

CESA NEWS

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Blood and Forgiveness

By Mervyn Eloff

IN A WORLD which is full of violence and bloodshed, it is hardly surprising when people balk at claims such as that made in Hebrews 9:22 that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (NIV).

In its immediate context, the verse is, of course, referring to the Old Testament sacrificial system described in particular in the early chapters of Leviticus, a religious system which to modern ears smacks of barbarism and superstition. But the wider context of the chapter as a whole, together with the writer’s use of the present tense ‘...is no forgiveness’, makes it clear that the writer is in fact referring to the death of Jesus Christ who “has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). Such a claim, even for the Jews who countenanced animal sacrifice as an appropriate part of worship, seems to go much too far. Surely God cannot permit, let alone demand, human sacrifice as the means by which forgiveness is to be obtained?!

Meaning of blood in the Bible

Two things need to be born in mind when one ponders the words of Hebrews and seeks to understand the link between bloodshed, forgiveness and Christianity.

First, we must bear in mind the true nature of God and the true condition of humanity. Second, we must come



“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness...”

to understand the meaning of blood in the Bible. Let’s look briefly at each of these two points.

The popular understanding of God may be summed up by the idiom: To err is human, to forgive is divine. Whatever the original intention of the saying, its popular application expresses the prevailing notion that it is God’s duty to forgive... and to do so easily, and automatically. The reason we think like this about God and forgiveness, is because we tend to associate God only with goodness and love and not with holiness and justice.

Evil offends

Such a view is of course quite untenable if we think about it more deeply. If

we as sinful human beings are offended by evil and injustice – especially if we fall victim to it – how can we expect God who is holy, not to be? And yet we talk as if God has no moral standards, no sense of right and wrong. The truth of the matter is that if God is neither holy nor just, then we have no basis for holiness, righteousness and justice in our world.

The Bible as a whole, and Hebrews 9 in particular, makes it clear, however, that God is indeed Holy and separated from sin. God’s eyes are ‘too pure to look on evil’ (Hab 1:13) and He ‘cannot tolerate wrong’ (Is 59:1). Four times in Hebrews 9 we read of the ‘Most Holy Place’ (9:3,8,12,25). This is a reference

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A NEW PASSOVER

WHEN JESUS celebrated the Passover with His disciples, they would have been shocked to the core when He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat, this is my body given for you". These words had no place in the Passover feast. He should have said, "This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate when they came from the land of Egypt." Jesus changes these words in anticipation of His sacrificial death. As the bread was broken, so His body would be broken.

The same can be said of the wine. Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus understands His death to inaugurate and ratify a covenant that would secure the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus reinterprets the Passover, an annual feast celebrating how God delivered Israel from Egypt, to show that His death would also be an act of deliverance – but of far greater proportions.

By the 'breaking' of His body and the 'pouring out' of His blood God would deliver His people from the terrible bondage and consequences of their sin – He would forgive them!

Jesus is the final fulfilment of the Passover – He transcends its original meaning for He Himself is the Passover Lamb. The slaughtered lamb no longer had any part in the meal for its central position had now been taken by the bread and the wine. In the Lord's Supper the bread and wine represent the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb.

Neither the bread nor the wine contain in and of themselves any efficacy. The Lord's Supper is a proclamation and a remembrance of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and an expectation of the joy of being with Him in His kingdom.

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Co 11:26

Further to this, the bread and wine invite us to partake of the great blessings of the cross. Jesus said "Take, eat



... Take drink".

The Book of Common Prayer puts it succinctly: Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on Him in your heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

May the Lord grant you a Christ-filled Easter!

Bp Des Inglesby

MISSIONARY TEACHERS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Nokuphila School was planted in January 2010 as a private Christian School situated in Tembisa, a township of Johannesburg. The school has 80 vulnerable and disadvantaged children, many of whom are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. The school caters for children aged between 4 – 7 years and is growing into a full primary and secondary school. Nokuphila School is closely associated with Christ Church Midrand who planted the school.



