



Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa at Huguenot College
Christen Vigsburo vir Suider-Afrika by die Hugenote Kollege

CABSA's work inspires many



Attending our Annual General Meeting were guest speakers Anita and Ian Rushton, CABSA board member Christo Greyling, Lyn van Rooyen (CARIS) and CABSA manager Nelis du Toit. Request a copy of our Annual Report 2006/7, which was presented at the AGM, from our office or download it from www.cabsa.co.za.

At our fifth Annual General Meeting, held on 31 May in Wellington, we were privileged to host Ian and Anita Rushton from Ladybrand in the eastern Free State, near Lesotho, as our guest speakers. Ian and Anita told the inspiring story of their journey with HIV and Aids.

They came face to face with the dire effects of HIV when a dear friend almost died from Aids-related illnesses.

Shortly after this wake-up call their paths crossed with CABSA when they attended a Churches, Channels of Hope workshop. After this great experience they enthusiastically grabbed the opportunity to be trained as facilitators.

Since their training as CABSA facilitators in September 2004 this couple committed themselves along with their family to serve people living with or otherwise directly affected by

HIV and Aids. This led to the birth of the Jewels of Hope project in October 2004. God has done wonderful work through Jewels of Hope.

It has now become an organisation with a number of projects from Maseru to Magaliesburg. This newsletter also relates how Anita recently visited Zimbabwe to inform people about Jewels of Hope (see opposite).

The Rushtons give credit to CABSA for what God has achieved through Jewels of Hope as well as their work as Churches, Channels of Hope facilitators.

Many of the stories in this newsletter confirm the wonderful influence of CABSA's work far beyond the borders of South Africa.

Nelis du Toit

Anita Rushton visited Zimbabwe recently to introduce "Jewels of Hope" to interested parties. On her way home, she missed her flight. But, as the saying goes, all dark clouds have a silver lining, and in Anita's case, the delayed trip home gave her the opportunity to reflect on the influence of CABSA and the "Churches, Channels of Hope" (CCH) programme, and the work that the Christian community is doing to support people affected by HIV and Aids. She wrote the following email to CABSA manager Nelis du Toit (printed with her permission):

"I spent the day at the Christian Aids Taskforce, (CAT), a network organisation based in Bulawayo. I was so grateful to the Lord for this delay.

One thing that became so clear to me is the vital role that CABSA has played in the things that God is doing up there. Of course I was introduced as Ian's wife - the trainer from CABSA that was on Renita's training.

It was wonderful because so many people there are trained on CCH, some by CABSA and others by World Vision. I was so well received by all and it was great to meet Godfrey again who had been on the Modderpoort training where we first attended our CCH Workshop.

Up in these setting things seem to be so much more meaningful, and seem to play such a bigger role.

I just wanted to encourage you that I saw God at work in such a wonderful way, I guess in a way that we do not see.

I believe that in many places God is watering seeds that have been planted and we are not even aware of, and causing much fruit to be borne.

Only eternity will reveal the multiplying power of God!"

Women's Summit inspirational

Nearly two thousand women representing more than 130 countries worldwide attended the International Women's Summit, Women's Leadership on HIV and Aids in Kenya in July.

Among them was Lyn van Rooyen (CARIS), who says that she was bowled over by the diversity and passion of the attendees. The following two pages are dedicated to this inspirational event, as told by Lyn.

"Tall and short, old and young, all the colours you can imagine, languages, accents, a colourful spectacle of dress, from the most traditional to the most modern, singing, talking, questioning, listening, dancing, hugging, laughing, organising, crying, comforting, praying, networking, buying, selling, promising," she summarises the experience.

"A YWCA conference is very different from any other conference I have attended," says Lynn. "The sense of joy in meeting old friends, the sense of being part of such a huge organisation and the spontaneous singing and celebration ensured a very special atmosphere."

Participants actively participated in sessions and workshops such as "Positive women and faith communities," "Religion and HIV and Aids", "Creating an Aids Competent Church", "If women really matter, where is the leadership and the money?" and "HIV & Aids in Africa".

Lyn had the opportunity to briefly report on the work of CARIS and the powerful role that knowledge plays in addressing stigmatisation. The session "Mobilizing faith communities towards a comprehensive response to HIV and Aids: Lessons learned in addressing stigma, silence and discrimination" was presented by World Vision staff and was based on the Churches, Channels of Hope programme.



The Summit attracted high-level speakers, including the General Secretary of the World YWCA, the deputy General Secretary of the United Nations, the Director General of the World Health, the Executive Director of UNAIDS and the CEO of Care USA.

