



UCJCI UPDATE

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THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Congregational Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian

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OUR VISION: "Touching lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ."

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PRAY FOR:



- Rev. Dr. Clinton Smith (UWI)
- Rev. Stotrell Lowe,
- Rev. Ashley Smith
- Rev. Dr. Margaret Fowler
- Rev. Astor Carlyle and his family

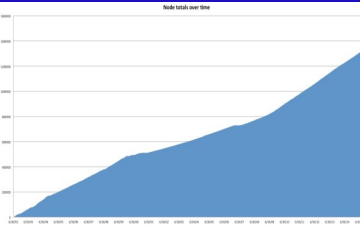
GROWTH AT LAST!

Although there have been earlier signs in previous years, the figures returned this year were significant enough to confirm earlier impressions that across the board, the congregations of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands are reflecting growth in numbers.

Seven years since the launch of the **Renewal and Transformation Programme** in 2009, the celebration of growth at this time according to Change Experts is just about on target. For they say, significant growth change such as that expected of our Renewal and Transformation Programme rarely takes place before 5 years of enactment.

Given our diversity and the fact that 2009 **did not** for many, signify the wholesale adoption of Renewal and Transformation, the experts seem to be right.

At the recent meeting of the Central Mission Council, (CMC) General Secretary, **Rev. Norbert Stephens**, reiterating that the Renewal and Transformation Programme was designed to address the lack of growth in the Church, noted that the available data indicate that numerical



growth occurred in three of the four Regions between 2014 and 2016 with the Western for 2015 and 2016, Northern in 2015 with a marginal decline in 2016. The Southern Region grew year over year from 2014 through 2016.

"We note", said the General Secretary "the decline in the Cayman Region but are confident that the signs are positive for a turnaround in this trend.

What is clear", he said, "is that we are headed in the right direction **as overall marginal growth of 3% was achieved in 2015 over 2014 and 4% in 2016 over 2015.**"

He also identified sustained growth in Camp Ministry. "God continues to favour this Ministry," he said.

"There has been a steady increase in participation over the period 2014 – 2016. "

Significant growth has also been recorded in **Youth Fellowships** per congregation as well as in the total number of youth attending.

We celebrate the fact that of the **195 congregations that make up our Church, there are 117 Youth Fellowships as at 2016, demonstrating an increase of over 11% over 2015.**

In fact, the total Youth Fellowship membership at 2016, was **1795, recording an increase of 4% over 2015**

"Of note also is the increase in both the number of **church schools 177 of 195 congregations (91%) as well as the 17% growth in numbers in 2016 over 2015.**

"We must continue the push towards a church school in each of our congregations within the next Synodical period", the General Secretary said.

The need to continue to plan with growth targets at the congregational level and to resource them from the regional levels remain paramount in order to ensure a continued upward growth trend was a strategy going forward, he said.

Rev. Stephens was careful to observe that it bears repeating that church growth is the result of deliberate and concerted effort of the whole community of faith.

Continued over-page.

CWM AT FORTY. PHOTO STORY



70:

Rev. Clement Reid

- April 9.

Rev. Alton Clarke

- April 11.

GROWTH!!

"When we pursue the vision of a needs-meeting church, through deliberate discipleship evidenced through a commitment to prayer and discernment, faithful proclamation and embodiment of the Word, our passion to care for and advocate for one another and for those on the margins of life, we will continue to experience and sustain the growth trend of our congregations.

We celebrate the RDGs and their teams, Ministers and Lay Pastors in all the Regions" said the General Secretary. "They have pushed forward with the Renewal agenda despite setback and pushbacks and we are proud and grateful for their leadership, dedication and commitment to the cause of Christ." - Not willing for us as a Church to rest on our laurels of success, as it were, the General Secretary, called the Church to further action.

"I wish to reiterate that we should encourage the planting of at least one (1) congregation per year and have each planting recognized at the annual Synodical gathering (Convocation/Synod) as a tangible sign of our commitment to renewal and growth", he challenged.



ABOVE: UCJCI General Secretary, Rev. Norbert Stephens (Centre Left) and Guyana Congregational Union, General Secretary, Rev. Valeska Austin (Right) cut the CWM 40th Anniversary cake at centre.

BELOW: Rev. Kevin (Nana-Moses Calbert and drummers demonstrate alternate worship genres.



TIM participants, Guyana's Trishtanna De Cunah and Jamaica's Roy Mc. Gregor, recall experiences of TIM, in the South Pacific.

Send comments and news about your congregation to ucjiupdate@gmail.com