We are looking for qualified pre-primary and primary school teachers who are:

- Committed evangelical Christians
- Able to make a minimum 1-year commitment from January 2012
- Self-supporting
- Have experience in teaching
- Passionate about serving God by teaching the Gospel to disadvantaged children.

Accommodation will be provided but the candidate will need to raise financial support for return airfares; medical expenses and living expenses. Christ Church Midrand will provide a supportive environment and a warm church family.



For more information
Contact Helen Loots at
info@christchurchmidrand.co.za



"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ, for he himself is our peace..."

Ephesians 2:13-14



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to a part of the Tabernacle which was the symbol of God's dwelling among the ancient Israelites.

The 'Most Holy Place' was separated from the rest of the Tabernacle by a screen, indicating God's own holiness of person and of character and his separation from all that is evil or imperfect.

Holy reaction to evil

In his book *The Cross of Christ*, John Stott writes: "Closely related to God's holiness is his wrath, which is in fact his holy reaction to evil. God's anger is absolutely pure and uncontaminated by those elements which render human anger sinful. Our anger tends to be a spasmodic outburst, aroused by pique and seeking revenge; God's is a continuous, settled antagonism, aroused only by evil, and expressed in its condemnation."

Failure to recognise the reality of God's holiness will inevitably mean failure to see the necessity that something drastic needs to happen if we as sinful human beings are to be acceptable to God, and enabled to be in a relationship with Him.

We minimize our sin

The second mistake which we humans make, is aptly summed up in the first part of the idiom. If we err at all, it is in viewing our misdemeanors with respect to each other and with respect to God merely as error, rather than as sin. In addition to having a low view of God's holiness, we have a low view of our own sinfulness as human beings. We are, of course, quick to condemn serious acts such as murder or rape or child abuse, but we fail to take seriously Jesus' own references to the evil which resides in all our hearts (Mark 7:14-23). And we fail to recognise that even good deeds done for the wrong motives are themselves unacceptable to the Holy God who searches our hearts.

Radical act of salvation

And thus we fail once more to see why God can't just accept us as we are or with a gentle slap on the wrist or even a stern warning. Hebrews 9, however, shows us that sin is a real problem for every human being and that our sins, even those committed in ignorance (9:7) separate us from the God who is holy. Both our sins and our sinfulness

make us liable to death and judgment (9:27) and thus we are faced with the necessity for a radical act of salvation if we are to be saved.

It is precisely this radical act of salvation that Hebrews 9 has in mind when it says that "Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people" (9:28) or that "...he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (9:15). What is being spoken about here in language reminiscent of Isaiah 53, is the death of Jesus in the place of sinful human beings.

Substitutionary death

Thus when Hebrews 9 speaks about blood, it has in mind bloodshed i.e. death, rather than blood per sé. The Bible forbids any superstition about

blood and its magical powers. That was why the Israelites were forbidden from drinking blood as the Canaanite nations did. In the Jewish sacrificial ritual, blood had to be poured out as a symbol of death. The penalty for all sin, no matter how great or small, is death. Only substitutionary death can bring forgiveness and the gift of life instead of the sentence of death.

The wonderful message within Hebrews 9 is that having recognised that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness", it goes on to proclaim that blood has indeed been shed, once for all, and that forgiveness is thus accessible to all who will depend upon Jesus' death on their behalf.

Rev Dr Mervyn Eloff is rector of St James Church, Kenilworth

Churches for Namibia

Robbie and Michelle Daries have recently committed themselves to serve as coordinators of the Churches for Namibia Mission team

THE "Go Mission" trip to Namibia of 2009 was a week away from departure when a couple who had planned to be a part of the team had to withdraw. They were given a gospel opportunity of a different kind.

This caused a dilemma for the team. So we were asked to join the team with only four days left. God proved his faithfulness by providing all our needs – we did not even have a passport at the time and we were faced with many other challenges.

As a result we have seen God's mighty hand at work not only in our lives but in the lives of many who have been a partnering in the gospel in Namibia.

We are humbled by the privilege and the opportunity and are praying that our Heavenly Father would keep us faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that by the power of the Holy Spirit many lives may be changed as we serve Him.

