

Is the Church ready for this?

"Ask any minister or pastor working in a rural Area, what frustrates him most about the Sunday morning worship service, and he will probably say that it is the scarcity of men and the abundance of children attending the service.

Under present conditions, where Aids-related deaths result in funerals nearly every Saturday and Sunday, it happens more and more that even the women seldom get to Church.

As a result we often preach to an audience of mostly children on a Sunday morning!

On a Sunday morning a few months ago, I stood in the church at Dwaleni. I was a bit discouraged, because there were so few adults in the church. But at that moment I seemed to hear the voice of the Lord Himself and I realized that these children were the challenge of the future for the Church." So writes Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard, Secretary of the *Reformed Church in Swaziland*.



God's plan is ready!

"Nothing ever happens by chance, because even at that stage the Lord had a plan, the impact of which we cannot grasp, not even now. Through a wonderful combination of circumstances, *Petra College* presented training in children's ministry in Piet Retief during March, April and May. 12 People from Swaziland attended the training and could not stop talking about all their new skills they wanted to try out in practice. We know children's ministry in Swaziland will never be the same again. God blessed this training, not because of people, but because He wanted to bless the children. It is interesting to realize that the Lord had often brought the need of children to our attention over the past months, almost as if He wanted to make sure that we would not forget what He has in mind for children."

Something is happening in Swaziland Many think that Swaziland is over evangelised, but the Lord is opening doors there for children's ministry. We have suddenly been receiving invitations from one group after another, to come and tell about the activities of the College and to give training. Earlier this year the Bible Society in Swaziland sponsored a training work shop for children's workers. It was arranged by former students, involved with *Africa Children's Evangelism (ACE)*, Swaziland, and was presented, with the help of two of our lecturers, to 120 people. Afterwards the College also addressed two large meetings (each of around 200 church delegates) and received positive feedback.

Let us pray for the Lord's plan for the Church in this small country. If they are 'saturated' with children's ministry, the Church might be strengthened in the Gospel 'from the bottom up'. Might it perhaps work through like yeast and run over to surrounding countries...(?)

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