



25
GRATIS
Desember
2023

Goeie Nuus Good News

NOU REEDS **25 JAAR OUD!**

**AANLYN-UITGawe
ONLINE EDITION**

Posbus 1957
Potchefstroom 2520
Tel: (018) 293 1996
www.goodnewsmessage.co.za
Goeie Nuus Koerant -
Good News Newspaper



Stap Saam met God

"Loof die Here, want Hy is goed, aan Sy liefde is daar geen einde nie!" (Psalm 106:1)

"Ek weet aan Wie ek my toevertrou het,
al wissel dan ook dag en nag;
Ek ken die Rots op Wie ek gebou het,
van Wie ek al my heil verwag.
Eens aan die einde van my lewe,
sal ek, van alle sorge vry,
vir elke dag my hier gegewe
U 'n hoër, reiner loflied wy."
(Ges. 353:4)

Met hierdie gesang kan 'n mens die ou jaar uitstap en die nuwe jaar betree. Méér nog, 'n mens kan daarmee na jou sterfbed gaan en die Ewigheid aandurf. Hier, in die laaste

oomblikke van die jaar, roep ons die hele pad waarslangs God ons geleei het in herinnering. Ons dank Hom vir elke tree van die pelgrimsreis, omdat Hy ons deur elke dag liefgehad en gedra het.

Daar is baie waarvoor ons om vergifnis moet vra: kosbare tyd wat ons verkwis het, liefde wat ons weerhou het, gebede wat ons nie gebid het nie, geleenthede wat ons laat verbygaan het.

Maar daar is ook so oneindig baie waarvoor ons God kan dank: vir bewaring, genesing, ondersteuning, voorsiening.

Mag ons geïnspireer word deur die woorde

van Marie-Louise Haskins:
"Ek het aan die Man by die poort 'n lig gevra vir die donker pad wat voorlê. Hy het vir my gesê: 'Plaas jou swak hand in die Hand van die almagtige God en stap moedig voort. Dit sal vir jou beter wees as 'n lig en veiliger as 'n bekende pad.'" - Oorgeneem

"...Die pad van die regverdiges is soos die lig van die môreglans, wat al helderder word tot die volle dag toe..." (Spreuke 4:18).

You wrote Your glorious Name across the heavens

...and it read - Elohim - The Creator.

**You pronounced Your holy Name to Your people
and it was Yahweh - Lord of Relationship.**

**You posted Your powerful Name at life's valleys and dead-ends
and it was El Shaddai - the All-sufficient God.**

**You spoke Your lovely Name into fear and conflicts
and it was Jehovah Shalom - the Lord our Peace.**

**You whispered Your compassionate Name
into sorrow and brokenness
and it was Jehovah Jireh - the Lord provides.**

**You signed Your most beautiful Name in blood upon our hearts
and it was - JESUS - JEHOVAH IS SALVATION!**

NET 'N BEKER WATER...

Jare gelede, in die vroeë negentigs, het ek in 'n kerk na 'n man se getuienis geluister. Ek reken sy van is aangegee as Pretorius. Dit is al wat ek van hom weet en onthou. Maar sy aangrypende getuienis het my ook aangegryp en ek onthou dit tot vandag toe nog.

Die man het gepraat oor die groot vloede in Mosambiek. As gevolg van die geweldige impak hiervan het hy daarheen gegaan om hulp te verleen, aangesien al die smarte en ellendes van die mense hom diep ontroer het.

Hy het vertel hoedat hy 'n ou man aangetref het wat daar onder 'n boom gesit het. Hulpeloos, sonder kos en water, en uitgelewer aan die natuur-elemente. Sterwend. Toe het hy gehardloop om vir die ou man net 'n beker water te gaan haal. Maar toe hy terugkom met die water, het die man reeds gesterf! Magteloosheid en ontnugtering het hom aangegryp, en hy het vir homself gevra: "Waar is die man se siel? Die ewigheid in sonder God? Net 'n beker water kon hom red!"

Hierdie gebeure het die man so aangegryp dat hy uit sy eie sak begin het om vir die mense kos en water te gee! Hoe kan jy vir hierdie mense die Voorspoedleer ("Prosperity Gospel") verkondig? Hoe kan jy vir hulle sê jy moet saai, dan sal jy ook maai! Gee, dan sal daar vir jou gegee word! God sal sorg! Die mense het NIKS! En die nood is só groot.

Dit wat die man kon gee, was maar 'n druppel in die emmer. Maar hy het fondse gekry en hy het gegee. En gegee... Toe kom die verhaal van sy druppeltjies by die VN uit en hulle het begin gee. Later gee hulle vir hom vragmotors met vragte op vragte vol mieliemeel en hy deel net uit. Noodverligting!

Hy doen die deel wat die Kerk eintlik moes doen, nie die wêreld-organisasies nie. Jesus sê: "Ek was honger... Ek was dors... en julle het My gevoed. Alles wat julle aan hulle gedoen het, het julle ook aan My gedoen" (vgl. Matt. 25:40).

Hoe moet ek die Woord van God hoor en verstaan en toepas? Een TV-prediker het gesê: "Begin om die Woord te lees, vra dan vir God om dit vir jou oop te maak en toe te pas op jou omstandighede!"

Ons moet egter nie net fisiese brood gee nie, maar ook lewensbrood. Anders doen ons slegs humanistiese werk soos ander godsdiens en soos wêreldse mense. Jesus sê: "Ek is die Brood van die lewe" (Joh. 6:35). Hy sê ook: "Ek is sagmoedig en nederig van hart. Daar waar Ek is daar sal My dissipel ook wees." En dan later: "Die beker wat Ek drink sal julle ook drink."

Ons is geroep om te dien. Hy is Heer en Meester, maar Hy was onder hulle soos een wat dien. Sy Woord lui: "Moenie na hoë dinge strewe nie, maar voeg julle by die nederige." Hy weerstaan die hoogmoediges, maar aan die nederiges gee Hy genade (1 Pet. 5:5). Hy het Sy dissipels se voete gewas soos 'n slaaf (Joh. 13). Hy het vir Sy vyande gebid. Lees ook Matt. 5 en Fil. 2:5-11. **Volg in Sy voetspore!**

Ons is wel konings en priesters (Op.1:6 en 5:10). Maar nie om ons in ons hoogheid te verbly en daarin te roem nie. Om te DIEN! Wat het jy in jou hand om Hom mee te dien? In jou eie smarte en lyde kry jy ook God se medelye om ander te help. In Ps. 18:29 staan geskryf: "U, Here, laat my lamp helder skyn; my God gee lig as dit donker is om my" (NV).

Ons is 'n kolonie van Waterdraers. Paulus skryf: "Want ons burgerskap is in die hemele, van waar ons ook as Verlosser verwag die Here Jesus Chris-

tus, wat ons vernederde liggaam van gedaante sal verander, om gelykvormig te word aan Sy verheerde liggaam volgens die werking waardeur Hy ook alles aan Homself kan onderwerp" (Fil. 3:20-21). 'n Goeie vertaling van die Griekse woord politeuma vir "burgerskap" sou wees: "Ons is 'n kolonie van die hemel."

So bestaan ons in 'n vyandige wêrld. Selfs Petrus skryf: "[ons] vreemdelinge en bywoners op hierdie aarde." Jesus het gebid in Joh. 17:15 - "Ek bid nie dat U hulle uit die wêrld wegneem nie, maar dat U hulle van die Bosse bewaar." Lees ook verder die hele Johannes 17, Jesus se Hoëpriesterlike gebed vóór Sy kruisigung, en op pad na Getsémane.