Please pray for:

- Tish Hanekom (CESA Missionary in Namibia). The floods have caused much damage and she is unable to move about with her current vehicle. She desperately needs a 4x4 vehicle that will enable her to go into areas that a normal vehicle cannot.
- The ongoing gospel work in Ovamboland. Pray for the church leadership and for those who have recently become Christians.

For any enquiries or if you desire to support gospel work in Namibia, please contact: Robbie 082 772 2644 / Michelle 082 821 8071 or 021 697 2351 (H).



Robbie and Michelle Daries on their first Mission trip to Namibia in 2009



What is your church doing for Easter?

We asked several ministers to tell us about their Easter programmes and how they are advertising their gospel services in their communities. Here's what they said...



THE EASTER weekend is a really good opportunity to reach unbelievers, but we have tried to use our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services as events to build up to throughout the first term. For example, we've run things like (outsider-friendly) parenting courses and divorce counselling courses during the first term and we then encourage the non-Christians attending those courses to join us over Easter.

We then strive to make the Easter services as outsider-friendly as possible: very familiar music; clear evangelistic talks; limit the jargon. We bill our Sunday service as an Easter Sunday Fun Day and have some special Easter activities for kids (egg hunts, the ever-present, never-fail bouncy castle, etc.). We often try to arrange an outside speaker for one of the services as this tends to build interest and may give the congregation extra impetus to invite unbelieving friends and family (not to mention giving them a break from the hacker they usually have to listen to). This year we have Richard Coekin (from London) speaking on Easter Sunday.

Finally, we try to have some kind of follow-up course in the pipeline. This year we will start a Christianity Explored course in mid-May and will give that a big push over Easter.

Word of mouth is always king, so we ensure the congregation knows about our Easter plans well in advance. Other ways we advertise what we're doing over Easter is to hang a banner outside our church two to three weeks ahead that gives some details about our Easter events and we may also take out newspaper ads and drop flyers, but these options are usually saved for stand-alone evangelistic campaigns.

Rev Murray Anderson
St Peter's Church, Fish Hoek



SOMLANDELA BIBLE Church, Mandela Park Community Church and Yesunathi Community Church will jointly host our Easter celebrations at Yesunathi Community Church. Our theme is "The Atoning Work of Christ". Our guest speaker is Rev Mphumezi Hombana, who will take us through Isaiah 53. Mphumezi is the pastor of Gugulethu Baptist Church. He graduated from Cape Town Baptist Seminary and is a gifted and passionate preacher who desires to see lives changed through the preaching of the Word of God. He is also a committee member and a teacher at the All of Grace School of Theology in Khayelitsha. Our Easter celebration will start on Thursday 21 April with Holy Communion and Mphumezi preaching. On Friday 22 April we will have two sessions. The first one will be our traditional seven words preached by seven people and the second session will be Mphumezi preaching once again. We will also have sessions on Saturday and our usual church service on Sunday morning with Holy Communion. We are spreading the message about our church programmes by encouraging church members to invite their friends to our meetings. And we also fellowship together after meetings.

Rev Peter Makapela
Somlandela Bible Church, Strand



effective results have come through encouraging our own church folk to invite their friends and family to the services. We have even made up business card invitations for our members to invite someone when the opportunity presents itself.

Rev Glenn Lyons
Emmanuel Church, Port Elizabeth

EASTER IS always an opportunity for evangelism and our services are geared towards reaching the many who visit our church over this weekend. Easter and Christmas are still days in which non-Christians go to church and we intend to take full advantage of this cultural practice for as long as it continues. On Good Friday we will be presenting a multi-media talk called "The Power of the Cross" and on Easter Sunday it will be "The Power of the Resurrection". Our invitations say: "In a world searching for more power over their lives and circumstances, come and hear where real power is found." Each service will also challenge people to make a decision for Christ and/or commit to come and find out more about him by signing up for the Christianity Explored course. The CE course is specifically planned as an Easter follow-up. We have found that our best responses have come when we have run it this way.

