

CPRC Newsletter

The Church with Open Doors

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Cape Peninsula Reformed Church

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

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Francois Wessels
021- 9195903
083-23 20 960

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->

So, are we alone?

Sorry to disappoint you, but it seems to be the disconcerting truth. Quite a sobering thought. Alone... in the universe.

That is if we can believe Eric Metaxas in his article in the Wall Street Journal, on the probability that there are living beings other than we earth-people, somewhere in the universe.

It turns out that, whereas astrophysicists (scientists who study stars and the universe) once were optimistic that there is life somewhere else, they are now downright pessimistic. It is likely –very likely – that we earthlings indeed are... the only ones.

Metaxas mentions that Carl Sagan, the famous scientist and TV presenter of the 1990s, once announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life – the right kind of star around which the planet revolves, and the right distance from that star.

Given the fact that there were roughly one octillion (1 followed by 24 zeros) planets in the universe, scientists were optimistic that there must be other planets with conditions like that of earth (enough oxygen, reasonable temperature etc), some of which will most probably have life.

With such favourable odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), an organization, was founded to promote research in the possibility of life elsewhere.

For some atheists, this research was very important, because life elsewhere will prove their point that there was not a God who created the heavens and the earth, and gave only to earth the luxury of life. Evidence of life elsewhere would destroy the Biblical belief that there is a God who once created life on one special planet called

Earth, and then revealed Himself to the earthlings in and through the experience of one particular people, and eventually through his own incarnation, life, death and resurrection.

This story must have been invented to provide peace of mind to the inhabitants of the earth – an interesting story, which could not possibly be true, because on an octillion other planets, the inhabitants of those planets have created other stories to explain how they have been created by a Creator.

However, the tide has turned for this scientific estimate.

Whereas scientists once thought it very highly possible that there is life on other planets, they are now extremely skeptical.

Scientists have been listening with vast radio telescopic networks for signals that “resembled coded intelligence” and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Researchers have not discovered convincing signs of life. In fact they discovered circumstances on other planets to be without any indication of conditions

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

that could support life. It became clear that there far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 20 and then to 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets dropped drastically. Today, there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life – every single one of which must be perfectly met or there will be no life.

The fact that there is life on planet Earth seems to very near to an inexplicable miracle. For example, without a massive planet Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would Earth's surface.

So the question arises: Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point, asks Metaxes, is it fair to admit that science suggests we cannot be the result of random forces?.

Doesn't assuming an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the conceivable odds to come into being?

For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces – gravity, the electromagnetic force and the “strong” and “weak” nuclear forces – were determined less than a millionth of a second after the Big Bang. If the ratio between nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction – even one part in the 100 000 000 000 000 000 – then no stars could have ever formed at all.

Is this a proof that there must have been a Creator behind the creation? Oxford professor John Lennox said “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator... gains credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”

(Thanks to Sune Pauw for the article.)

News

Welcome to those who started to worship with CPRC:

* Sandra and Lennox Corbett, who work in Wynberg and can be contacted on 021- 761 6334;

* Elizabeth Booysen (073-264 96 89)

*and Gideon Page (number?)

FINANCE REPORT: FEBRUARY 2015

When you read this, CPRC's financial year end (28 February) will already have passed and the full year's results will be a reality.

Unfortunately, CPRC's 2014/15 income will fall short of the key targets for the year. However, the congregation is thanked for striving to achieve those targets. To cover the deficit for the year, the investment income will have to be used, which, because of inflation, depletes the investments value. More information in next month's report.

The January 2015 results show a return to the pattern of the months prior to the previously-reported boost in December 2014 in respect of Thank Offerings and Donations. This month the key results are:

- Thank Offerings of R11 570 were R6 763 below budget (-37%);
- Pew Collections of R4 821 were R1 753 below budget (-27%).

<i>January 2015</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Over/ (Under)</i>	<i>% variance</i>
Thank Offerings	11 570	18 333	(6 763)	(37%)
Pew Collections	4 821	6 574	(1 753)	(27%)
Sub Total	16 391	24 907	(8 516)	(34%)
Benevolent Fund	420	713	(293)	(41%)
Donations	500	458	42	9%
Total	R17 311	R26 078	(R8 767)	(34%)

The total income shortfall for the 11 months to January 2015 would have been much worse but for the boost in Thank Offerings and Donations received previously. The cumulative income summary is as follows:

<i>Cumulative (11 months)</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Over/ (Under)</i>	<i>% variance</i>
Thank Offerings	172 844	201 666	(28 822)	(14%)
Pew Collections	66 316	72 306	(5 990)	(8%)
Sub Total	239 160	273 972	(34 812)	(13%)
Benevolent Fund	5520	7 846	(2 326)	(30%)
Donations	24 700	5 500	19 200	349%
Total	R269 380	R287 318	(R17 938)	(6%)

The main task now is to focus on the 2015/16 financial year and the challenges it will bring. Let's work to achieve the targets for the coming year. More about them in next month's report.

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 FNB Long Street, Cape Town
Code: 201-709
CPRC FINANCE COMMITTEE