



# CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY SOUTH AFRICA

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The Communication of the South African Region  
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## CLC COMMUNIQUÉ

Dear Community of South Africa,

### A Christmas Message from Kaye

As we enter the last week of Advent I am touched by the appropriateness of the messages of the prophets as they encouraged the people of Israel to maintain their hope in the Lord despite the social and political problems of the time. Very similar to our current situation in South Africa today! Our CLC Charism invites us constantly to deepen our awareness of God's ongoing loving action in our daily lives. This has been a challenge for many in this past year.

So now on behalf of the national exco I wish and pray that all our members may enjoy a personal experience of joyful hope in the faithfulness of God in the circumstances of our daily lives. I pray that the family celebrations may be happy and rewarding and that all who travel may be safe. May we all be renewed by the sure belief that God so loved us that God's son took on the human condition and continues to be with us in our daily lives! My very best wishes to all for joyful, peaceful, safe and happy Christmas time!

Kaye  
National Coordinator CLC SA

### All Africa Assembly

I, Malesabe Hannah "Sabie" Makgothi, believe that 2016 is a year of serious learning and growth. This year has been filled with painful memories not only personal but also national and international.

The visit to the Hector Peterson Memorial with younger CLC members (Auckland Park and Katlehong), was a personal and national memorial of pain for me. It is 40 years since the event that had me truly confused at the age of 10. The 16th of June 1976 was just another winter school day. We were calling out our exam marks to Mrs Seageng our Standard 2 teacher, as we had just finished our half-year exams and she was compiling her mark schedule. Suddenly there was a thunderous noise from behind our classroom block at Moetapele Combined School. As we hopped onto our desks to see what the noise was, there were high school students at our door telling us to go home. I remember running to the pre-school to fetch two

younger children whom I used to walk to school. We ran all the way home.

Ask though we did, no one could explain what was going on. There were strange sounds around us: helicopters, gunshots and the smell of teargas (I didn't know what that was until later) I just remember the discomfort that accompanied that smell! Itchy eyes, sore throat and then more gunshots! I remember this as clearly as if it was yesterday. I still see that policeman standing on a rock and spraying bullets at the students. Then there were the ugly army caspirs in the streets which were to become part of our life until 1977. Every time one appeared, you had to run into the nearest yard to avoid being arrested or shot. These memories were clear as day when I was walking around the museum looking at the pictures. What a difficult time to have lived through. Sad thing is we saw similar scenes 40 years later of police shooting the students during the #feesmustfall protests. This time it wasn't white apartheid police and young army conscripts, shooting but the police force of the democratic South Africa. It is hard to believe that government has changed!

The second big painful memory: the visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial. On the 19th of November CLC All Africa Assembly delegates took a break out of a very busy schedule to visit the memorial. The beauty of the place belies the pain that it commemorates! The reminder of that fateful year when an attempt was almost successfully made to remove an entire section of a national community. Anyone who tearfully watched Hotel Rwanda or Sometimes in April, will agree that the film looks very neat compared to the visuals in the museum.

Upon entry to the memorial an explanation is given of the purpose that the memorial serves. Then you watch a documentary with some survivors and then you go through to the massive mass graves where an estimated 250 000 bodies or parts of bodies have been buried. The last part to visit is the museum with very graphic photographs taken at the scenes of the massacres. This started with fairly old pictures from the colonial period showing the beginnings of the segregation and classification of the people according

to tribes. The display gradually changed to show scenes of small massacres and attacks, which became a full on strategic killing of close to one million Tutsis.

My struggle came while looking at the many scenes of horror! The breaking point for me was a particularly gory picture where a large number of women and children had been hacked to death and their blood collected in a basin. That sent me back to the time of my mother's murder. The basin full of blood was reminiscent of the blood that was washed off the floor where she was left to bleed to death. That was one death! The photos I was looking at were showing many people who were killed in the same way as we would kill animals for traditional ceremonies, the blood is often collected in a basin. Treating those made in the image of God exactly sacrificial animals brought me to tears! How could humans be so cruel to each other! We were looking at the worst of human behaviour towards other humans. And this was not the first nor the last time for such cruelty towards those of our species.

Where was God in all of this pain? How much thought or memory did the killers put into who they are and whose image they were? Now that I sit with my computer writing my experience on that day the 19th November 2016, I realise God kept all in His hand, all the while waiting for the choice of life be made. The reading which we read for opening the Assembly - Deuteronomy 30:15 -20 - comes to mind. It is up to us to choose life continuously. Choices were made but how much of this choice was for life? May I always choose life! Please understand that this took me a long time to put into words because of the intense emotion it still raises in me. It is very hard to look at this memory as a preparation for Christmas, but it is. Jesus came into the world to teach us how to live and love even in the face of such pain. May we celebrate this birth with the full knowledge and belief that one day through our prayers and our choice of life, we will live in the fullness of peace and joy. A blessed Christmas for all. God bless!

*With best wishes and much love for  
our Lord's Birthday  
while becoming aware of the presence of God...  
Mandy for the National Exco*