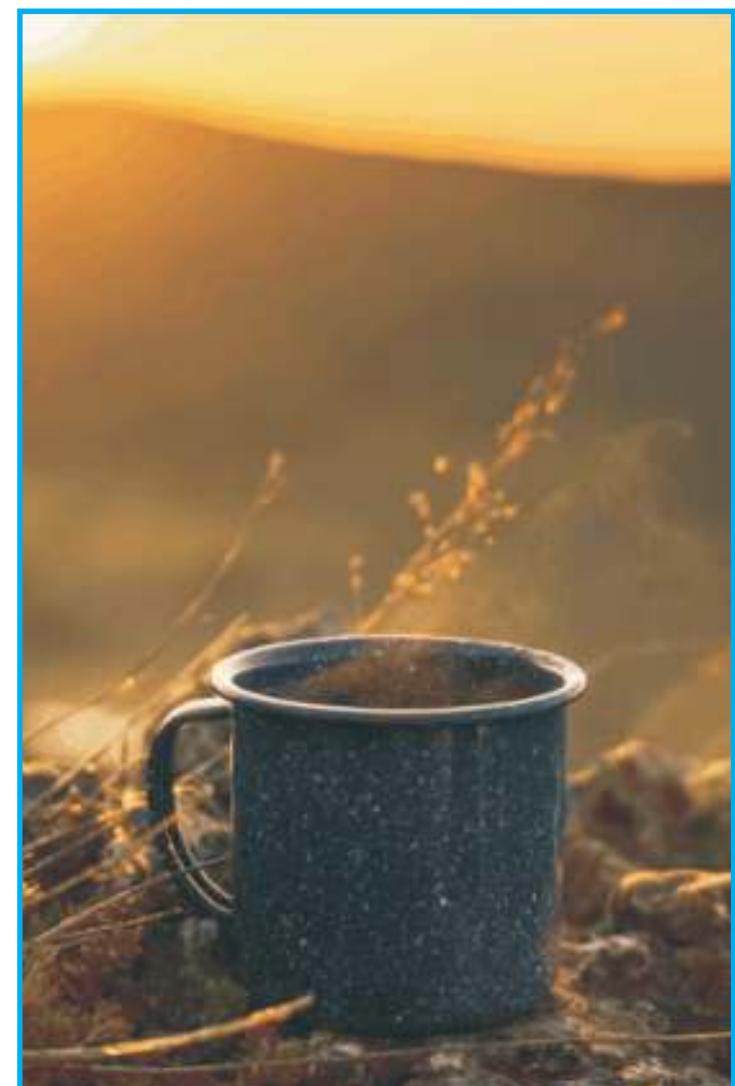
Hierdie Woord het my laat dink aan die kolonie van die heuningby. My pa het op die plaas waar ek grootgeword het, 'n paar bye-kaste gehad en hy het ons baie geleer van die heuningby. Soos Eugène Marais wat 'n studie gemaak het en gaan kyk het na die miere, het ek ook gaan kyk na die heuningbye. Gaan lees gerus oor hierdie wonderlike "insek" op die internet.

In so 'n kolonie, wat baie goed georden is en baie hardwerkend is, vind jy die koningin. Haar taak is net om eiers te lê en jong bye voort te bring. Dan kry jy die werkersbye (wyfies) wat nektar en stuifmeel bymekaar maak en van die nektar heuning maak. In vyf weke se tyd maak sy maar 'n teenlepeltjie nektar bymekaar en sy werk haar letterlik dood!

By al die ander funksies van die bye vind ons ook die Waterdraer. Hy bring net water na die nes wat dan onder andere gebruik word om die heuning te verdun en om dit verteerbaar te maak. Hier wil ek 'n toepassing maak. Ons kan nie almal "nektar" en "stuifmeel" versamel nie, maar ons kan almal Waterdraers wees in God se Koninkryk. Ons dra dan die lewenswater aan soos Sendeling Pretorius met "Net 'n beker water..."

Gaan na die heuningby en word wys. En volg ook in die voetspore van Jesus. Lees Joh. 4 waar Hy by die vrou by die Put van Jakob gaan sit het en vir haar gesê het: "Gee vir My water om te drink." 'n Hele gesprek het plaasgevind, en uiteindelik sê Hy vir haar: "As jy die gawe van God geken het en geweet het wie Hy is wat vir jou sê: 'Gee vir My water om te drink,' sou jy Hom gevra het en Hy sou vir jou lewende water gegee het" (Joh 4:10).

Waterdraer, wat dink jy van Kersfees? Gaan dit oor wat jy kan kry,



of oor wat jy vir Hóm kan gee? Dáárom vier ons Christusfees - nie Kersfees nie - want die Skrif sê: "Want 'n Kind is vir ons gebore, 'n Seun is aan ons gegee; en die heerskappy is op Sy skouer, en Hy word genoem: Wonderbaar, Raadsman, Sterke God, Ewige Vader, Vredevors..." (Jes. 9:5).

Luister gerus na Jan de Wet se lied, "Hierdie Kind..." Dawid sê: "Wat sal ek die Here vergeld vir al Sy weldade aan my?" Lees ook Ps. 103. Dit gaan nie slegs oor humanisme, Mandela-dag, of 'n sekere politieke party of die regering of die Springbokke nie. **Ons dien JESUS CHRISTUS in al Sy Volheid deur ons alles vir HÓM te gee as 'n geskenk!**

Jesus sê: "Gee aan die keiser wat die keiser toekom, en gee aan God wat God toekom." Ja, gee vir mekaar geskenke vir Kersfees, maar bo alles gee jou lewe oor aan Jesus en dien Hóm getrou met jou "goud, wierook en mirre" soos die wyse manne uit die Ooste by die geboorte van Jesus. Gee aan Hóm jou kosbaarste besitting, jou hele wese, gawes, bedieninge, vermoëns, temperament met alles wat jy is en het: "Hierdie gesindheid moet in julle wees wat ook in Christus Jesus was" (Fil. 2:5).

Jesus sê vir die Skrifgeleerde en Fariseërs: "Wee julle, Skrifgeleerde en Fariseërs, geveinsdes, want julle maak die buitekant van die beker en die skottel skoon, maar binnekant is dit vol roof en onmatigheid. Blinde Fariseér, maak eers die binnekant van die beker en die skottel skoon, sodat ook die buitekant daarvan skoon kan word" (Matt. 23:26).

Op my knieë vra ek dus vir Hom: "Here, maak my beker nie net buitekant nie, maar ook binne skoon, reinig my, heilig my, en gebruik my sodat ek 'n skoon beker sal wees om U lewende water aan te dra na 'n noodlydende mensdom."

Ek en jy is geroep om Hom in nederigheid te dien met alles wat ons is en het, want Hy het Sy alles vir ons gegee. Wees getrou tot die dood toe. **Wees 'n Waterdraer vir Jesus!**

Christmas is Costly

It cost Mary and Joseph the comforts of home during a long period of exile in Egypt to protect the little Babe.

It cost mothers in and around Bethlehem the massacre of their babies by the cruel order of Herod.

It cost the shepherds the complacency of a shepherd's life, with the call to the manger and to tell the Good News.

It cost the wise men a long journey and expensive gifts and changed lives.

It cost the early apostles and the

Early Church persecution and sometimes death.

It cost missionaries of Christ untold suffering and privation to spread the Good News.

It cost Christian martyrs in all ages their lives for Christ's sake.

More than all this, it cost God the

Father, His own Son - He sent Him to Earth to save men.

It cost Jesus a life of sacrifice and service, a death cruel and unmatched in history!

What does Christmas cost you?

- Selected

The message of Christmas is a constant one. In the midst of the ever-changing world, the vacillations of man and the rise and fall of governments, our hearts cry out for stability. The message of Christmas inseparably involves Christ. Cancel Christ out of Christmas (Xmas) and you are back to the human, the transient, the instability of a decaying world and world systems, accentuated by the excesses of what is called the "Festive Season".

Christless Christmases have been the excuse and reason for more sin, revelry and unrighteousness than is possible to assess. How many lives, characters, homes and friendships have been ruined in the revelries generally indulged in at Christmas-time. The excuse often offered is: "It is only Christmas once a year."

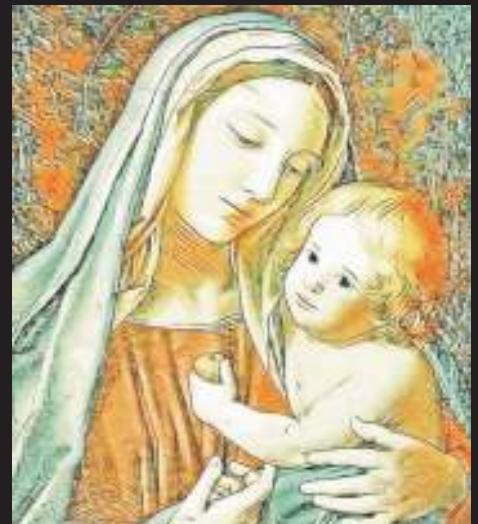
A Christless Christmas is a dangerous and

treacherous thing.

The true Christmas, with the emphasis on Christ, is a "Joy to the world". In a strife-torn world it is "Peace on Earth". Amidst the hatred and distrust between individuals and the peoples of the world, it is "goodwill toward men".

What is most attractive to man about the true Christmas message is its immutability. No season, age, country, tongue or circumstance can change it. Its effectiveness has been proven over a period of more than 2 000 years. It is not seasonal but perennial, not national but international, not selective but universal, not temporary but eternal... To all who believe on Him, the CHRIST of Christmas, He is the LIFE, JOY and PEACE for time and eternity!

