



UCJCI UPDATE

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

THE UNITED CHURCH
IN JAMAICA AND THE
CAYMAN ISLANDS

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Presbyterian

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

SYNODICAL THEME:
"Renewal and Transfor-
mation: Discipleship for
Life"

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PRAY FOR:



*Rev. Millard Edwards, who is ill.

*Rev. Raymond and Mrs. Ruth Coke, Rev. Godfrey and Mrs. Lynette Meghoo on the passing of Mrs. Mary Mangaroo, sister to Ruth and Lynette.

*The family of Rev. Keith Gordon, who has passed on.

DEALING WITH DOUBTS AND FEARS

“My sisters and brothers, I think of all that is going on around us, locally and globally; the increased rates of COVID-19 infections and related deaths here in Jamaica; the implications for our health sector; the new restrictions as we try to minimise the spread of the virus; the negative impact the crisis is having on life in community and our economy.

On the global scene, there are similar realities, to include storms and hurricanes, flooding and the casualties as a result. These are enough to cause doubts and fears.

Maybe right now you are faced with doubt; feeling anxious and afraid. And so, I would like to share with us some thoughts on how to deal with doubts and fears.

Consider **St. John 20:19-23**. This is one of the stories of Jesus appearing to

His disciples after the resurrection.

When circumstances challenge our sense of well-being, our safety and our security, we often experience doubt and fear. Doubt and fear can imprison us, if we allow them to. They can make us feel impotent; they can paralyse us, robbing us of hope and the willpower to do anything to change the situation. We can become so doubtful and fearful, that we miss the great and good news that is happening around us. We can miss the stories of hope, transformation and triumph that are taking place around us.

As people of faith, and in fact, people of **no** faith, there are some lessons to be learnt in how to deal in with **Doubts and Fears**. These lessons can be gleaned from this post-resurrection narrative in John's Gospel.

One lesson is that we should **Acknowledge our Doubts and Fears**.

Let us not try to pretend away our doubts and fears, as if they are not real. According to John's Gospel, the disciples were locked away in fear of the Jews. They had 'quarantined' themselves from the enemy. They were not prepared to venture out because they were very much conscious of the brutality that Jesus, their leader, had suffered. And if wicked people could do what they did to a righteous man like Jesus, what would they not do to His disciples?

Was it that the disciples did not have enough faith why they hid themselves or 'quarantined' themselves away from the enemy, or were they just using the common sense that God gave to them?

(Continued on Page 2)



CELEBRATIONS!



70:

Mr. Alja Dias
September 24

UCJCI VALUES

In seeking to live out our calling, we particularly value and are committed to:

Discipleship and Holiness:

The intentional and relational development of believers to become mature followers of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:2, Colossians 3:1-17).

“Goodness can endure a few moments; *Holiness* is life-defining.”

Ravi Zacharias

www.ravizacharias.com

MAKING
DISCIPLES
Being
DISCIPLES

Dealing with Doubts and Fears

(Continued from Page 1)

They were Jesus’ disciples. They had first-hand knowledge and experience of being with Jesus. They had witnessed, with their own eyes, the power of God being demonstrated, yet fear gripped them when they thought of their vulnerability, their own mortality; what was possible by the angry, bloodthirsty Jews; that they could be murdered, too, as in the case of Jesus. So, ‘dem tek weh’ themselves. They huddled together as they supported each other and ensured they were in a safe place. They recognised and acknowledged their humanity; their fear and vulnerability. It’s okay to feel afraid. It’s okay to acknowledge it; to come to grips with it; to face it.

Secondly, **Access Reliable and Uplifting Information.** The worst thing you could ever do when you are faced with doubt and fear is to feed your mind and spirit with information that is not credible or trustworthy. Look at what happened in the case of the disciples. They were locked away (door and windows bolted), but Jesus appeared in their midst. And less they were mistaken, less they wondered who He was, He enabled them to access reliable and uplifting information about what was happening by speaking some familiar and energizing words to them: *“Peace be with you”*, and by showing them a familiar sight - His pierced hands and side.

Thoughts of fear and doubt had been eradicated by new, reliable and uplifting information that had come to the fore. *“Our Leader, our Teacher, our Saviour is no longer dead. He is risen. He is alive.”* This was authentic, powerful and transformational information. They accessed information that liberated their minds and spirit. We are told in the text that they were overjoyed when they saw and recognized the Lord. Sisters and brothers, when we are bombarded by **doubts and fears**, let us make sure that we feed our minds and spirits with information which uplifts and motivates us; that which gives us hope; that which puts victory in front of us to be grasped or taken hold of.

Thirdly, **Anchor Your Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.** The disciples were locked away from the Jews, but not away from Jesus. Jesus knew what was going on in them – the fear, the doubt, the depression, the hopelessness. It was apparent that the Jews did not know where they were, but Jesus found them. Even if the Jews had found their location, it would have been a challenge for them to get near the disciples because they were locked away. Though locked away, Jesus entered their midst; seemingly without the need for a door or window to be opened because He is almighty, all powerful; He transcends matter, time, space and human circumstances.