We use a variety of publicity opportunities to let the community know what we're doing. Easter advertising boards are placed on the roadside for a few weeks leading up to Easter. We also advertise through our own church website as well as a popular local Christian website (www.pechurchnet.co.za). Our teens have fun doing a letter-drop in the area a week before Easter. But by far the most effective results have come through encouraging our own church folk to invite their friends and family to the services. We have even made up business card invitations for our members to invite someone when the opportunity presents itself.



WE WILL hand out a leaflet to inform our church community of the preaching series we will be going through in the run-up to Easter. The theme for the series is "The Ultimate Sacrifice". We will look at Genesis 22, the story of Abraham and Isaac, to show that God has always had a plan of saving humanity through the Lamb. We will then look at Isaiah to show that even the prophets knew and spoke about the impending sacrifice for human sin. Then we will show from the mouth of Jesus that the cross was not a tragic accident but a well executed plan of salvation. Jesus knew what was to come and told his disciples that he was going to die and rise again on the third day. On Good Friday we will speak about the victory of God and on Easter Sunday we will focus on the Emmaus story to show the danger of being where Jesus is but failing to recognise him.

Rev Jomo Mchunu
Christ Church Hillcrest



OUR THEME for the Easter period is "The Cross-minded Life". On Sunday, 27 March the sermon will be "The Necessity of the Cross", followed by "The Freedom of the Cross" on Sunday, 3 April. And then on 10 April we will preach about "The Triumph of the Cross", then "The Power of the Cross" on 17 April, "The Love of the Cross" on 22 April and finally, "Alive When He Should be Dead" on 24 April.

We'll get the word out the following ways: On 9 April we will have our men's braai. Before the braai the men will drop leaflets in homes and the shopping centre near our church. And then on 17 April we will have our Oasis. Once a quarter all our Bible study groups meet together at the church for a meal. This Sunday we will have a morning Oasis before the service. We will serve breakfast on the church grounds. We also have printed a banner and posters to invite people around the church to the breakfast. On Sunday 24 April at 6am we will have a sunrise service at the King Frost Park in Auckland Park and walk to the church for our normal 9:30am service. The community will be invited to the park event. All our Easter events will appear in the local newspaper and SABC Radio will also record a few of our services.

Rev Edwin Ngubane
Melville Union, Johannesburg

Hope Training Course

A new initiative has been launched in Mandela Park to equip people to have a better understanding of the Bible and to train others for ministry

HOPE TRAINING COURSE, based at Mandela Park Community Church in Khayelitsha, was launched on 9 February.

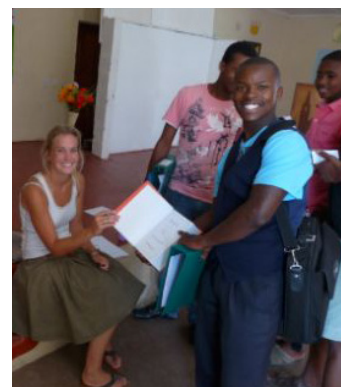
Hope was born out of a vision to see young Christian leaders raised up for the Western Cape and beyond. In this, we are standing on the shoulders of several ministers in this region who have been and remain committed to training.

Hope is currently aimed at men and women who are in the 18–35 age group (although we currently have a 40-year-old onboard) and are thoroughly involved in serving in their local church or in a Christian organisation, often in a training role at some level.

We are very grateful to have 13 students, most of whom are apprentices, nine of whom are from CESA churches. It has been especially encouraging to see a couple of churches identifying and sending apprentices for the first time. Of the remaining four students, three are from Christian organisations based in Khayelitsha, and one is attached to a Cape Town student ministry. We have intentionally set up Hope as an independent ministry in an attempt to train others from outside the denomination. We are praying, therefore, for more and more students from Khayelitsha and the Cape Flats.

With GWC on our doorstep, the need is not for another Bible college, but for a resource that is 'light on its feet' in terms of cost, staffing and time commitment from students. Our aim is to provide accessible, affordable and practical training, which not only establishes convictions about the gospel and Word-based ministry, but tools to train others in ministry. Hope has not been founded to replace training and mentoring in the local church, responsibilities which remain with the church or Christian organisation leader, but rather to motivate and resource.