May your Christmas be Christ-centred, because then it will be a happy Christmas!



KE TLHOKA THUSO! (I Need help!)



Mo bophelong re tle o re tsene mo mathateng kgotsa mo dikotsing. Ka nako e o ka kopa Modimo, Mmopi wa gago, Mopholosi wa gago go go thusa. Modimo o teng. O utlwa selelo sa gago. Nako e nngwe bana ba Modimo ba ba tsenang kereke Sontaga e nngwe le e nngwe ba tsena mo pitlaganong kgotsa bophelo bo ba tsamaisa mo mogorogorong wa moriti wa loso. Ke ne ke maketse fela maloba ke bona mongwe a le mo tseleng go ya go diriwa karo mme a kopa a re: "Ke kopa Modimo le Badimo ba tsamaye le nna mme ba thuse nna le dingaka go feta mo letsatsing le." O ka se dumele mo Modimong go go thusa mme o be o nagana gore o santse o tlhoka thuso ya badimo le medimo eseile.

"O se ka wa itirela modimo wa seseto... O se ka wa e obamela le e seng go e direla. Gonne nna Morena, Modimo wa gago, ke Modimo o o lefufa. (Ekesodu 20). Buisa ditemana tse go ithuta gore thuso ya Modimo e teng fa o e tlhoka.

Se tshwenyegeleng sepe, mme a ka metlha tse lo di tlhokang di itsisiwe Modimo ka thapelo le kopo, di na le tebogo. Mme kagiso ya Modimo e e fetang tlhaloganyo yotlhe e tla boloka dipelo tsa lona le maikutlo a lona mo go Keresete Jesu (Bafilipi 4:6-7).

Latlhela tshwenyego ya gago mo Moreneng, mme o tla go tlamelwa; ga a kitla a leseletsa mosiami ka gope go theekela (Pesalome 55:23).

Ka moo, ikokobeletseng letsogo le le thata la

Modimo gore o tle o lo godise ka nako e e leng yona. Latlhelang matshwenyego otlhe a lona mo go one, gonne lo tlamelwa ke one (1 Petero 5:6-7).

"Tlaang kwano go nna lotlhe ba lo lapileng, ba lo imelwang; nna ke tla lo lapolosa. Ipeleseng jokwe ya me, lo ithute mo go nna; gonne ke bonolo le boikokobetso mo pelong, mme lo tla bonela mewa ya lona tapologo. Gonne jokwe ya me e bonolo, morwalo wa me o botlihofo" (Matheo 11:28-30).

Se boife, gonne ke na nao! Se tlalelw, gonne ke Modimo wa gago! Ke a go tiisa, ee, ke a go thusa, ee, ke go tshegeditse ka letsogo la me le le jang le le pholosang (Jesaya 41:10).

Ke tsholeletsa matlho a me kwa dithabeng; thuso ya me e tla tswa kae? Thuso ya me e tswa Moreneng yo o dirileng legodimo le lefatshe. Ga a ka ke a leseletsa lona lwa gago go relela! Motlamedi wa gago ga a ka ke a otsela! Kana Motlamedi wa Israele ga a otsele, e bile ga a robale. Morena ke Mmabaledi wa gago; Morena ke moriti wa gago fa letsogong la gago le le jang. Letsatsi ga le kitla le go tlhaba motshegare, le fa e le ngwedi bosigo. Morena o tla go sireletsa mo masuleng otlhe; o tla boloka mowa wa gago. Morena o tla femela go bolola ga gago le go goroga ga gago go tloga jaanong go fitlha bosakhtleng (Pesalome 121).

Yo o ntseng mo tshireletsong ya Mogodimodimo, yo o leng mo moriting wa Mothatayotlhe, o tla raya Morena a re: "O botshabelo jwa me le kago ya phemelo ya me; o Modimo wa me o ke o ikanyang." Gonne ke ena yo o tla go gololang mo serung sa mothaisa-nonyane le mo leroborobong le le bolayang.

O tla go sireletsse ka diphuka tsa gagwe, o femelega fa tlase ga tsona; boammaaruri jwa gagwe ke thebe le phemelo. Ga o na go boifa poitshego ya bosigo, le e seng motsu o o fofang motshegare, le e seng leroborobo le le tsamayang mo lefifing, le e seng kgogodi e e bolayang motshegare wa selebalo. Le fa



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go ka wa ba le sekete ka fa lothakoreng lwa gago, gongwe ba le dikete di le some ka fa letsogong le le jang la gago, wena ga go nke go go ama. O tla leba ka matlho fela, o bona baikepi ba bolawa ke se ba se jeleng. 9Gonne o rile: "Wena Morena o botshabelo jwa me." O dirile Mogodimodimo phemelo ya gago. Ga o nke o welwa ke bosula bope, le boago jwa gago ga bo nke bo atamelwa ke sebetso. Gonne o tla go laeela baenegele ba gagwe gore ba go boloke mo ditseleng tsotlhe tsa gago. Ba tla go kuka ka diatla gore dinao tsa gago di se kgopiwe ke lentswe. O tla gata tau le lebolobolo, o gataka ledumedi le kgogela. Ke tla mo pholosa, ka a nkgomaretse ka lorato, ke tla mo sireletsa, gonne o itse leina la me. E tla re a mpitsa, ke mo utlwe, ke nne nae mo tlalelong; ke tla mo namola, ke mo tlota. Ke tla mo kgorisa Bophelo jo bolele, ke mmontsha pholoso ya me (Pesalome 91).

Ons Identiteit, Ons Roeping

Menige gelowige worstel met die vraag, "Wat wil die Here hê moet ek doen?" Tyd is so kosbaar en so vlietend. As ons vanaf 'n sterfbed sou terugkyk oor ons lewens, wil ons die vreugde smaak van 'n sinvolle nalatenskap en 'n kosbare, vrugbare lewensreis.

Paulus skryf in Ef. 2:10, "Want ons is Sy maaksel, geskape in Christus Jesus tot goeie werke wat God voorberei het, sodat ons daarin kan wandel." God het reeds goeie werke vir ons voorberei. Maar wat is hierdie goeie werke? En wat is ons roeping as gelowiges?

Ek glo dat daar 'n algemene roeping asook 'n spesifieke roeping vir elkeen is. Alle mense word geroep tot redding deur geloof in Jesus Christus (2 Pet. 3:9). Alle gelowiges word opgeroep om getrou te bly onder verdrukking (1 Pet. 5:9), om mekaar lief te hê (Joh. 13:34), die Evangelie te verkondig en dissipels te maak (Matt. 28:19-20), en om die Evangelie prakties uit te leef (Fil. 1:27). Ons moet groei om aan die Beeld van Jesus gelykverdig te word (Rom. 8:29). Maar dan is daar ook spesifieke werke waartoe die Here mense mag roep, en dit verskil van persoon tot persoon.

Kom ons lees Johannes 1 en ontdek hoe verskeie mense in 'n bepaalde roeping gestaan het, en wat ons hieruit kan leer in terme van ons eie roeping. Ons sal sien hoedat roeping en identiteit hier in onlosmaaklike wisselwerking tree. 'n Mens moet eerstens weet WIE jy is (die identiteit waartoe God jou geroep het) alvorens jy werklik kan DOEN wat jy moet doen (jou roeping uitleef).

JOHANNES DIE DOPER

Die Evangelieskrywer Johannes onderskei tussen Johannes die Doper en Jesus, met verwysing na elkeen se unieke identiteit asook hul unieke roeping: "Hy [Johannes die Doper] het tot 'n getuienis gekom om van die lig [Jesus] te getuig, sodat almal deur hom [Johannes] sou glo. Hy was nie die lig nie, maar hy moes van die lig getuig" (Joh. 1:7-8).

Ons kan bemoedig word deur die feit dat elkeen 'n unieke, spesifieke roeping het. Dit is baie bevrydend, omdat ons nie onself meer met ander hoef te vergelyk nie. Die enigste maatstaf van beoordeling vir ons lewenstaak is of ons die werke gedoen het wat God vir ons voorberei het (1 Kor. 4:3-4).

Johannes die Doper het by navraag dit duidelik gestel dat hy nie die profeet (Messias) of Elia was nie. Tog was hy baie seker van sy unieke doel op aarde:

"[Johannes die Doper] antwoord: Ek is die stem van een wat roep in die woestyn: Maak die pad van die Here reguit! soos Jesaja, die profeet, gesê het... maar dat Hy [Jesus] aan Israel openbaar sou word, daarom het ek gekom en met water gedoop" (Joh. 1:23,31).

