TASK TEAM FOR CONGREGATIONAL WITNESS:

C B R N E W S

(CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY)

*Newsletter * March 2022*

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CBR PROJECT MANAGER

It is with a sense of gratitude and excitement to share our next CBR newsletter with our partners, donors, and congregations.

With this newsletter, we want to share the message that the roll-out of our Contextual Bible Reading project is delivering the goods. The feedback we get from the presbyteries we facilitated CBR workshops with is positive and members want to hear and learn more of this way of reading the Bible. It's especially exciting to see and hear that our young people, not only enjoy this way of reading the Bible but also experience it as empowering and enriching.

Thank you once again to our main donors, Kerk in Actie of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (PCN) and Witness Ministry of the DRC family, for making this project possible. A big thank you to our presbyteries and congregations who are opening their buildings, hearts, and minds for CBR.

It is our sincere hope that CBR will keep assisting congregations and presbyteries to attend to some of the priorities of our URCSA Cape synod, like "deepening unity", "building leadership capacity", and addressing "gender-based exclusion", to mention a few, contribute to the broader building of capacity within URCSA Cape, and enable congregations and presbyteries to come up with biblically-sound action plans that will serve the change and transformation we so urgently need for being church, especially today as we are still coming to terms with the impact of the COVID pandemic on our congregations and communities.

Our prayers accompany our CBR Coordinator and Trainer, Rev. Babalwa Sifuba, and her co-facilitators and cluster-leaders, as they continue with the roll-out of this empowering missional method and project.



Rev. Stephen Pedro
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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Endless possibilities! This is what Contextual Bible Reading brought into our lives - both religiously and socially. Not only are we guided to read the Bible from our context, but we are also guided to deepen our relationships - both internally and externally. Just imagine, beloved: The Bible, God's Holy Word, speaks into our situations and different contexts; it then leads us, with our neighbour, to think afresh about our current context and then (again) with others we are allowed to put action plans together.

Beloved, you just need one Contextual Bible Reading workshop to become aware of the value of this God-given tool which could be of great help in the processes of spiritual growth and community upliftment. Under the excellent leadership of Rev. Stephen Pedro and under the guidance of the high-performing, energetic facilitator, Rev. Babalwa Sifuba, you cannot but exponentially grow into a believer who understands his/her context and the Bible better.

Avail yourself for growth in 2022. Use Contextual Bible Reading as a tool for development: Read your context; read your Bible; enrich yourself and change your community!



Rev. Danny Bock
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OUR ADJUSTED STRATEGIC PLAN

We have decided to adjust our strategy of rolling-out CBR to our Cape Synod congregations. Our aim now is to introduce CBR to the rest of our 29 presbyteries over the next two years.

Rev. Babalwa Sifuba was reappointed as CBR coordinator and trainer to coordinate the roll-out phase for the 11 presbyteries from our Eastern and Southern Cape presbyteries, and to focus on the training of CBR facilitators of these presbyteries.

From Rev. Stephen Pedro's office, the roll-out to the other 18 presbyteries will be coordinated. We've also grouped our presbyteries into clusters and requested some of our pastors, who have been trained as CBR facilitators, to serve as cluster leaders. They function as a support team for Revs. Sifuba and Pedro and will assist them with the facilitation of workshops with the presbyteries and the training of facilitators.

Rev. Sifuba works with five clusters and Rev. Pedro with six. The cluster leaders working with Rev. Sifuba have been finalised and they are:

Cluster 1 (37 congregations)
Presbytery of Aliwal North, Colesberg, Cala
Cluster leader: Rev. Boyce Masele

Cluster 2 (23 congregations)
Presbyteries of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage,
Cluster leader: Rev. Mawande Soga

Cluster 3 (38 congregations)
Presbyteries of Monti, Fish River, Graaff-Reinet
Cluster leader: Rev. V Ntshabalala

Cluster 4 (17 congregations)
Presbyteries Mthatha and Rietvlei
Cluster leader: Rev. Bloro

Cluster 5 (17 congregations)
Presbytery of George
Cluster leader: Rev. Sifuba

With this adjusted strategy we believe we will be able to introduce CBR to most, if not not all, our 29 presbyteries over the next two years and that there will be, at least in each presbytery, a few trained CBR facilitators and at least one CBR trainer in each cluster.