The Women Leading Change Awards Ceremony celebrated the work and lives of 14 women, many of them living with HIV, who have live the theme of the summit "Changing lives, Changing communities".

The powerful and practical Nairobi 2007 Call to Action document was accepted during the closing plenary session. It ends with the words: "Our leadership can change our world. We commit to advance these ten critical actions to create change in the lives of women and girls around the world and particularly those infected or affected by HIV and Aids. We pledge to turn these words into action. We can be the change we wish to see in the

lives of all of us as women and girls infected or affected by HIV and Aids."

Each delegate received a personal pledge form with promises making the points of the declaration practical.

Delegates were invited to sign their pledges together and to take the pledges home and to display them somewhere where they will be reminded of their promises.

Lyn concludes: "I hope that the nearly 2000 women returning to all parts of the world, all have hearts beating faster, and that they all remember that they said loudly and clearly: 'I pledge to do everything in my capacity to respond positively, proactively and practically to the unprecedented challenges presented by the Global Aids pandemic'".

The power of our words

A multilingual, non-denominational women-led worship service focussing on HIV started the Summit events every day.

One of these worship services reminded Lyn about the power that simple words can have. She shares her insights:

"From the Old Testament reading from Ezekiel 37:1-14 we

were reminded that Ezekiel faced a situation that seemed hopeless, where the valley was filled with 'very dry' bones that had no sign of life left in them.

This situation was compared to the situation facing us in a time of Aids, at a time when 'the earth is full of Death, the valley is full of bones.'

We were reminded of how

Ezekiel's prophecy blew life into the bones, with the power and on the instructions of God.

In a symbolic act, the women present blew life into whatever situation of 'dry bones' they faced in their own lives and committed to speaking words of hope and life to bring life even where it seems impossible.

Summit snippets

? For every person receiving treatment, there are six new cases of HIV infections!

? Mother to child transmission is a source of unbearable grief for parents, and a result of the failure of medical care. Access to prevention strategies should be universal, and this kind of transmission must be stopped.

? The economic and social empowerment of women is important to prevent the spread of HIV infection.

? South Africa's deputy president, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, was the guest speaker at the gala dinner. She worked for the World YWCA in Geneva from 1984 to 1989 as Youth Director and advocated for job creation for young people within the UN system. She expressed her regret that the organisation is not more active in South Africa.

? For too long women in the pandemic have been seen as vessels, vectors, and victims. However, women should no longer accept these views, but see themselves as victors.



Participate in the first ever international conference on women and AIDS

International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership Making a Difference on HIV and AIDS
July 4-7, 2007

Positive women can help to fight stigmatisation

One of the sessions that Lyn van Rooyen attended during the International Women's Summit, Women's Leadership on HIV and Aids highlighted the role and contribution that positive women and faith communities can have on the general response to Aids.

One of the women living with HIV who shared her journey with her respective faith communities was a Kenyan pastor.

She told of the role she had played in strengthening stigma in her church, and how she often used Deuteronomy 28 and other texts in explaining that HIV is the punishment of God.

She shared her shock when she tested positive. Her church decided to keep her status quiet.

Her personal journey brought her to the point where she disclosed her status. She and her husband both lost their jobs, as well as their home. They were left with no support.

She found important spiritual support through ANERELA+ (African Network of Religious Leaders living with or personally affected by HIV and Aids), and also became involved with a "wonderful program called Channels of Hope".

After a long struggle, her church started to include her in their planning and policy making. Today her church is one of the leaders in HIV treatment, care and prevention.

She emphasised that empowered women living with HIV in faith communities can begin to change attitudes and have a powerful role to play.

"At the end of the meeting we met and greeted each other like long lost sisters, although we have never met before," Lyn remembers.

"Churches, Channels of Hope truly makes family of strangers!"

In a lively discussion that followed, the severity of stigmatisation was highlighted.

Speakers from countries as diverse as Sri Lanka and Norway spoke about how difficult it is for women to disclose their status and the challenges of how to handle stigma towards children. A workshop on the topic was also hosted.