Alle gelowiges word geroep om Jesus bekend te maak. Johannes die Doper het egter 'n spesifieke roeping gehad om die weg vir Jesus se eerste koms voor te berei. Mag ons saam met Johannes getuig, "En ek het gesien en getuig dat Hy die Seun van God is" (Joh. 1:34).

DIE PRIESTERS EN LEVITE

Die geloofsgemeenskap van die dag was onrustig oor 'n nuwe, vurige prediker na wie die mense gestroom het. Hulle wou weet wie hierdie persoon was en waarvoor hy gestaan het: "En dit is die getuienis van Johannes, toe die Jode uit Jerusalem priesters en Leviete gestuur het om hom te vra: Wie is u? ...En die wat gestuur was, was uit die Fariseérs" (Joh. 1:19,24). Hulle wou weet of hy 'n ondersteuner of 'n bedreiging vir die teenswoordige kerk (geloofsgemeenskap) was.

Hier sien ons 'n negatiewe voorbeeld van 'n (versaakte) roeping. Dit is so dat die Kerk die pilaar en grondslag van die waarheid moet wees (1 Tim. 3:15), moraliteit moet leer en tentoonstel, en 'n voorbeeld in die gemeenskap moet wees. Daar is egter 'n donker kant aan enige instansie wanneer mense hul oueriteit misbruik om selfsugtige begeertes na te jaag en oor mense te regeer, in plaas daarvan om by hul oorspronklike roeping te bly. Baie skade is al IN die Naam en AAN die Naam van Jesus Christus aangerig. Vele is van die geloof weggedryf deur die vergrype van kerklike hoëlui, of deur gewone gelowiges wat sonder integriteit optree. Mag ons eerder ons eie kleed van geregtigheid onbesmet hou en suiwer bewaar (Kol. 1:21-23).

ANDRÉAS

In dieselfde hoofstuk lees ons van Andréas, die broer van Simon Petrus. Toe hy hoor dat Jesus die Lam van God is, het hy self eers ondersoek ingestel. Nadat hy bevestiging van Jesus se ware identiteit ontvang het, het hy dadelik die goeie nuus aan Petrus gaan mededeel: "Hy het eers sy eie broer Simon gekry en vir hom gesê: Ons het die Messias gevind - dit is, as dit vertaal word, die Christus. En hy het hom na Jesus gelei" (Joh. 1:42-43a).

Wat 'n wonderlike voorbeeld van iemand wat meer in die agtergrond gefigureer het, maar wat ander na toe Jesus lei (Joh. 12:21-22). Dit is byna soos die olie wat

die masjien glad laat loop. Soos die stille **intersessor** wie se gebede 'n bepaalde diens of gebeurtenis bekratig. Soos die onbaatsugtige **helper** wat in die skaduwees beweeg, maar ander in staat stel om voor te loop. Mag ons ook, soos Andréas, doen wat ons hand vind om te doen in terme van Koninkrykswerk en so die verkondiging van die Evangelie fasiliteer.

PETRUS

Petrus was instrumenteel in God se plan vir die eerste Kerk. Hoe-wel hy 'n vurige persoonlikheid gehad het wat in die begin gelei het tot konflik en oorhaastige optrede, het die Here hom aldeur geskaaf en gevorm.

Met hul ontmoeting het Jesus aan Petrus 'n nuwe bynaam gegee: "Toe kyk Jesus hom aan en sê: Jy is Simon, die seun van Jona; jy sal genoem word Céfas, wat vertaal word Petrus" (Joh. 1:43b). Simon (die Griekse weergawe van die Hebreeuse naam Simeon) het die 'van' of bynaam Petrus (Grieks: Pétros; Aramees: Cefas) gekry. Op ander plekke in die Nuwe Testament is hy om die beurt Simon of Petrus of Cefas of Simon Petrus genoem.

'n Naamsverandering dui gewoonlik 'n nuwe lewensfase en identiteit (en roeping) aan. So het ons as Christen 'n nuwe naam, identiteit en roeping! Petrus het Jesus se identiteit korrek verstaan, en dit deur 'n Goddelike openbaring (Matt. 16:13-16 NV)! Nou spreek Jesus Petrus se identiteit / roeping aan: "En Ek sé vir jou: Jy is Petrus [Pétros - klip of rots], en op hierdie rots [pétra - 'n rotmassa, grot, afgrond, krans, of klipperige grond] sal Ek My kerk bou, en die magte van die doderyk sal dit nie oorweldig nie" (Matt. 16:18-18 NV).

Ons sien hier 'n woordspeling tussen die Griekse woorde Pétros en pétra. Een kommentator verklaar dit so: "Pétra (a feminine noun) indicates 'a mass of connected rock,' which is distinct from Pétros (a masculine noun), which means 'a detached stone or boulder'. Pétra is a 'solid or native rock, rising up through the earth, a huge mass of rock (a boulder), such as a projecting cliff.'"

Wat hier uitstaan is dat Jesus SY Kerk op 'n vaste fondament sal bou. Party teen hierdie fondament is Petrus, ander dat dit op 'n element in Petrus se karakter (sy geloof) gebou is. 'n Goeie opsomming, na my mening, is "Peter-like faith in Jesus as the Christ grants one access into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Gelowiges verkry dus toegang tot die Koninkryk van God deur slegs

geloof in Jesus, die Messias, en die rol van die kerkleierskap (soos wat Petrus 'n leier was) is om standvastig te verseker dat almal heengewys word na die Hoeksteen, Christus (1 Kor. 10:4). Dit is ook die roeping van elke gelowige om mense na Jesus te lei deur aan hulle Sy identiteit en Sy roeping bekend te maak.

JESUS

Ons grootste Voorbeeld is Jesus. Laat ons Sy identiteit en roeping oorweeg: "Die waaragtige lig wat elke mens verlig, was aan kom in die wêreld. Hy was in die wêreld, en die wêreld het deur Hom onstaan, en die wêreld het Hom nie geken nie. Hy het na Sy eiendom gekom, en Sy eie mense het Hom nie aangeneem nie. Maar almal wat Hom aangeneem het, aan hulle het Hy mag gegee om kinders van God te word, aan hulle wat in Sy Naam glo" (Joh. 1:9-12). **Jesus is die ware Lig, en Hy het aarde toe gekom sodat ons verlig kan word, tot redding deur geloof in Hom.**

Die Seun van God het uit genade aan ons die Vader se liefde kom openbaar (Joh. 1:14). Jesus het ook 'n nuwe geestelike bedeling ingelui: "Want die wet is deur Moses gegee; die genade en die waarheid het deur Jesus Christus gekom. Niemand het ooit God gesien nie; die Eniggebore Seun wat in die boesem van die Vader is, dié het Hom verklaar" (Joh. 1:17-18). Nou kan ons God met vrymoedigheid nader en in 'n verhouding met Hom staan (Heb. 4:16)! Dit is ons daagliks roeping.

Die wonderlike eerste hoofstuk van die Johannes-evangelie leer ons dat beide ons identiteit en ons roeping as gelowiges hul grondslag in Jesus se identiteit en roeping vind! Wanneer ons wonder oor ons aardse doel, laat ons na Jesus se lewe kyk. Ons doel is geanker in Sy karakter. Wanneer ons onseker is oor ons identiteit, laat ons dit in Hom vind! Ons moet soos Hy wees en optree. Ons is medewerkers van God in die bediening van versoening. "For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Hand. 17:28 NIV).

Laat ons bid om God se spesifieke doel vir ons lewens te begryp; maar laat ons ook onthou wat God se algemene liefdesdoel vir alle gelowiges is. Laat ons ook deurentyd bewus wees van ons identiteit: "Kyk wat 'n groot liefde die Vader aan ons bewys het, dat ons kinders van God genoem kan word!" (1 Joh. 3:1). As ons na God nader, sal Hy na ons nader en ons lei om ons identiteit en roeping voluit vir Hom uit te leef!

THE REFINING FIRE OF LOVE

In Psalm 66 the unknown psalmist starts off with praise to God as he relates historical events of God's dealings. Acknowledging God's guiding hand throughout the past he clearly sees God's correcting dealings too. "For You, God, tested us; You refined us like silver. ...we went through fire and water, but You brought us to a place of abundance". And yet, in spite of the discipline the psalmist's mouth is filled with praise to God!

