology of work programme is designed to help church leaders to embark on a journey to a paradigm shift. A shift from the notion that theology is static within a particular context, to a more innovative and dynamic contextual theology of social justice and peace. On the 24th August 2003 I visited the Dutch Reformed church (DRC) to preach Worker Sunday in Dundee near Glencoe.

### Theology of Work - Worker Sunday 24 August 2003 Dundee

Rev. S Zwane gave a sermon on " God of the workers" in Dundee during worker Sunday. The Worker Sunday in Estcourt on 5th October 2003 was organized at the N.D.J. Ethiopian Church in Zion. The congregation listens to the sermon during the Worker Sunday. YCW's are also being part of the N.D.J Ethiopian Church in Zion in Estcourt.