

CPRC Newsletter

The Church with Open Doors

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"Where are you?"

"The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?"

That is a question which echoes throughout the centuries. God coming to the world and calling them: "Where are you?"

Many books have been written, dealing with the theme of man's search for God. It is quite remarkable that the theme which more often more often in the Bible, is the theme of God searching for man.

That is certainly the dominant theme in Genesis, the first book of the Bible – vocally expressed by God's words in Genesis 3:9:

"Where are you?"

It is God is speaking to Adam and Eve. We are told that "the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day..." (v 8).

The picture suggested by this call of God, is an idyllic scene of God and his creation in perfect harmony. God is on his way to Adam and Eve, and in "the cool of the night" – that favourite half an hour in the early evening when the sun was not completely down, but the sweltering heat had been replaced by a merciful cool breeze, when people go for a refreshing walk. In the time before sin distorted their relationship, the LORD God came walking in the Garden of Eden, expecting to be joined by Adam and Eve for a refreshing walk among the trees of the garden.

What strikes the reader, is that the Creator here is pictured as look-

ing forward for the walk, and when he does not find his friends, he calls out – with disappointment – "Where are you?"

The emphasis here is not on the disappointment of the sinners, Adam and Eve, because their idyllic relationship with the Creator had been broken, but on the Creator's disappointment because they are not at home when He came around for the regular evening stroll.

Put simply, God missed their fellowship more acutely than man and woman missed his Presence.

It is he who came looking for them. It is he who calls one "Where are you?" while Adam and Eve are hiding from him.

This theme of God coming to his people, seeking their companionship, is a recurring theme in the Bible. Soon after the Fall in the Garden of Eden, when "man's wickedness on earth had become great", we read that "the LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (Acts 6:5).

God suffered because his friends, the people he created, were no longer his friends, and no longer longed for his fellowship. He was so grieved that he decided to make a new beginning with Noah and his family in the ark.

Unfortunately, despite the Creator's trouble, this new attempt to create a new relationship between God and his people, also

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

failed, eventually ending in the rebellion among people, building the tower of Babel – a signal for the new world without God they hoped to build, where nothing would be impossible for them. In great disappointment, the LORD “scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Gen 11:6-8). God’s ideal of building an intimate relationship with people seemed to be in shatters at the end of Genesis 11.

But God did not give up. Despite this series of failed relationships, God did not give up. He decided to make a new start – again. This time his scope would be large – peace with all humankind – and his instrument would be man called Abram, who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, that is in today’s Iraq.

We will continue this story in coming newsletters. The point to take note of here, is that it was every time God, the Creator, who reached out to humankind – asking Adam and Even where they were, commanding Noah to build an ark to start a new community and calling to Abram to leave his home, family and tribe, in order to start a new community.

Almost as if God was in need of fellowship. Being God, and therefore perfectly self-sufficient God, he was, and is, of course never in need of the support of any other being. And yet, the first 10 chapters of the Bible story show clearly that Lord seeked the company and fellowship of his people.

Not to seek their support, but for another reason – for something else – some force that moved even God himself to interact with creatures, and especially human beings.

How odd is that? We, who are weak, feel little need for interaction with God, but God, who is self-sufficient, yearns for our company! He – not us - is to one who comes calling: “Where are you?”

Maybe that is what the Bible calls love. *To be continued.*

Francois Wessels



PLEASE LET ME MAKE THIS PENALTY SHOT, LORD

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Istvan and Naldine Berko will bring their youngest daughter, Kiara Irene, to be baptised on Sunday 2 August.

After many months and visits to the Department of Home Affairs, **Robert Chikakula** has eventually received his ID document. We thank the Lord for that!

Gideona Page thanks everyone for their prayers for sister’s daughter Suzanne. Doctors thought she had a stroke, but we now know that it was not – she is making good progress. Give thanks to God, also for Suzanne’s baby who was not hurt by the car accident in which the family was involved.

Diane Beal had started her radiotherapy in Vincent Palotti hospital. We thank for keeping her in your prayers.

Stephen Keys-Transfeldt gives thanks to God for the opening given to him to help with the training of students in the clothing industry.

Brian Littler, our new deacon, has started to inform passers-by of CPRC ministry by setting up two tables with fruit and other bric-a-brac, books etc outside CPRC. The idea was that when people stop to buy a few bananas, Brian will give them some CPRC brochures and tell them about CPRC and our ministry, and especially that the church is not only there for the

benefit of its members, but also for those who are not yet members of CPRC. The project has grown, and we have realised that the stuff which he has acquired, is now too much to be stored in the church. Brian is looking around for a second hand mobile foodwagon, in which the bric-a-brac etc could be stored. Should you know about such a good second hand foodwagon, please contact Brian Littler, 072-96 64 328.

Project OPHELP cleaning area around CPRC every Sunday morning

1. CPRC Church Council has asked Straatwerk’s Project OPHELP 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 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. Should you want to contribute, make the payment to CPRC, with the reference “Project OPHELP”.