We too need to surrender and submit to our Father's correction and we will reap great blessings. Our Father's Hand of kindness will rest upon us with divine guidance and wisdom. You will

rejoice in the final, refined product that reflects His Face. Rebel and disobey and you will certainly reap a bitter harvest of bad consequences.

The Psalmist cries out, "Come and see what God has done!" This is his testimony after the testing of refining fires - "Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of His praise be heard; He has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. FOR YOU, GOD, TESTED US, YOU REFINED US LIKE SILVER".

Yes, they went through fire and water, but He brought them out in a place of abundance. The result? To a receptive, surrendered heart this is what the pain of the refining

fires of the crucible brought about. "Come and hear, all of you who fear God; let me tell you what He has done for me... His praise was on my tongue".

Yes, he cried out in his pain. Yes, God heard, but He finished the process. "Praise be to God, Who has not rejected my prayer OR WITHHELD HIS LOVE FROM ME." And through the ages that very same, most precious love still works in us. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:2, "He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God."

May our response ever be to "live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ".

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895.



Helen
du Plessis

RUTH

When someone says, "Let me tell you about my mother-in-law," we expect some kind of negative statement or humorous anecdote because the mother-in-law caricature has been a standard centrepiece of ridicule or comedy.

The book of Ruth, however, tells a different story. Ruth loved her mother-in-law, Naomi. Recently widowed, Ruth begged to stay with Naomi wherever she went, even though it would mean leaving her homeland. In heartfelt words, Ruth said, "Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God" (1:16). Naomi agreed, and Ruth travelled with her to Bethlehem.

Not much is said about Naomi except that she loved and cared for Ruth. Obviously, Naomi's life was a powerful witness to the reality of God. Ruth was drawn to her - and to the God she worshipped. In the succeeding months, God led this young Moabite widow to a man named Boaz, whom she eventually married. As a result, she became the great-grandmother of David and an ancestor in the line of the Messiah. **What a profound impact Naomi's life made!**

The book of Ruth is also the story of God's grace in the midst of difficult circumstances. Ruth's story occurred during the time of the judges - a period of disobedience, idolatry, and violence.

Even in times of crisis and deepest despair, there are those who follow God and through

whom God works. No matter how discouraging or antagonistic the world may seem, there are always people who follow God. **He will use anyone who is open to Him to achieve His purposes.**

Ruth was a Moabite, and Boaz was a descendant of Rahab, a former prostitute from Jericho. Nevertheless, their offspring continued the family line through which the MESSIAH came into our world!

Read this book and be encouraged. **God is at work in the world, and He wants to use you! God could use you, as He used Naomi, to bring family and friends to Him!**

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No matter how devastating our present situation may be, our hope is in God. His resources are infinite.

We must believe that He can work in the life of any person - whether that person is a king or a stranger in a foreign land. Trust His protection.

We tend to think of blessings in terms of prosperity rather than the high-quality relationships God makes possible for us. No matter what our economic situation, we can love and respect the people God has brought into our lives. In so doing, we give and receive blessings. Love is the greatest blessing!

[*LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE, New Living Translations, Tyndale House Publishers Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois, 2004*].

Angels



"I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book" (Revelation 22:9).

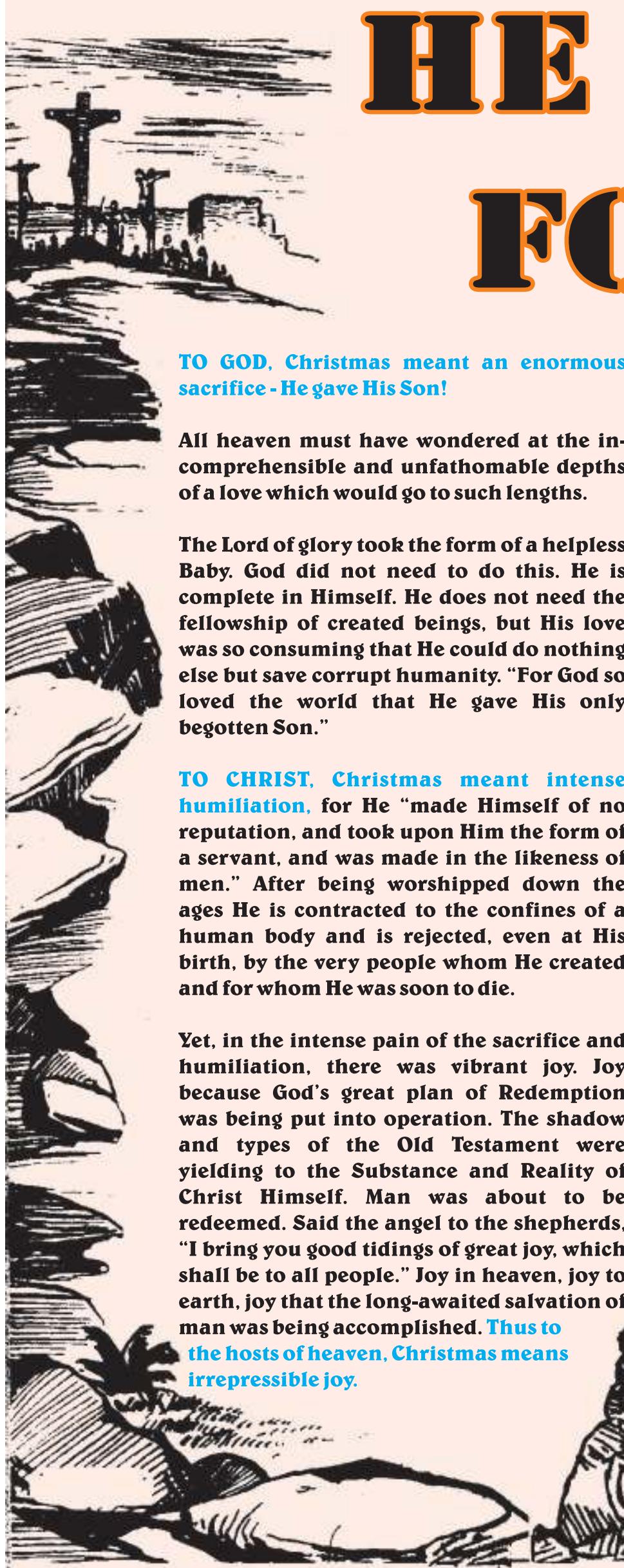
Charles Lightoller was just drifting off to sleep on April 14, 1912, when he felt the collision of the Titanic with an iceberg. Rousing himself, he helped as many women and children as possible into lifeboats before he was swept into the icy sea. At that moment, a verse of Scripture came clearly to his mind - Psalm 91:11: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (NIV).

Just then, a blast of hot air exploded from the belly of the ship, propelling Lightoller like a missile to the surface, where he managed to pull himself onto an overturned lifeboat. **He had no doubt that an angel had helped him!**

Angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14), but they are also fellow servants with us. The angel told the apostle John, "I am your fellow servant" (Revelation 19:10). How incredible! Alongside angels, we are serving the Lord of hosts. There could be no higher calling!

- Michael Heiser, Turning Point

HE CAME . . . FOR ME!



TO GOD, Christmas meant an enormous sacrifice - He gave His Son!

All heaven must have wondered at the incomprehensible and unfathomable depths of a love which would go to such lengths.

The Lord of glory took the form of a helpless Baby. God did not need to do this. He is complete in Himself. He does not need the fellowship of created beings, but His love was so consuming that He could do nothing else but save corrupt humanity. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

TO CHRIST, Christmas meant intense humiliation, for He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." After being worshipped down the ages He is contracted to the confines of a human body and is rejected, even at His birth, by the very people whom He created and for whom He was soon to die.

Yet, in the intense pain of the sacrifice and humiliation, there was vibrant joy. Joy because God's great plan of Redemption was being put into operation. The shadow and types of the Old Testament were yielding to the Substance and Reality of Christ Himself. Man was about to be redeemed. Said the angel to the shepherds, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Joy in heaven, joy to earth, joy that the long-awaited salvation of man was being accomplished. **Thus to the hosts of heaven, Christmas means irrepressible joy.**

TO THE WORLD, Christmas means Redemption, "for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." Bethlehem has no meaning without Calvary. **He was born to die!**

The enormous weight and ghastly concentration of the sin of the world would, after a few brief years, rest upon Him on the Cross. The awful separation from His Father awaited Him, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" would soon be wrenched from His dying lips. But this would result in redemption.

A Saviour is born. A Saviour from sin. It was sin which He took upon the Cross. It was sin with which God was dealing at Calvary. This then is the purpose of Christ's coming - to save men from sin!

