

# CPRC Newsletter

*The Church with Open Doors*

April 2015  
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## He has risen, indeed!

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#### Cape Peninsula Reformed Church

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##### Treasurer

Christie Esterhuysen  
Wed 9:30-12:00  
021-423 3529

##### Pastor:

Francois Wessels  
021- 9195903  
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##### Convenor elders:

Harry Levin

##### Main worship service:

Sunday 09:00

**55KLF:** Sunday 18:00

Bread for Life: Wed 17:30

Facebook group

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Cape->

*In this period between Good Friday, Resurrection Sunday and the coming of Pentecost (17-24 May), we are still thinking about the effect of the death and the resurrection of Christ.*

*Let us focus on our Lord's resurrection. What are the "benefits" of his resurrection to believers?*

*First, it means that for a Christian believer, death is not the end. Christ has risen, He has risen indeed! Those who believe in Christ may know and believe that as Christ has risen, they also shall rise. Death indeed – for them, for us – are not the end. Praise God for that – it changes the way one lives in this world.*

*However, this is not the only "benefit" of the resurrection. The other important benefit is that the resurrection of Christ announced the coming of the kingdom of God. Let us think about this aspect of the resurrection today.*

When Christ arose from the dead, the bonds of death were broken and the reign of God was inaugurated. The kingdom of God is not yet fully established – but it has broken through, as sure as the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

Paul emphasizes that in his letter to the Philippians, chapter 2:9, in which it is said that Christ died the "death on the cross" and then proceeds: "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

It is important that this kingdom of Christ is not only seen as "heaven" – a place somewhere in space where the souls of the believers will gather in future. This kingdom started with the resurrect-

ion of Jesus and will be established as believers erect signs of the kingdom of God - on this earth on which we live.

"Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about" (NT Wright, *Surprised by Joy*).

So, Christ's resurrection is more than assuring believers that they are assured of a life after death. It does give us that assurance – but that is not the end of the story. Christ's resurrection also reminds Christians that God has not given up on the world and its people – even though many of us have done so. He trusts that the world in which we live will be transformed from a place where sin rules to a place where Christ's

*Christos anéthe! Christos aléthos anéthe! Christ has risen! Christ has risen indeed!*

authority is recognised.

This has at least two imported consequences for Christians:

*First*, Christians do not give up so easily, even when they meet obstacles in their effort of proclaiming the authority of God. They continue, reminding their fellow believers and anyone who has an ear to hear:

“Repent, because the kingdom of God is near!”

*Secondly*, it reminds us that Christ’s kingdom will bring a transformation which will include this earth of which we live. In other words, the “coming kingdom” do not only refer to a heavenly, other-worldly abode where our souls will gather. No – it reminds us of how God wants this world on which we live, to be transformed, so that it will meet the heavenly requirements.

This message has a very importance consequence: It reminds us that the material world in which we live, is very important to God the Creator – and whatever we do to make this world a better place, we contribute to the extension of the Lord’s kingdom.

### Two ways to understand the kingdom of God

When it comes to how the kingdom of God should be understood, there are two traditions – two ways of thinking – in Protestant theology.

One tradition says Christians live, at the same time, in two worlds: the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God.

In the kingdom of this world (this tradition says) even Christians sometimes have to use worldly means. Yes, even even Christians have to use force occasionally to apprehend and punish violence . It will be of no use trying to apply the methods from the kingdom of God (love everyone as yourself) in the kingdom of this world.

Love, peace and turning the other cheek are examples of

Biblical ethics – but they should only be applied within the parameters of the kingdom of God.

The second tradition – to which Reformed Churches adhere – says No! there is only one world, and the children God have to establish the kingdom of heaven wherever they go. Parts of the kingdom are under the rule of the evil one, and other parts have been annexed in the name of the living God.

When Christ was born, and when He was crucified, powerful signs of the kingdom of God was erected. When Jesus healed people, He often said the kingdom of God has come – in the lives of those healed. Such a healing was a sign of the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

So much more when Christ rose from the dead: it was a strong sign that the kingdom of God was breaking through. That is why Paul, when he writes about the resur-

*“The point of the resurrection... is that the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die... What you do with your body in the present matters because God has a great future in store for it... What you do in the present will last into God's future.”*

rection in Philippians 2:9, he describes it in terms of a king gaining an important victory:

*“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth”*

One consequence of accepting this this explanation (not two kingdoms, but one) is that we realise that whatever happens in the

present “temporary, bodily” world, is crucial to God. As NT Wright puts it:

“The point of the resurrection... is that the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die...What you do with your body in the present matters because God has a great future in store for it...”

“What you do in the present— by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbour as yourself—will last into God's future.

“These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly, a little more bearable, until the day when we leave it behind altogether (as the hymn so mistakenly puts it...). They are part of what we may call building for God's kingdom.”

If we follow the second tradition (there is only kingdom), Jesus’ resurrection is enormous important. Then the resurrection is not only a guarantee that those who believe in Christ’s death and resurrection will receive eternal life after death - it is then also a guarantee that God in Christ Jesus will complete the renewal of heaven and earth which He started with the resurrection. In the words of Jürgen Moltmann, in his book, *Jesus Christ for Today's World*:

“Believing in the resurrection does not just mean assenting to a dogma and noting a historical fact. It means participating in this creative act of God’s ...

“Resurrection is not a consoling opium, soothing us with the promise of a better world in the here-after. It is the energy for a rebirth of this life... It is focused on the redemption of this life.”

*“Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about.”*

## CPRC – the Way Ahead

At the end May Francois Wessels will reach retirement age. How will that affect CPRC?

Those who have heard this explanation may skip this, because it will be a repetition of what you have already heard. However, for the sake of informing everyone, here are the thoughts of the CPRC church council:

1. Until the end of May 2015, CPRC and the Synod of Western Cape will share Francois as an employee on a 50/50% basis. Until end of May he will be legally an employee of the Synod, and CPRC will refund Synod our 50% share of his salary etc.

But from 1 June 2015, Francois will legally become an employee of CPRC. He will in future give the same amount of time to CPRC as he had been giving to CPRC under the 50/50 agreement. He will still continue his ministry to Jewish people with Cecilia – for which the Synod will compensate him for travel and other costs, on an *ad hoc* basis.

2. At the same time CPRC will be looking around for a theological student who has finished his theological training, but has a work which provides him/her with some income, and who would be enthusiastic about the possibility to start an evening outreach at CPRC, similar to what 55KLF is doing on Sunday nights at the moment. We will then invite such a person to start a similar ministry, for which he/she will be compensated and supported by CPRC. From then onwards, we will monitor the situation. The most positive outcome will be that such an outreach will develop into a permanent ministry of CPRC, headed by our youth worker.

3. The beginning of the new arrangement will be when Francois will be formally inducted in June as pastor of CPRC on a fixed term contract.

## Synod of Western Cape meeting

### Mon 4 – 8 May

The Synod is a meeting of representatives from every congregation of the Dutch Reformed in the Western Cape.

They will at Goudini resort near Worcester. Francois Wessels and Ted Coulson will represent CPRC at the synod. Remember the meeting in your prayers. Some of the matters which will be discussed there are:

- the role of the church in reducing poverty and improving peace and stability in our society
- how the programme of “Fresh Expressions” in can help us in our outreach to people outside the church
- what the church can do to support schools and teachers to improve our education
- whether the church should give any direction regarding the possibility of exploration of shale gas in the Karoo the process of hydro fracking (an important issue for farmers in case the process of hydro fracking may poison the water resources in the Karoo)
- what the way forward is in re-unification of the Dutch Reformed Church and our sister church, the Uniting Reformed Church.

## From Church Council Meeting 30 May

*Project OPHELP was asked to assist with arranging people to clean area around the church”. The council decided that:*

1. . Straatwerk’s Project OPHELP will be asked to recruit, organise and oversee homeless people who will clean area around church before church services on a Sunday morning. This will include:
2. OPHELP providing a foreman every Sunday morning to oversee cleaning and compensate the workers with cash to those who have helped.
3. OPHELP handling all the cash payments and invoicing CPRC only for the direct costs involved (labour, cleaning material).
4. OPHELP managing a rush of too many interested persons, if it should occur.
5. OPHELP (and CPRC) inviting the recruited persons to attend the worship service after cleaning.
6. This outreach will be financed by CPRC’s Benevolent Fund (which depends on contributions from members and friends).