CLUSTER LEADERS' PLANNING & TRAINING

The main task of the cluster leaders is to work as a team with Rev. Sifuba and support her in introducing CBR to the presbyteries and with the training of CBR facilitators. The cluster leaders will also be supported by the other CBR pastor-facilitators in their cluster with the CBR introduction.

GRAAFF-REINET

From 29 to 31 October, Rev. Stephen Pedro (Manager of Congregational Witness and project manager of CBR Cape) and Rev. Babalwa Sifuba (CBR coordinator and trainer) had a Training and Planning Workshop with the cluster leaders of the presbyteries of the Eastern and Southern Cape areas in Graaff-Reinet. The focus was on leadership. The development of leadership on congregational level has been identified by the URCSA Cape Regional Synod as one of our major challenges. We've focused on the theme of leadership and did a CBR with 1 Peter 5 as our reading text.

Rev. Pedro also facilitated the session about the adjusted strategic plan to introduce CBR to the rest of our 29 presbyteries. They've utilized the time to finalize their programme of dates and actions for the next 4 months which includes two follow-up training and planning sessions to develop a CBR on "Deepening unity" and "Gender exclusion" which the URCSA Cape Synod also identified as challenges that our ministries on synodical, presbyterial and congregational level need to attend to before the next synod meeting. With these CBR templates, they hope to support and contribute to the building of leadership capacity work our ministries need to do before the next synod meeting.

Fltr: Revs. Soga, Masele, Ntshabalala, Sifuba, Pedro, Bloro and Calvary





Some of the attendees at the workshop



Fltr: Revs. BMasele and Soga

CLUSTER LEADERS' FOLLOW-UP TRAINING

EAST LONDON

On 30 November, Rev. Sifuba did a follow-up training session on facilitation in East London. She and Rev. Pedro did a short version of a CBR with a group of congregation members.

Rev. Sifuba will use this reflective and contextual reading as material to compile another CBR template on leadership for our CBR Manual for Facilitators.



Rev. Sifuba explains CBR.



Rev. Pedro (right) in conversation with attendees.

CLUSTER LEADERS INTRODUCING CBR TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS

DIMBAZA

On 27 November, Rev. Ntshabalala did a CBR workshop with the CYM (Christian Youth Ministry) of URCSA Dimbaza Congregation. The topic was Gender Exclusion and they worked on 1 Timothy 2:1-15.



CYM members discussing the CBR theme.



Rev. Ntshabalala

MOTHERWELL PORT ELIZABETH

On 6 November, Rev. Soga did CBR with CYM Motherwell on the theme "Gender-Based Violence" with the focus being on the story of Tamar.



CYM members discussing the CBR theme.



Rev. Soga

AND TO OUR YOUTH!

KWAZAKHELE, PE

Contextual Bible Reading is making inroads and vibrations under the youth of URCSA Cape in the Eastern Cape!

On Saturday 19 February 24 young people of PE Presbytery's Christian Youth Ministry (CYM) attended a CBR workshop at KwaZakhele congregation in Port Elizabeth. It was facilitated by Rev. Babalwa Sifuba, CBR coordinator and trainer from URCSA New Brighton and Rev. Mawande Soga, a cluster leader for PE and Uitenhange Presbytery.

The branches of Motherwell, KwaZakhele, Seyisi and New Brighton were present.

One of the attendees, Anele Bhili from Motherwell Congregation, says, "The CBR was fun and also engaging as we took an initiative and committed ourselves into changing our behaviour and start afresh and rebuild our ministry. We also learnt to stand firm and be unshaken and be courageous like Nehemiah."

Another youth member, Olothando Sandlana from Motherwell congregation, says, "I enjoyed the CBR because we got to know each other as CYM and had the opportunity to discuss and exchange challenges that we are facing as youth inside and outside of church. In a nutshell - the CBR was fun and educational."

"CBR is very engaging and allowed us to talk about real issues that we are faced with as young people and it was wonderful how the Word of the Lord guides us in working through our issues," says Thandi Nelani from Zwide Congregation.

"It was exactly what we needed as youth after the long break from church. It brought back the spark that was gone," says Siya Bola from KwaZakhele Congregation.