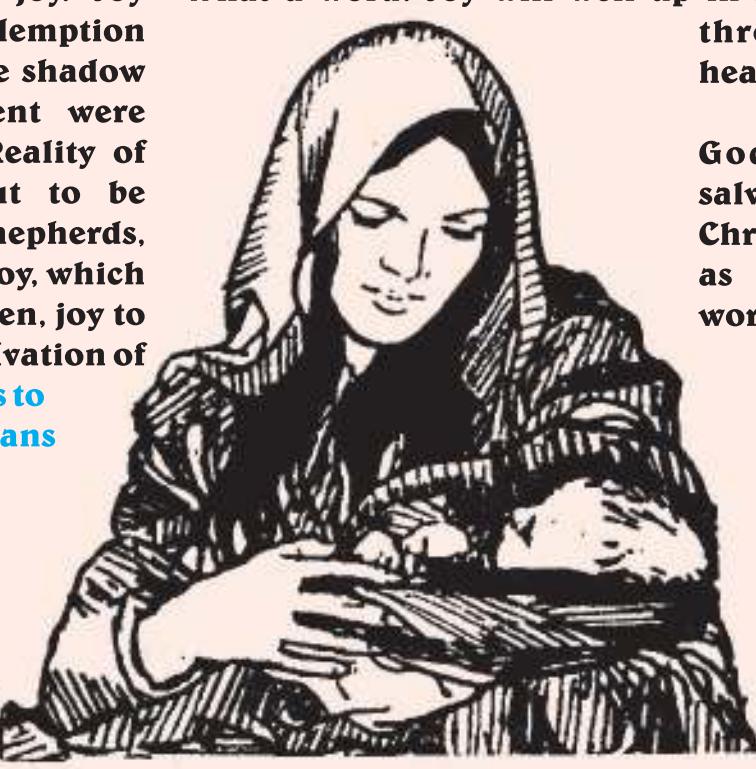
TO THE INDIVIDUAL, Christmas brings a solemn challenge. Has His coming been effective for me? The purpose for which He died was to save me from sin. Am I saved from sin? Have I seen Him as the One Who took all the evil of my soul and bore the punishment of death for me? Have I gratefully, humbly, accepted Him as my Saviour?

What a change will be wrought in my soul when I dare to trust Him to forgive and to save me! Why, the joy which the angels heralded to the shepherds will be mine. Forgiven! What a word! Joy will well up in my soul and will ring through the courts of heaven as well.

God offers His great salvation to you at this Christmas season, to you as you read these very words.

WILL YOU TODAY RECEIVE THIS SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD AS YOUR SAVIOUR TOO?

- Rev. CN Peckham



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AS DIE DOOD VANDAG AAN U DEUR SOU KLOP...

Duisende mense in ons samelewing verkieks om nie aan die ewigheid te dink, of waar hulle die ewigheid gaan deurbring nie. Tog is dit baie belangrik dat ons veral in die lig van die komende Kersfees, of sal ons eerder sê Christusfees, dringend aandag aan hierdie onderwerp sal skenk.

Wanneer ons die sondeprobleem oorwin, word die gedagte aan die ewigheid opnuut 'n aantreklikheid om aan te dink.

Sonde het meegebring dat die mens nie meer in staat is om met sy Skepper te kan kommunikeer nie. In sy innerlike wese het daar as't ware 'n vakuum ontstaan, 'n "niksheid". Hierdie "niksheid" of geen kommunikasie met sy Skepper nie, het chaos in sy lewe teweeggebring, omdat die enigste grondslag vir orde in sy bestaan nou skipbreuk gely het. **Nét God se aktiewe Teenwoordigheid in die mens se bestaan verseker orde.**

Die gevalle mens leef en rig sy lewe in volgens sy eie vermoëns en insigte. Hierdie eie insigte is verdorwe en daarom het hy 'n wanvertolking van die werklikheid. Hy het sy eie god geword; 'n korrupte wese en 'n slaaf van die sonde ("want as iets jou in sy mag het, is jy sy slaaf" - 2 Pet. 2:19(b) NV). Hy het sy bestaansreg voor God prysgegee.

Hoe hard hy ook al probeer om goed te doen, hy is nie daartoe in staat nie, want hy het homself gewilliglik onderwerp aan 'n verslawing onder bose magte, strukture en sondige begeertes.

Deur die skeiding met God ontstaan 'n gapende leemte in die mens se lewe. Uit hierdie wortel spruit 'n magdom spesifieke begeertes voort. Alhoewel die mens bedoel is om lewensvervulling te smaak, word hy nou aan sy strewe na lewensvervulling verslaaf. Hy werk nou vir homself 'n lewenspad uit waar God geen plek meer het nie.

Hy beplan sy lewe self, bestaan net vir homself. En tog is daar die ewige verlange na iets meer... 'n Ewige dors in sy innerlike wese wat hy nie self kan les nie. Hierdie dors probeer hy les deur aan wêrelmse magte en begeertes oor te gee. Maar dit bly 'n ewige leegheid...

Omdat hy nie hierdie vervalle staat van hom wil erken nie, het hy ook trots, selfversekerd en selfverheffend geword. Sy natuur is sondaar, en hy kan nie anders as om sonde te doen nie. Tog het hy mens gebly, nie iets boos of 'n duivel geword nie. Sondaarmens, en daarom is daar tóg hoop vir hom, omdat God hom nie algeheel prysgegee of verwerp het nie.

Indien die mens in die sonde bly, is daar verder geen hoop vir hom nie. Slegs maar 'n verwagting van die dood, die ewige oordeel en ewige verdoemenis in die hell! ("En net soos die mens bestem is om eenmaal te sterwe en daarna die oordeel..." - Heb. 9:27. "En as dit bevind is dat iemand nie opgeskryf was in die boek van die lewe nie, is hy in die poel van vuur gewerp" - Openbaring 20:15). Hy leef voortdurend onder die toorn van God (Rom. 1:18; Joh. 3:36),

het God sy vyand gemaak (Heb. 10:31; 1 Sam. 2:25; Ps. 76:8; Ps. 34:17) en staan skuldig voor God en sy skuldgevoelens druk swaar op hom. Sy aard of karakter is sondaar, en hy sondig daagliks meer en meer. Hy kan homself nie losruk uit hierdie put van ewige verdoemenis nie, maar sink net dieper en dieper in die modder van sonde weg. Hoe harder hy ook al probeer om nie te sondig nie, des te méér sondig hy.

Daarom het God sy Seun gestuur om vir ons te ly en te sterwe sodat ons kan lewe. Dit klink egter na so 'n wye stelling. So omvattend. So asof ALMAL maar eendag hemel toe sal gaan.

OORWEEG EGTER DIE VOLGENDE:

(1) Kan 'n mens seker wees van jou saligheid?

("Dit het ek geskrywe aan julle wat glo in die Naam van die Seun van God, sodat julle kan weet dat julle die ewige lewe het en kan glo in die Naam van die Seun van God" - 1 Joh. 5:13).

(2) Veronderstel u kom vandag tot sterwe, en u kom voor God te staan en Hy sou u vra: Hoekom moet Ek jou in My hemel toelaat, wat sal u vir Hom sê? Onthou, geen goeie werke kan u red nie. Niks wat u self kan doen nie ("Nie op grond van die werke van geregtigheid wat ons gedoen het nie, maar na Sy barmhartigheid het Hy ons gered deur die bad van die wedergeboorte en die vernuwing deur die Heilige Gees" - Titus 3:5. "Want uit genade is julle gered, deur die geloof, en dit nie uit julle self nie: dit is die gawe van God; nie uit die werke nie, sodat

niemand mag roem nie" Ef. 2:8-9).

WAT OM TE DOEN - STAP VIR STAP RAAD AAN DIE SOEKENDE SIEL:

(1) Erken dat u 'n sondaar is en dat NET Jesus u kan red. ("Want almal het gesondig en dit ontbreek hulle aan die heerlikheid van God" - Romeine 3:23).

(2) Bekeer u, d.w.s. keer u af van u verkeerde weë ("Nee, sê Ek vir julle; maar as julle jul nie bekeer nie, sal julle almal net so omkom" - Lukas 13:5).

(3) Bely u sondes met berou en vra God om vergifnis. ("As ons ons sondes bely, Hy is getrou en regverdig om ons die sondes te vergewe en ons van alle ongeregteidheid te reinig" - 1 Johannes 1:9).

(4) Vra Jesus om in u hart in te kom. ("Maar almal wat Hom aangeneem het, aan hulle het Hy mag gegee om kinders van God te word, aan hulle wat in Sy Naam glo" - Johannes 1:12. Lees ook Romeine 10:9,10; 13).

