



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

November 11, 2020

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 45



Pray with me!

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council surrounds the Reverend Donovan Myers with our prayers and support at this difficult time. We pray for healing. We offer to his family our love and support and continue to pray for God's faithful presence with them and with the John Gray Memorial Congregation.

"Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion;
therefore, I will wait for him."

Lamentations 3:22-24

Encourage One Another

by Otto Menko

Please read Act 27

The weather was promising. The merchant ship was gently rocking on the waves in the harbor located on the west shore of Crete. It was one of the larger vessels that regularly traversed the sea between Rome and the eastern Mediterranean, making a handsome profit for her owner. Presently it was loaded with grain destined for Rome and merchandise to be traded in ports on its way. But it also carried another 'kind' of cargo, prisoners, to be delivered to their fate: prison, execution or slavery. The apostle Paul was among this ragtag group of convicts. They were overseen by Julius, a Roman centurion of the Imperial Regiment and a small cohort of soldiers under his command. Julius paid special attention to Paul, for he was not considered a 'common criminal'; he was supposed to be tried in the presence of the Emperor himself.

The season for safe sailing has come to an end that year, but despite Paul's warning words the centurion, the ship's owner, and the harbor pilot all agreed to pull up anchor and journey onward. For a few hours, everything was fine, then all of a sudden hurricane-force winds descended on them from behind and they found themselves in the midst of a major, life-threatening storm. For two long weeks, the vessel was at the mercy of the elements, and all aboard prepared for the worst. ("...we finally gave up all hope of being saved" v20).

Amid all the chaos, desperation, and hopelessness one steady, encouraging voice kept them going, that of Paul's. He not only implored them not to give up but also reasoned with them and provided invaluable suggestions regarding how to handle the upcoming challenges. This experience was tough on all of them, and although the ship and its merchandise were lost, all on board were saved to see another day.

This story is full of a number of important lessons worth considering, of which I wish to highlight only one, and that is the importance of **encouragement**. It is considered a truism that the 'storms of life' are inevitable and that we all must face them. The mere fact of this obvious truth is deeply troubling. For one thing, there is no way of escaping them. Another is that they come in many shape and form, and finally, they may build and advance slowly, or strike unexpectedly. Nevertheless, the common denominators of our response to them is that of fear and worry.

We should not find these reactions strange or unnatural. Fear is a universal response of every living thing in the face of danger. Fear enables the flight or fight response for survival. Worry, on the other hand, is uniquely human. Worry/anxiety is like an ever-increasing ocean-wave that is growing higher and more menacing, or like bondage that becomes tighter the more, we try to escape from it. It is as if our thoughts and emotions are conspiring against us, mutually reinforcing each other as we grapple with our experience. This often leads to, among other things, feelings of hopelessness, despondency, and even questioning our faith, and God's goodness.

I don't believe for a moment that Paul was unfazed in the midst of that calamity or that he faced that roaring monster of a storm with the stoic, 'matter of fact' attitude of an imaginary mythical hero. He was human after all, just like us. That is why the angel begins God's message by telling him, "Do not be afraid". Paul found a redeeming strength in God's reassuring words and he held onto them all through the days and nights that followed. Not only that, but he also became the source of encouragement for those who had already given up all hope.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 14. (Saturday)

YLNE Executive meeting via Zoom – 10:00am

November 15. (Sunday) 24th Sunday after Pentecost



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

November 15, 2020
Rev. Otto Menko

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

With his words, demeanor, attitude, and actions he instilled courage, perseverance, confidence, and hope in those around him. His faith in the reliability of God's word was firmer than the solid ground they all wished to have under their unsteady feet. Paul very accurately assessed the situation and understood how those around him felt and what they were thinking. His encouragement was not superficial, condescending, or trivial. It sprung from a strong conviction clothed in empathy and it altered their attitude, behavior, and actions and ultimately the outcome of their ordeal. His faith inspired them to surmount their limitations, to be courageous in the face of danger, and to have hope for tomorrow. In verse 37 we read, that "They were all encouraged...".

This story is about you and me and about the importance of receiving as well as passing encouragement on to others around us. It is not only about the personal or shared 'storms' of our lives, but also about any situation or circumstance when one becomes discouraged, loses hope, and might be ready to 'give up'. Certainly, we can think of someone even at this moment who needs some form of encouragement that is not 'offhand' or shallow, but born out of genuine empathy by understanding their situation, what they struggle with, how they feel and think, and is expressed in a way –by words and/or practical help- that is fitting to the situation. Let us then, -as Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:11 "...**encourage one another, and build each other up**...".

Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you!
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you!



God will take care of you,
Through every day o'er all the way;
He will take care of you;
God will take care of you!

(songwriter: Civilla Durfee Martin)

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
THANKSGIVING
SERVICE**

November 29, 2020 6:00pm
East End United Church

Guest preacher Rev. Mary Graham
Theme: **In Everything Give Thanks!**

Please make every effort to attend this special service. Please confirm/apologize so that we can organize transportation. A special offering will be taken for the Savannah United Women's Fellowship in support of The Francis Bodden Girl's home.

UCJCI'S RESPONSE TO 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 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 and those with co-morbidities.
- * Provision for the needy and those who have lost, or will lose, their jobs.
- * Our local and world economies.

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947 1963 Email: dgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky