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Cape Peninsula Reformed Church

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021-423 3529

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Francois Wessels
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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->

CPRC Newsletter

The Church with Open Doors

Were there not enough graves in Egypt?

I know the sentence above is not the ideal introductory sentence to the first month of the new year, but I believe there is a precious lesson we can learn from this sarcastic – and also funny – question of the Israelites, asked on the occasion of their liberation from Egypt.

These words were spoken by the Israelites, as an accusation against Moses, as they stood on the verge of being set free from their 430 years of slavery in Egypt.

It often happens that when you have to leave a place where you stayed for a while, you suddenly, on the last day, remember the exceptional qualities of the place you are about to leave.

Egypt did not hold many such memories for the Israelites. They had to dig deep into their collective memory to remember any such qualities, but they did remember one – in Egypt there were so many places to bury people. Now, as they were leaving, they felt it necessary to remind Moses about the precious advantage they now stood to lose. Thus their question:

Why are we leaving? Were there not enough graves in Egypt?

What made them to suddenly remember the one good thing in Egypt?

The appearance, a distance away, of Pharaoh and his chariots of fire, opened their eyes.

“As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching towards them” (Ex 14:10).

That should not have worried the Israelites. Had the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not, just a few days ago, sent ten miraculous plagues – to change the minds of

the Pharaoh and the Egyptian people? Would this same God who delivered them in such a dramatic fashion, not also help them overcome the new burden?

Of course He would. He could, and He would protect the Israelites as He had promised – we, 21st century readers of the Bible, would say, from our perspective.

For some strange reason, the Israelites saw it differently. “They were terrified and cried out to the LORD” (v 10). As one person they decided: Moses was the guilty party! And they did not mince words. Then followed that wonderful accusation, dripping with sarcasm: “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?”

We, of course, would never take such a dim view of our situation – seeing only the dangers and the difficulties of the year ahead.

Complaining about the lack of graves outside Egypt? Never!

It seems to me the best way to forget the graves is to remember the dangers and pitfalls the Lord had brought us thus far. To remember Moses’ words: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today (v 13)”.

And to focus on the risen Christ, the Lord who defeated the grave and death.

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

Just a Gathering of People?

Pastor Jeremiah Steepke transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the 10 000 member church that he was be introduced as the head pastor at that morning.

He walked around for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for the service... only 3 of the 7 000 people said hello to him. He asked people for change to buy food but no one in the church gave him change. He went to sit down in front of the church and was asked if he would please sit at the back. He greeted people to be greeted with stares and dirty looks.

As he sat in the back of the church, he listened to the church announcements. When that was done, the elders went up and were excited to introduce the new pastor... The congregation looked around and clapping with anticipation... the homeless man sitting in the back stood up... and started walking down the aisle... the clapping stopped.

The new pastor recited Matth 27: "For I was hungry..." and concluded: "Today I see a gathering of people... not a church... the world has enough people, but not enough disciples... are you prepared to be a disciple of Jesus?"

From:

Roger Beal 1939-2014

The finance report in last month's CPRC Newsletter, was the last one Roger Beal wrote. We have been told by a number of people that when they receive the newsletter, the financial report is the first piece they turn to. That in itself is a tribute to Roger's style and wit. We will try our best to follow in his footsteps. He will be dearly missed, not the least in our FinCom meetings.

FINANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER

Thank Offerings income continues to cause significant concern and again was lower than budget (this month by R6 873 – 38%). However, Pew Collections of R8 018 reflected a welcome surplus of R1 768 (28%) over budget for the month and, with a one-off donation of R3000 enabled the total income for the month to be held to a shortfall of R2 176 (8% below budget). The income summary for the month is as follows:

<i>November 2014</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Over/(Under)</i>	<i>% variance</i>
Thank Offerings	11 460	18 333	(6 873)	(38%)
Pew Collections	8 018	6 250	1768	28%
Sub Total	19 478	24 583	(5 105)	(21%)
Benevolent Fund	600	713	(113)	(16%)
Donations	3 500	458	3 042	664%
Total	R23 578	R25 754	(R2 176)	(8%)

The cumulative position for the 9 months to November reflects a worsening overall position, caused mainly by the increasing shortfall in the Thank Offerings (now below budget by R28 556 -17%). The cumulative results for the other income items reflect a decrease in the respective shortfalls, with Donations receiving a welcome boost as mentioned in the November comments above. The cumulative results disclose an overall shortfall of R23 892 (10% below budget). The cumulative income summary is as follows:

<i>Cumulative (9 months)</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Over/(Under)</i>	<i>% variance</i>
Thank Offerings	136 444	165 000	(28 556)	(17%)
Pew Collections	57 219	59 160	(1 941)	(3%)
Sub Total	193 663	224 160	(30 497)	(14%)
Benevolent Fund	5 050	6 420	(1 370)	(21%)
Donations	12 100	4 125	7 975	193%
Total	R210 813	R234 705	(R23 892)	(10%)

The congregation's expenditure is closely managed and is kept to a minimum. However, if the budgeted break-even result is to be achieved for the financial year ended 28 February 2015, Thank Offerings income will need to receive a significant boost during the last few months, or any overall shortfall will again have to be funded from investment income to the detriment of future investment returns. If you wish to deposit or transfer your Thank Offering, Donations etc. directly to CPRC's bank account, the details are:

NG GEMEENTE CPRC

A/c No: 50061426729 FNB Long Street, Cape Town

Code: 201-709

CPRC FINANCE COMMITTEE

Decembers, trying to stay awake so he could make sure that all of the lights across the street were functioning correctly. If one went out, or if the lights came on or turned off outside the proper times, he would scream and cry in panic until it was fixed. (Yes, I spent an hour one cold night on top of the neighbour's garage, replacing *one bulb* in a Santa display so the boy would sleep!)

Christmas was a nightmare. Phil would scream as each package was unwrapped. As frightened as he was when each new thing appeared, he was equally frightened when it changed or disappeared. We'd try to find him a present he'd enjoy, but he'd merely scream and cry in panic at the intrusion on his carefully ordered world, and the gifts would sit ignored.

He wanted nothing. He would look straight at toys we thought he would like, and he would not react at all. He asked for nothing. He anticipated nothing.

This year, we once more asked the kids what they wanted for Christmas. Our 14-year-old daughter sat down and made out her list. And our 10-year old son, for the first time in his life, answered the question. "PlayStation 2," he said. "I want PlayStation 2 Christmas." We just about fell over. His sister gave him a piece of paper. She wrote *Phil's Christmas List* at the top. He wrote *playstation tow*.

So, we drove to the shop. He has never looked at anything there, never seemed to notice anything he might want. But he led us right to the PlayStation 2 sets, picked out the bundle he wanted. "Open at Christmas," he said. He watched gleefully as we wrapped the package, and then he solemnly placed it under the tree. So, a PlayStation 2 game set sits there, wrapped, with his name on it, and he waits to open it. "December 25," he says. "Open PlayStation 2 December 25."

Yesterday he said, "I want Christmas." There were tears in my eyes. It's such a small thing, but such a truly amazing thing. It's one more bit of hope that he will be able to function in some semblance of society as an adult one day - that he might be able to live just a bit more independently, and one day want the things he needs to survive enough to work for them.

This Christmas I am grateful for being able to appreciate what complexity and miracle is involved in such small "selfish" acts as wanting something for Christmas and expressing those wants to another person. I'm grateful that my son is able to enjoy all of the commercial cultural trappings of the holiday this year instead of running from them screaming. I'm grateful for the many ways Phil helps me stop and look again, even at my most "Christian" conclusions. And I'm especially grateful that my son helps me learn more Christ's humble birth, over and over again.

News

Thank you to all who helped to make our **Christmas programme** on Sunday evening 13 December such a heart-warming occasion.

Thank you to those who recently donated clothes and cash for those who are in need. The **CPRC Benevolent Fund** had often been used in the past few months to help people in need. Should you want to make a specific contribution to the Benevolent Fund, simply put the money in an envelope and write "Benevolent Fund" on it and put it in the collection plate.

Francois and Adré will be at CPRC until Sunday 27 December. Francois will take leave and be back on 15 January. **Pastor Dennis** has been asked to help out at Claremont URC, where Pastor John Mouton retired in December. Dennis will take the services at Claremont on 27 December and 3 January. Our guest speaker on Sunday 3 January will be **Arion Naidoo** from Fraserburg URC.

As I write this, **Jürgen Dünhofen**, our administrator, has gone to the dentist because of a very painful tooth root canal problem. This is the day before Christmas. Please pray that the pain will be gone by Christmas.

Our wish is that, even if your Christmas celebration is mingled with emotions of sadness and loss, you will be reminded and encouraged by the One who came to us as a Child, weak and fragile, and left us as crucified criminal – and yet is with us, as the risen Christ and Lord Himself.

*Francois and Adré
Dennis and Pat*

**CPRC's 112th
Anniversary**
Sunday 14 February 2010
Guest speaker: Prof Martin Pauw