



CBR NEWS



Task team for
CONGREGATIONAL
WITNESS

*Contextual
Bible Reading*

April - August 2022

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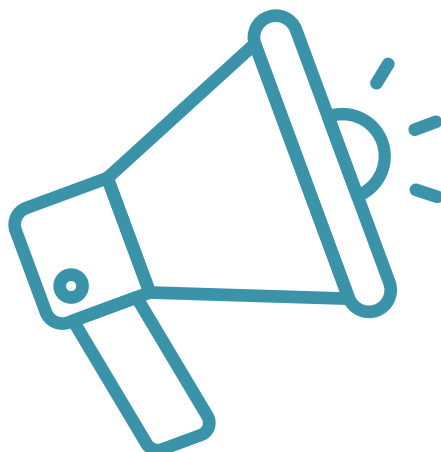
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A message from our *Chair of task team*

Dearly beloved members of URCSA and the broader faith community, we are grateful to share our second CBR Newsletter for 2022 with you.

COVID-19 took us to the trenches, and we almost lost the battle. Our fight against this adversary was severe and we lost dear ones in this war. The fight is not over; we are still in the trenches, this time fighting for the survival of our beloved community of faith.

Out of these trenches, we need to give birth to new ways of being church, new ways of being relevant. As we fight for survival, we need to give life to new ideas and concepts of being church. And we need to be creative and innovative as we take on the pre and post-COVID challenges facing us as URCSA.

There is, according to me, no better tool we can use, undertaking this new journey, taking in a new direction than Contextual Bible Reading (CBR). This tool offers us the possibility to look at our contexts, through the different lenses of the Bible, with the intention that we, as the faith community, become actively involved in addressing the contextual needs of our society.

CBR invites us to identify the challenges in our own local contexts (see), it helps us through the different lenses of the Bible, to understand what and who we are dealing with (discernment) and then it guides us to put measures in place to become actively involved in addressing the unique challenges of each context (act).

In this newsletter, the reader will get a sense that we really do mean business when we say that we are putting this practical tool at the disposal of our congregations and ministries. Please get on board and join us in utilising this powerful method to not only tackle our challenges but also to build capacity among our members and leaders of URCSA Cape.

Beloved, become a part of this exciting journey, as we (together) move to safer grounds.

Greetings,

Danny Bock

FACILITATOR TRAINING

Presbytery of Cala & Fish River



From 25 to 27 May, Rev. Sifuba (co-ordinator and trainer) and Rev. Ntshabalala (cluster leader) presented the first 3-days facilitator training with representatives from the Presbytery of Cala and Fish River at Pallotti Farm in Queenstown.

"The group was diverse," says Rev. Sifuba. "We had both males and females from different age groups. The focus was on gender exclusion or patriarchy from the book of Esther. While training the facilitators, they had the opportunity to showcase how they would apply CBR with their congregation."



This workshop meant a lot to those who attended. Siwe from Cala says, "CBR has empowered me to not be afraid to stand and share the Bible with people because this tool teaches us that everyone's voice and opinion is important ... Now I can confidently say I know how to choose a text and work on it without fear of being looked down on."

"I learned that it is important to read the whole story instead of just reading one line and to also understand what the story is about. I am happy to have been part of this training," says Mr Vumazonke from Fish River.

During the month of June, Rev. Pedro facilitated and coordinated two training workshops with some of our candidates for the ministry (proponents). They were trained to be Contextual Bible Reading (CBR) facilitators and to assist with the introduction of CBR to some of URCSA Cape presbyteries.

Contextual Bible Reading is one of the projects managed by Rev. Pedro and its broader goal is to support the accompaniment of congregations and to build capacity on congregational level.

GEORGE

The first CBR training workshop took place from 8 to 10 June at the Carmel Retreat Centre, in George. Rev. Pedro was assisted by CBR Trainer, Rev. Moses Baartman. Rev. Willa McKay also joined the training.

Fltr.: Proponents Pieter Windvogel, Zolani None, Rev. Willa McKay, Proponents Noxolo Fihla, Don-marco Jonaan, Rev. Moses Baartman, Rev. Stephen Pedro. Front: proponents Ntsika Tyityi and Randow Jantjies



URC KLAWER

The second training workshop took place at URC Klawer, from the 27-29 June 2022. Rev. Pedro was assisted by Rev. Julian Coetzee and supported by Rev. Danny Bock, the Chairperson of Congregational Ministry.

Read more about CBR at <https://witnessministry.christians.co.za/contextual-bible-reading/>

These 13 CBR Facilitators are now ready to assist revs Pedro and Babalwa Sifuba with the roll out of CBR to our 29 presbyteries and especially with the further training of CBR facilitators.

Follow-up Facilitator Training Cala & Fish River Presbytery



On 13 July Prop. Noxolo Fihla and Rev. Sifuba had a follow-up training with facilitators from Fish River Presbytery at Bhofolo congregation.

"We worked on the theme of unity from the book of John 17," explains Rev. Sifuba. "That also proved to be a great opportunity to share CBR with other people who were not part of the training as we were joined by church council members of the local congregation.

"That experience afforded the local congregation to draw up an action plan to assist with church growth and healing during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Some of the attendees have the following to say: "This is a very good way of reading the Bible and it will help improve the way I plan my sermon."

"Now I can stand and preach with confidence. I am reminded of how important it is to analyse your context. This will help us go back to the church council and present what we think can help to revive our congregation."



PRACTICE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TAUGHT

URCSA Indwe
Congregation

On 21 August Elder Bathembu from URCSA Indwe in the Presbytery of Cala conducted a CBR workshop with church council members, leaders, and members of his congregation.

Mr Bathembu says, "From the many challenges that were identified as serious problems, one that affects our church directly and also indirectly is the high rate of alcohol and drug abuse, especially among the young people.

"Most parents ended up losing hope and became inactive in the church. We decided to do CBR to assist people to be motivated and not give up, and that was a very good move because people now see the relevance between the context and the Bible."