They were now empowered. Jesus said to them, *“As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.”* He breathed on them and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”* The ‘quarantined’ disciples now had their freedom again and they were more powerful than they had ever been.

Sisters and brothers, these days are challenging. They may cause us doubts, anxiety and fear. If that is the case, don’t be afraid to share those thoughts and feelings with someone who has the ability to understand. Feed your mind and spirit with information that can uplift and empower you. Positive thoughts can be very powerful and transformational. Remember, remain anchored in Jesus – in time He will calm the sea and grant you victory.”

- Contributed by Rev. Gary Harriott, Minister of the Bryce Charge of United Churches

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

LEADERSHIP CORNER

Good Leaders in the Middle Make Better Leaders at the Top

In places where the top leaders try to keep everyone else down, the overall leadership is usually pretty poor. Why? Because when all the power is at the top and there are no leaders in the middle to help them, the top leaders cannot lead very effectively. Good leaders anywhere in an organization make better leaders at the top—and make for a much better organization overall.

EVERY TIME YOU ADD A GOOD LEADER, YOU GET A BETTER TEAM. Good leaders maximize the performance of those on their team. They set direction. They inspire their people and help them work together. They get results. This is easy to see in sports where the only thing that changes on a team is the coach. When a better leader comes in, the same players often perform at a much higher level than they did before.

The same thing happens in any kind of organization. When a strong leader takes over a sales team, their performance goes up. When a good manager takes over at a restaurant, the operation runs more smoothly. When a better foreman runs the crew, the people get more done.

If you were to look at your entire organization, you would be able to locate the quality leaders even before you met them. All you would have to do is look for the teams with consistently high results. That is where the good leaders are.

EVERY TIME YOU ADD A

GOOD LEADER, ALL THE LEADERS IN THE ORGANIZATION GET BETTER. I thought it was so interesting when Tiger Woods moved up from the amateur ranks to become a professional golfer. He was so good that the rest of the field looked weak. He won his first Master's Tournament at Augusta by a huge margin, and afterward he said he didn't even have his "A" game all the days he played. Many people feared that Woods would so dominate the game that nobody would ever be able to beat him.

But a funny thing happened after Woods had played for a few years. Everyone else's game went to another level. Why? Because strength brings out strength. The book of Proverbs says, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man (woman) sharpens another."*

When a good leader joins the team, it makes the other leaders take notice. Good leaders bring out the best, not only in their followers but also in other leaders. Good leaders raise the bar when it comes to performance and teamwork, and this often challenges other leaders in the organization to improve.

GOOD LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE ADD VALUE TO THE LEADERS ABOVE THEM. Leaders in the middle of an organization are closer to the people in the trenches than are the leaders on top. As a result, they know more about what's go-

ing on. They understand the people who are doing the work and the issues they face. They also have greater influence at those lower levels than the top leaders.

When there are no good leaders in the middle of an organization, then everyone and everything in the organization waits on the top leaders. On the other hand, when good leaders in the middle use their influence and commitment to assist the top leaders, they "stretch" the top leaders' influence beyond their reach. As a result, the top leaders are able to do more than they would ever be able to do on their own.

GOOD LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE RELEASE TOP LEADERS TO FOCUS ON THEIR PRIORITIES. There is no greater frustration for senior leaders than operating at a level below their own, because leaders in the middle need continual hand holding. If a leader has to do that, the organization ends up paying high-level dollars to solve low-end problems.

For this reason, the leaders at the top can only be as good as the middle leaders working for them. When you perform with excellence in the middle, you free up your leaders to perform with excellence above you.

Source: *"The 360-Degree Leader"* by John C. Maxwell



COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS FEATURE

UCJCI'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Individual Prayer:
Every Wednesday
from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

(2 Timothy 1:7)

UCJCI'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

POINTS FOR PRAYER

- * A stop to the spread of the disease.
- * Healing for those who are infected with the disease.
- * Strength, comfort and peace for the loved ones of persons who have died from the disease.
- * Encouragement for the children who are confused and fearful during this time.
- * That persons will draw closer to God, and families draw closer to each other, during this time.
- * That all persons will take this matter seriously, and responsibly take the necessary precautions.
- * Support for our healthcare systems and workers who are on the frontlines.
- * Safety of all elderly persons, those with co-morbidities and our tourism workers.
- * Provision for the needy, those in quarantine and those who have lost, or will lose, their jobs.
- * Our local and world economies.



UCJCI FAMILY AD CORNER

WORD FOR TODAY



RESTARTING SOON!

*

Training for Lay Leaders
through the United Church in
Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Lay Training Institute

*An empowering Christ-centred leader, producing a transformed
Christ-centred church.*

**We can handle
these difficult times,
we're all in this
together!**