## News - Christian Reformed Church in North America

Jon Vugteveen said he left his position as pastor of a church in Allegan, Michigan to serve as a church planter for River Rock Church, itself a church plant in Rockford, Michigan.

The son of a minister, he said his path to becoming a pastor and church planter had some stops along the way. He decided at one point to turn his back on God, falling into a world of selfishness and darkness.

Change finally came some years ago when he walked into a Promise Keeper’s rally in Detroit. Being with so many other men was electrifying, but he felt like he was alone with God.

“I got on my knees that day, and ever since my life has been hard, and yet I’ve been moving ahead,” he said.

As he works to build the church in Greenville, Vugteveen said he will do what he did in Allegan--use his own experiences, coupled with his faith in God, to reach out to others.

“I work with people who may be beaten down and talk to them about a God who can provide hope,” said Vugteveen, whose goal is to launch the new church early next year. “I want to plant a church to motivate people to engage and move into the mystery of Christ.”

## Christian Reformed World Mission reports on Nepal earthquake

On April 25, a powerful earthquake rocked the country of Nepal and northern India. Over six thousand people are reported to have been killed. All Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) staff and partners are safe.

Nepal has not experienced an earthquake of this magnitude in over 80 years.

CRWM has been in communication with all staff and partners in Nepal, and nearby countries and we are thankful to report that they are safe. It is uncertain, however, how many people whom our staff work with are effected.

"After the big quake, everyone was gathering outside in open areas for hours and now people are finally starting to come back inside," said Troy Bierma, a CRWM staff member who adds that some people are staying with his family in their home since they don't trust the structural integrity of their own houses. "It has been 6.5 hours since the quake and the earthquake alarm still buzzes every 30 minutes or so from aftershocks and tremors. We appreciate continued prayers for a quiet night."

The seminary where two of our staff-members teach has suffered major damage and walls have collapsed. There are also cracks in the homes of our staff members.

Additionally, at the time of the Earthquake, a church-plant with whom one of CWRM missionaries works with was holding a worship service. Their church building is at the epicenter of the earthquake. Communication inside the country has been difficult and it is unclear how this congregation was effected.

We ask you to lift up in prayer the people of Nepal and its neighboring countries as they cope with the trauma and destruction of this event.

We praise God for his hand of protection over our staff members and partners in the midst of this tragedy.

Pray that they can be of help and comfort to all people affected by the earthquake.

## FINANCE REPORT: MARCH 2015

March is the first month of CPRC's new (2015/16) financial year. As this report covers the results for only one month, comparisons to budget have limited significance at this stage. It is more meaningful to compare the results with those of previous months -

- Except for the December 2014 figure of R24 830 (which was unusually high), the Thank Offerings for March 2015 (R14 060) were the highest for many months. However, they are still not at the level (in excess of R20 000 per month) required to enable CPRC to meet all its commitments from its non-investment income.
- Similarly, a welcome trend was shown by the Pew Collections at R9 153 - the highest amount of any of the recent months.
- Very welcome donations of R1500 were received.

<i>March 2015</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Thank Offerings	14 060
Pew Collections	9 153
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>23 213</b>
Benevolent Fund	650
Donations	1 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>R25 363</b>

Inflation continues to impact everyone – including CPRC!

Therefore, it is essential that the target for 2015/16 takes this into account and needs to be higher than for the past financial year.

Only in this way will CPRC be able to fund its responsibilities and its goals for the year ahead. Let's all do our best (that's all we can do!) to meet the challenge!

If you wish to deposit or transfer your Thank Offering, Donation, etc. directly to CPRC's bank account, the details are:

NG GEMEENTE CPRC

A/c no: 50061426729

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Branch code: 201-709

**CPRC FINANCE COMMITTEE**