

'Be the hands, feet of Jesus'

By Calsile Masilela

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Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard, a pastor and project manager for Shiselweni reformed church home based care, has commissioned 40 Home Based Caregivers (HBC) to go and be the 'hands and feet of Jesus' as they take care of chronically ill patients.

Pastor Wyngaard, said this during a graduation for home based caregivers held at Maseyisini Inkhundla on Thursday.

In a gesture of humility reminiscent of what Jesus did to His disciples in the Bible, Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard personally washed the feet of some of the graduating Caregivers. This, he did with the assistance of Laura Clark and Wendi Hammond from the United States of America.

Dr. Wyngaard's congratulated the Caregivers for choosing to take care of the terminally ill with no prospects of remuneration. He also indicated that ever since he responded to God's call whilst in a bus, he is humbled by the results of this HIV response project.

"More and more people are willing to make a meaningful contribution through providing voluntary service in their communities. This has enabled us to cut through the challenge of denial in the area of HIV and AIDS," he explained.

"Another humbling experience for me is that this Swaziland Reformed Church Home Based Care Initiative was awarded the Courageous Leadership Award (second place) in 2008 in the United States of America. Our nomination was facilitated by a nomination by World Vision who runs this initiative yearly in collaboration with Willow creek Church – one of the largest churches in the United States," he explained. Through the prize money for this Award, estimated at E280, 000, a pre-school and kitchen were constructed at Dwaleni. This is where Dr. Wyngaard initially trained some of the very first groups of Caregivers. The organisation managed to buy medical supplies and other working tools for Home Based Caregivers.

Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care is taking care of 2 200 patients. "This is possible through the 23 groups of Home Based Caregivers that we have equipped with appropriate skills and information. As you may tell from the name, the 700 Caregivers we have trained are in the Shiselweni region with only one in Croydon," he explained.

World Vision's Program Manager at Maseyisini constituency, Musa Mayisela said the training was a compressed combination of theory and practice. World Vision contributed E6 500 whilst the Swaziland Reformed Church contributed E1 000.

Mayisela further said; "Besides the financial contribution, the church also provided facilitators who are from the Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care, South Africa and the United States of America. We appreciate this level of collaboration between the two organisations."

These sentiments were echoed by the constituency's Member of Parliament, Mduduzi Dlamini, who also congratulated the Home Based Caregivers with extra warmth.

According to Jeanet Botha, one of the facilitators, the one-week training covered Home Based Care and Palliative Care. Botha facilitated on selected topics on medical prescription and nutrition for chronically ill. She is competently acquainted with prescriptions since she is a trained and registered Pharmacist in South Africa. Since the outset of this year, she has decided to volunteer her expertise as service to her church for one year.

The Home Based Care givers hope to improve the HIV and AIDS response at Maseyisini Prevention

efforts in the area are compounded by the community's proximity to the border post, which is barely ten minutes away. History shows that this cross-border set up heightens a community's vulnerability to HIV infection.

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