The core of the course is concerned with passing on Bible-handling tools, how to interpret different Bible literary genres, and orientating students in



Above: (L-R) Phumezo Massango (Hope TC facilitator), Chris de Witt (Hope TC facilitator), Thami Makayi (Hope student) and Bp Des Inglesby

Above: Receiving ESVs

Middle: Hope class in session

Left: Post-class indaba

the Scriptural narrative via an OT Overview. We also deal with applying Bible teaching and doctrines to our diverse context, as well as explicit ministry and leadership skills. Each week includes one very hands-on session where students lead a Bible study or give a Bible talk and receive feedback.

In all our training and fellowship, our prayer is that students will be equipped and inspired with a love for the Bible in such a way that they become passionately committed, in a sustainable way, to living it out in their own lives and to teaching it in their specific contexts.

The course is facilitated by Phumezo

Masango (Mandela Park), Vuyani Sindo (Holy Trinity) and Chris de Witt (The Message), and assisted by JP Harper (St Paul's Stellenbosch), with the invaluable support of their local churches. We meet once a week on a Wednesday from 8.30–2.30pm.

If you are interested in finding out more please drop Chris an email on chrisedwitt@thessage.org.za or call on 072 086 3627.

If you can make it to Khayelitsha on a Wednesday during term time, we'd love you to come and spend a morning with us to experience Hope first hand.

Hillbrow Shelter Christmas

LATE LAST YEAR, the ladies ministry at Christ Church Sandton came up with a great initiative: They decided to invite the kids from the Hillbrow shelter to celebrate Christmas with them. Instead of going to Hillbrow, the women of the church decided to bring Hillbrow to Sandton ... okay, not the whole of Hillbrow (we are still working at connecting with our local community), but everyone from the shelter.

Buses were arranged, presents were bought (not just presents for the kids from the shelter, but also presents for the staff and for the CCS kids as well), the jumping castle was erected, the soft serve machine hired (although the operator kept sampling the ice cream to make sure it was cold enough) and Uncle Fred did the candy floss.

A fantastic time was had by all. This event wasn't really held to share the gospel with children from the shelter – they are really well taught already. It was a time to share the joy of Christmas with each other. It was definitely not a one-sided affair. We were just as blessed and encouraged by all the Hillbrow kids, as they were hopefully blessed by us.

Everyone from CCS got stuck into making the day a real success. And Uncle Fred unintentionally looked like Father Christmas towards the end of the day, with a long pink candy floss beard... I'm certain there's an asbestos-type claim coming at us at some stage!

It was great to see the love of the Lord genuinely shared amongst Christian folk from varying backgrounds and economic privileges. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another". Can there be a better way to celebrate Christmas than to show the world that the risen Christ is real and really makes a difference in our lives?

The ladies from Christ Church Sandton were blessed to share the joy of Christmas with kids from the Hillbrow shelter



Laugh your way to a great marriage

CHRIST CHURCH SANDTON hosted a two-day "Laugh your way to a better marriage" seminar, which looked at topics like "The tale of two brains", "Why does he/she do that?", "The key to incredible sex" and "How to stay married and not kill each other".

In fairness the "work" part of the workshop really involved picking yourself up off the floor after you'd collapsed from laughter... again! Pastor and author Mark Gungor presents the biblical response to marriage in an enormously practical and wildly entertaining way. He teaches that it's not about finding the right person... it's about doing the right things. Surprisingly many Christians think if they find the right person it will all end "happily ever after". But Mark asserts that marriage is like an ox – a great and productive thing. But

if you have an ox, you're going to have ox poo! There's no such thing as a poo-free marriage. When you encounter the "stuff that stinks" it doesn't mean you've married the wrong person, it means you've got to get working.

Of particular importance in these sessions is debunking the myth about married sex. With enormous candour, Mark frankly addresses the many issues Christians are too "polite" or embarrassed to address.

You may want to consider using this resource as an opportunity for your church to reach out to your community. It's easy to invite unchurched people to these sessions and is a great platform for helping couples in a really practical way.

For more info contact Jolanda at jolanda@christchurch.co.za