Other key points on the issue included:

- Positive women who transcend their status can be teachers to their faith communities
- Stigma can only be overcome by challenging it!
- The church needs to develop material specifically for women.
- Parents need to make sure that their children are informed before they disclose their status in other public situations. Don't let your children learn your status through gossip!
- Our choice of words is important. Use "parent to child transmission" rather than "mother to child transmission", for instance.
- Women need to stop blaming and start speaking 'outside'. Turn problems into opportunities to bring about change.
- Individuals and communities should prepare themselves to face HIV and to become embracing communities.
- HIV reveals the cracks in our societies. It can be an important vehicle through which to change our society for the better.
- To create a space where positive people feel comfortable talking about their status congregations must become 'loud and vocal' in their acceptance of people living with HIV.

Churches can cope with Aids

The World Council of Churches hosted a session on how to create an Aids competent church in which its work and that of EHAIA was highlighted.

The Council initiated EHAIA to help the church to acknowledge the reality of the epidemic, to act from a position of strength and knowledge, to reduce vulnerability and to learn from each other.

According to the Council, an Aids-competent church should be based on the cornerstones of leadership, knowledge and resources.

Having these basics in place will allow the development of a church response to HIV that will include theological competence, social relevance, inclusiveness, technical competence and compassion.

A book on the topic will be published in the near future.

Our July Churches, Channels of Hope Facilitator Training at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre near Pretoria was a wonderfully blessed experience. The training was conducted under the leadership of Frank Molteno (back row second from right), who was assisted by his co-trainers Anna Mashilo, Buyiswa Mpini, Lundi Joko and Ian Rushton. The diverse group of trainees included three members of PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness), three members of Operation Mobilisation as well as one participant each from Zimbabwe and Malawi.



Dutch student reflects on CABSA's work

Dutch Theology student Judith Moret (middle) visited South Africa to complete her studies under guidance of CABSA. She also did volunteer work. Here she tells more about her experience:

"In my country, HIV and Aids is not a big problem. We hear about it on the television and see people in (South) Africa dying because of Aids. I wanted to find out more about what you do as a church in South Africa to join the fight against HIV and Aids. Therefore I decided to do my final research for my studies here in South Africa.

A friend of mine who is studying in Stellenbosch told me about CABSA. I found a vast amount of information about the organisation on their website. I contacted CABSA manager Nelis du Toit and he was willing to help me further. During the nearly six months I stayed in Stellenbosch I did research about the involvement of a Dutch Reformed and a URCSA congregation in the Aids pandemic. Because I did not know much about it before I came to South

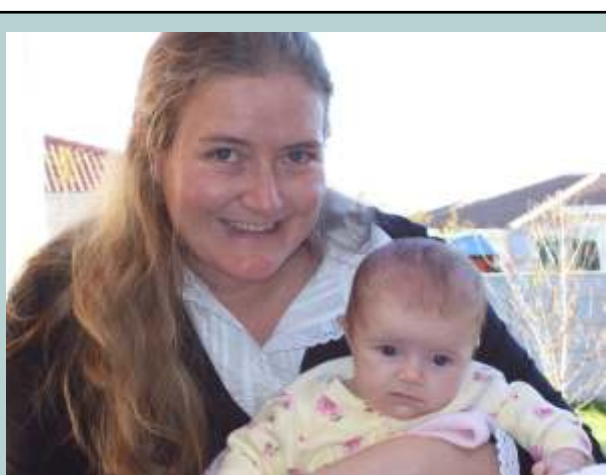


Africa, CABSA was of great help to locate more information.

I joined the "Churches, Channels of Hope" training session in February just after arrived in South Africa. I received a lot of new information and it was very interesting to talk with people about their experiences in the HIV and Aids field. I really think that CABSA is a great organisation that provides valuable information about HIV and Aids. The organisation and its people are able to help churches,

communities and individuals in their fight against Aids, all from a Christian perspective.

I hope that more and more people, and especially churches, are going to use their help in the future, so that we can speak more openly about HIV and Aids. This will help churches to really become channels of hope within the society of (South) Africa!"



CABSA is saam met ons opleidings- en mentor-skapkoördineerder Aneleh Fourie-le Roux en haar man Gerhard opgewonde oor die geboorte van hul eersteling, Tihanna, op 23 Mei. Na afloop van haar kraamverlof sal sy agt dae per maand in diens van CABSA staan om waardevolle insette tot ons opleidings- en ondersteunings-programme te maak.



CABSA het van 14 tot 16 Mei 'n Choose Life werkwinkel by die Calvynse Kerk Matroosfontein in Elsiesrivier aangebied in samewerking met Hospivisie. 'n Gevorderde opvolgkursus vind op 27 tot 29 Augustus plaas. Soortgelyke Choose Life werkwinkels saam met Hospivisie word vir belangstellendes in die Wes-Kaap beplan.