

## **Imam Abdur Rahman Bassier: A legacy that still thrives**

Imam Abdurahman Bassier was born 19<sup>th</sup> January in Port Elizabeth. His father was Imam Abdul-Bassier, Imam and religious leader at the Boorhanul Mosque in Bo-Kaap.

In 1978 he started doing prison missionary work at Robben Island and Pollsmoor prisons. Given the tense political situation as well as the prevailing antipathy towards prisoners, progress was slow. By 1980 with the assistance of Achmat Davids, he established the Muslim Board for Prison Welfare and State Institutions, under the auspices of the MJC, Hospital Welfare Society, Muslim Assembly and Paarl Jamaah. He served as its chairman from 1982 until he fell ill in 2002. He soon realized that Muslims need to have a unified body in its negotiations with State authorities, so he began the long road of setting up a national body. **In 1988 the National Muslim Prison Board came into existence, with Imam serving as its co-ordinator until 2002.** One of the Board's main achievements has been the appointment of a **Muslim Chaplain in 1998** viz Moulana Abdul-Aziem Khateeb (hafizhahullah)

Imam suffered a stroke in February 2002 at the age of 79 years. Thereafter his activities were severely curtailed. On Saturday morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2004 he passed away peacefully in the company of his lifetime partner and wife Mareldia. He was buried the following day in the grave of his father, Abdul, at the Mowbray cemetery.