(5) Aanvaar sy vergifnis en leef voluit vir Hom!

HOE?

- (a) Lees u Bybel gereeld elke dag.
- (b) Bid elke dag.
- (c) Gaan gereeld Kerk toe.
- (d) Vertel vir iemand anders wat Hy vir u gedoen het.

Mag die genade van God met ons wees sodat ons die volheid in Hom mag vind! Leef voluit vir Hom gedurende hierdie Feesgety!

© Dr. JJ Venter

'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?' (Matthew 6:26).

Do you realise how valuable and precious you are to God? He sees you, He knows your every need and He will take care of you. Often we don't even notice the birds, but they are a picture of how God cares. Don't doubt His love and care for you but believe that He loves you.

PRAYER: Lord, I am amazed how You take care of all the things that You have created. Your kindness and Your goodness can be seen all around me. I choose to simply trust in You and to focus on You and Your goodness towards me. Amen.



EGYPT: HOW CHRIST WAS INTRODUCED TO GARBAGE COLLECTORS

"For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

Last month, Abouna ('Father') Samaan, the Coptic Orthodox priest who created the famous Cave Church in Cairo's 'Garbage City', passed away at the age of 81.

Over 40 000 people gathered in the St. Simon the Tanner Monastery for perhaps the largest Christian funeral service in Coptic Orthodox history. His renown, however, stretched far beyond Egypt. This is his remarkable story.

The black-robed and white-bearded priest was born in 1941 with the birth name of Farahat Ibrahim. An otherwise ordinary Egyptian Christian, he worked as a typesetter at the printing press of St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral. Over time, he came to know the Lord in a personal way through the 'Society for the Salvation of Souls', a Coptic revivalist group within the Orthodox Church.

ONE DAY, HE LED THE NEIGHBOURHOOD GARBAGE COLLECTOR TO CHRIST!

One day in 1972, he led Qidees, his neighbourhood garbage collector, to Christ. Qidees transported the area trash 13 miles east to a shanty-town at the foothills of Egypt's Mokattam Mountains, where a community of very poor Christians had eked out a living recycling useful waste and feeding pigs with the edible remains.

Muslims consider pigs unclean, so Garbage City consisted only of nominal Copts. Like Qidees, most of these Christians had almost no knowledge of the Bible, with no church or pastoral care in their disease-infested slum.

Many were alcoholics and drug addicts, and sometimes very violent. But after two years of discipleship, Qidees asked Far-

hat to visit and evangelize his family. Farahat's first reaction was fearful repugnance - but he went anyway.

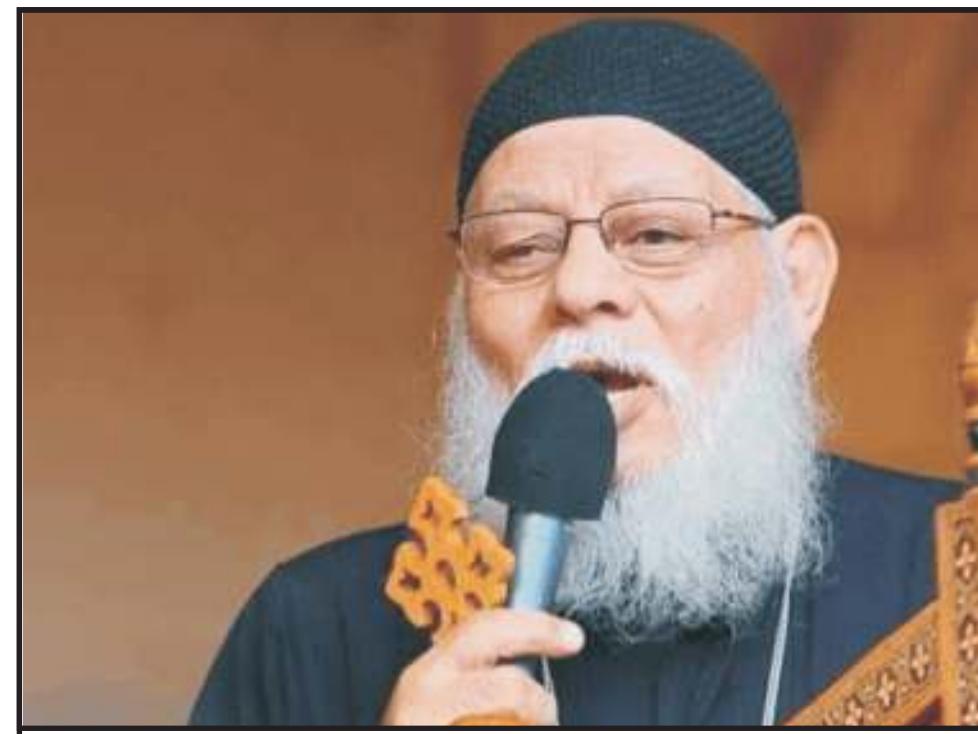
By then 14 000 Copts populated the area, and after a few months, Qidees' wife and seven children and many of their neighbours came to the Lord. Their weekly meeting soon outgrew its reed-roofed tin hut, and as numbers increased, Farahat convinced his well-off friends from the Society of the Salvation of Souls to build them a small church.

The people wanted him to become their priest. Reluctant, Farahat spent several nights in a small cave above the garbage village in prayer. As he was doing so, a scrap from an Arabic Bible blew by, torn from Acts 18. *"I am with you, and no one is going to harm you,"* he read, *"because I have many people in this city."* He took this as God's call to become their pastor.

Ordained in 1978, the young priest took Samaan - Simon in English - as his clerical name from a celebrated Coptic saint who, as a simple tanner, worked a miracle in the same Mokattam mountains. But his early years were very difficult. Trudging through overflowing trash heaps with a pair of boots and a flashlight, one would-be disciple attacked him with a knife, another hid from the priest in a pigsty. There were no social programmes in the area - only the flickering gleam of the Good News of Jesus.

But as hundreds came to know the Lord, they also realized their dignity as children of the Creator of the universe. Over time, the whole village changed. Though still smelly, filthy, and garbage-infested, it became a unique island of Christian faith in Muslim-majority Cairo.

By the early 1990s, Garbage City had grown to 70 000 inhabitants.



Abouna ('Father') Samaan (born Farahat Ibrahim)

Shops opened, recycling factories were established, and the community mobilized to demand paved roads, water, electricity, and sewage treatment from the government.

Today, over 90 percent of the trash in Garbage City - now known as the recycling capital of Egypt - is reused, and NGOs market creatively designed garbage-turned-crafts.

THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL CHANGES WERE DRAMATIC!

The physical changes were dramatic. **But the real change was in their hearts!** Money no longer spent on alcohol or drugs was used to improve family life. Rather than living in one-storey shacks shared with animals, residents built apartment blocks to live above the corralled livestock and collected garbage. And many centered their new life around the active and growing church.

Abouna Samaan's hope was that the children of Garbage City could learn about the Bible and then read it to their families. An education programme was developed, with early flannelgraph stories in the first school classroom that were later supplemented by the academic focus of Laila Iskandar, who later served as Egypt's minister of Environment and Urban Development. Today both institutions have helped educate a generation of Bible-loving Egyptian Christians!

"I was impressed by Abouna Samaan's love of Scripture," said Lindsay Olesberg, chair of Wycliffe USA. "I remember him telling our group that he was daily dependent on being fed by the Word." John Piper, chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, noticed the same. "I remember him sitting at the head of a long table, Bible open before him," he

said. "We sat sipping the juice he provided and feasted on his brief devotional."

Abouna Samaan held a regular Thursday evening service for the local community, but imparted his Biblical values through personal engagement and many teaching sessions throughout the week.

DISCIPLESHIP, SOCIAL WORK, PRAYER, AND DELIVERANCE

Once, a then-atheist American visitor unknowingly dropped his Rolex watch, which was returned to him by a poor garbage-collecting child. Flabbergasted, he told the child its cost and how, if he had kept and sold it, it would have transformed his entire life. **The boy replied that that would have displeased his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!**

In addition to Bible teaching and social work, once a week Abouna Samaan included a service of exorcism and healing. Christians (and some Muslims) came by the hundreds for prayer and deliverance, whether physical or spiritual. "He had absolute confidence in the spiritual authority of every believer in Christ," said Paul Williams, CEO of Bible Society UK, "over all the works of the enemy."

SIX CAVE CHURCHES AND A 25 000-SEAT CATHEDRAL

The ministry took off in 1990, when the first cave was converted into an auditorium seating 3 000 people. All of Egypt's Christian denominations were welcome. Ever expanding in service and rock-hewn beauty, the peaceful oasis now contains six cave churches and a 25 000-seat cathedral. Nearby is the special needs centre and an 11-storey state-of-the-art hospital. And 80 miles east, Abouna Samaan established a thousand-guest

Continued on p. 9



EGYPT: HOW CHRIST WAS INTRODUCED TO GARBAGE COLLECTORS

Continued from p. 8

Conference Centre in Wadi al-Natroun, on the desert road between Cairo and Alexandria.

"He is someone we can truly call a hero of faith," said his close friend Sameh Maurice, pastor of Kasr el-Dobara Evangelical Church in Cairo's Tahrir Square. "He renounced his life by living among and serving the garbage collectors as one of them, to gain thousands and thousands for Christ."

SMELLS OF GARBAGE AND THE AROMA OF JESUS

"When I first visited the garbage village, the sights and smells and suffering overwhelmed me," said Doug Birdsall of the *Lausanne Movement*. "But when I met him, I was even more overwhelmed - this time with the love and compassion that I saw in his eyes, and

with the aroma of Jesus... so much so that I did not want to leave."

But all this came at a price, much more than the many financial, logistic, and legal challenges that he encountered in developing his extensive ministry. After becoming well-known and beloved by many, Abouna Samaan was opposed by some leaders in the Coptic hierarchy who accused him of 'Protestant' tendencies. These accusations greatly discouraged him and his flock.

At the funeral, the Coptic Orthodox Church honoured his service. With tears in his eyes, Bishop Youannis delivered a remarkable eulogy in appreciation for his ministry, giving the praise and glory to God.

"If this historic gathering is your



Six cave churches and a 25 000-seat cathedral

send-off," he stated, "I wonder what your welcome in heaven was like." In 2007 a short documentary featured Father Samaan's ministry in 'Garbage City'. It's available on YouTube in two parts:

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e01d40ITi_k

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpQc7OS_DNs

Source: Ramez Atallah, Bible Society of Egypt
<https://www.joelnews.org>

EK WIL KOM STILWORD HIER AAN U VOETE

**Ek wil kom stilword hier aan U voete
Ek wil kom hoor wat U vir my sê!
Ek wil kom oopmaak vir U Gees,
as ek my vrae voor U kom lê!**

**Want soveel mense sterf sonder Jesus
soveel mislei na die ewige dood,
daar's soveel oorvloed, selfsug en rykdom
wyl ander ly in hongersnood!**

**Ek wil kom vra Heer, wat van die kinders,
wat nood en lyding glad nie verstaan?
Wat van die mense wat stukkend en seer is?
Wat van die een wat eensaam vergaan?**

**As ek dan vra Heer, "Waar is U liefde?"
Moet ek erken, dit lê nog by my!
Hier in my selfsug, stap ek gevoelloos
by nood en seer van mense verby!**

**Maak my 'n beeld van Jesus se liefde
om in die nood U hande te wees!
Ek gee myself aan U as offer
onder beheer van die Heilige Gees!**

**Hier staan ek voor U, net soos Jesaja,
raak my nou aan met U Heilige Vuur!
Sodat ek oral U liefde kan uitdra!
Hier is ek Heer, U kan my stuur!**

- FLAM 406, Annalise Wiid

Wie is Hy?

Meer as twintig eeue gelede is 'n Man gebore wat nie volgens die gewone natuurwette in die wêreld gekom het nie. Hy het opgegroei in 'n eenvoudige, plattelandse omgewing en met Sy hande gewerk om 'n lewe te maak. Hy het nie buitelandse reise onderneem nie, behalwe een keer toe Sy ouers met Hom uit die land gevlug het. Hy het nie eiendom besit of politieke mag gehad nie. Sy familie was eenvoudige mense en Hy het nie geleerdheid of besondere opleiding gehad nie. Sy geboorte het 'n koning die skrik op die lyf gejaag. In Sy kinderjare het Hy die geleerde van Sy volk verbaas. In Sy volwasse jare kon Hy die natuurmagte beheer. Hy kon bo-op die see loop en het die stormwind en die branders laat bedaar. Hy het groot getalle mense genees sonder medisyne en sonder om iets daarvoor te vra. Hy het nooit 'n boek geskryf nie. Tog sal baie biblioteke nodig wees om al die boeke te berg wat oor Hom geskryf is. Hy het nooit 'n lied geskryf nie. Tog kan al die liedere wat oor Hom gekomponeer is nie getel word nie. Hy het nie 'n skool gestig nie, en tog is daar meer mense wat sy leerlinge is as wat ons sal kan bereken. Hy het nooit in 'n mediese rigting gestudeer nie. Tog het Hy meer gebroke liggame en harte genees as waartoe enige menslike hulp ooit in staat was. Die name van groot manne uit Griekeland en Rome het gekom en gegaan. Die name van beroemde wetenskaplikes, filosowe en teoloë het bekend geword en weer vergete geraak. Maar die Naam van hierdie Man het al meer en meer bekend geword.

Daar is reeds twintig eeue tussen ons geslag en die dag van Sy kruisiging, en tog leef Hy vandag nog. Herodes kon nie hierdie Man se lewe beëindig nie en die graf kon Hom nie hou nie. Hy het die hoogste eer in die hemel. God erken Hom en die engele vereer Hom. Gelowiges op aarde aanbid Hom en die duiwels bewe voor Sy mag. Hy is die ewige Seun van God, die lewendige Verlosser, Jesus Christus ons Here!

Changed on Christmas Eve

A YOUNG ENGLISH WOMAN married a man in the Government service. Her husband was a light-hearted young man who smoked, drank and gambled like the other young men of his set.

As the years went on, he was promoted in service, had large responsibilities, but he became a hardened gambler and the leader of a circle who boasted that they could individually drink a bottle of whiskey and be nothing the worse for it.

As the husband went deeper into sin, his wife, through anxiety on his account, became deeply worried about her soul, and as a lost, guilty sinner (Rom. 3:9-19), cast herself and all her burdens on the Saviour, and became a new creature in Christ, with one burning desire - to bring her husband to Christ as well.

For thirteen years she prayed with never-failing faith that the Lord would convert her husband.

Every Sunday she would ask him to accompany her to church and he as often refused. He would say: "If you will go with me and my friends once, I will go forty times to church with you." She refused.

One Christmas Eve the

husband went to dinner with his friends before going home to his wife and children with his usual Christmas presents.

He was in good spirits and laughingly distributed the gifts. To his horror he found that he had for the first time since he was married, forgotten to buy his wife a present.

He was utterly at a loss to account for this, and said to her: "I don't know how this happened, but to make up for it, you may ask what you like, and I will give it to you."

She quietly and earnestly said: "Come with me to the Church service tonight. That will be my present."

"Oh, no," he said, "I cannot do that; come on, ask for some present." But she stood firm, and reminded him that he had promised.

When the time came for his wife to go to the service, he overheard the children say to her: "Do you think Father will go with us?"

"Yes," she said, "your father has never broken a promise to me."

He had no choice! Later that evening, after they had returned from the service, one of the pictures in the hallway caught his eye. It

was a picture of Christ on the Cross of Calvary.

He never liked the picture, but tonight it smote him to the heart. Words he had long forgotten came to mind: "*He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities... the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:3-5).

His wasted past and the prospect of an awful Eternity rolled in like billows over his soul. He realised that his only hope for peace was in this One, Who was despised, rejected, wounded and bruised. He looked and looked, until it seemed to him as if it were Christ Himself hanging on that Cross, and saying: "I died for you."

"For me, Lord?" and there, in soul agony, he called on the Saviour to save him and to put away from him forever the desire for all sin.

Like the "*chief of sinners he fell to the earth*" (Acts 9:4) and upon his knees in his own house, with no one near but God, he acknowledged his "*manifold transgressions*" (Amos 5:12), and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his own and only



Saviour.

He believed on Him "*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*" (Rom. 4:25), and rose from his knees, a free man, with Christ as his Saviour and almighty Deliverer!

That very night he went to his old companions and told them what the Lord Jesus had done for him. At first they thought he was joking, and laughed at him, but eventually they had to admit that if God can save a drinking, gambling, swearing sinner of the deepest dye, and make him a new creature in Christ, He can save anyone!

HE IS ALSO BOTH ABLE AND WILLING TO SAVE YOU!

[From: *The Railway Messenger*, December 1996].

Jer. 20:11

★★★ B&B Uit die Hand

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OASE VAN HOOP

-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

est. 2023

