



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

January 13, 2021

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2

UCJCI 42nd SYNOD THEME 2021 – Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE (Health, Opportunity, Peace, Evangelism)

What About the Body?

By Mr. Michael Bowerman

Have you ever wondered why the taking of another's life is considered the most serious crime a person can commit? Why is it that we do all in our power to prevent people from dying, or seek to prolong the life of an elderly person as long as possible? Why are millions – probably billions – of dollars spent on developing drugs to prevent illnesses which might lead to premature deaths? And, very relevant, why have there been such frantic efforts to develop a vaccine to counter the current Coronavirus pandemic?

The answer to all these is a simple one: we believe human life matters. There is an instinct within us which wants to prolong it as long as possible, even though we know that “it is appointed unto man once to die,” as the Bible tells us – in the words of the New International Version, “People are **destined** to die...” The Psalmist suggests a person's “*days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures...*” (Psalm 90:10). That being said, we believe human life has value.

We as Christians believe in the sanctity of human life, based on the statement made in Genesis 1:26-27,

“God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and overall the creatures that move along the ground.’ 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them...”

David in Psalm 8 gives further emphasis to this. As he looks at God's mighty creation, he then looks at himself as a human being, asking God a question and then answering it:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?”

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:

7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,

8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.”

One of the confirming facts as to how important human life is, is the fact that God in the person of Jesus chose a human body in which to live on earth. “*The Word (that is, God) became flesh and dwelt among us,*” John tells us. Or, as the New Living Translation puts it, “*...the Word became human and made his home among us.*” The writer to the Hebrews uses the same passage in Psalm 8, relating it specifically to Jesus. The man created “*a little lower than the angels,*” he says, was Jesus! God did not come as another creature but as a man, indwelling a human body.

There is therefore something different, special - indeed, unique - about human life and the human body which houses it. We are not just another creature. We are rather something made in God's image and we are the crown of his creation.

So we need what I call a ‘theology of the body’. This simply means we need to understand how God views the body, and especially how God sees the bodies of those of us who are Christians. The Apostle Paul provides us some helpful teaching when he sought to address the Corinthian Church's misunderstanding and misuse of their bodies. In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 he writes,

“I have the right to do anything,’ you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 You say, ‘Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.’ The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”

We do not have time to unpack this passage, but I want to suggest a few things as to how and why we should treat our

bodies correctly – how and why, in Paul’s last statement, we “*honor God with (our) bodies.*”

Over church history, there have been two extreme emphases. Interestingly, they both emerged from an early Christian heresy called Gnosticism which taught that there is a separation of the body and soul and that the former is temporary and evil and the latter spiritual and alone important. There were, therefore, those on the one hand who said it didn’t matter what they did with their bodies, and could and did - indulge them without any bad conscience. On the other side, there were those who treated them harshly, keeping them ‘under heavy manners’ in order to refine the soul. The early monastic system was a good example of the latter.

As Christians, we seek a middle path, recognizing that our bodies are given us by God, and are therefore his to be treated properly and used for his purpose. We must “*honor God*” with them. There are therefore ways to misuse, even abuse them. Paul is hinting at some in this passage, particularly sexual misuse. Scripture is clear throughout, that sexual activity is not just a physical activity but must be exclusively the ‘one flesh’ expression of a man and a woman within marriage. Sex outside marriage is a misuse of the body.

However, there are many other ways we can misuse or abuse the body. Overeating or eating the wrong things is an example to this, as is getting drunk. Christians tend to condemn the latter but cast a blind eye at the former! Putting anything into our bodies, such as illicit drugs or nicotine, is abusing them and dishonors the Lord.

On the other side, there are those Christians who treat the body as though it is the most important thing in life. They are consumed with good looks, with fitness, and health. So much of society is obsessed to the extent that billions of dollars are spent in the beauty and fashion industry and on ensuring health and fitness.

Again, we need balance. We need to care for our bodies and seek to be healthy. This often requires us to be disciplined with our diet and to exercise and such. However, we need to recognize the vulnerability of the human body and our mortality, and that these bodies inevitably age and despite all our best efforts and money, they **will** pass. Scripture does not discount or ignore the reality of ill-health, and God is obviously aware and sympathetic to our physical weaknesses. John in 3rd John 2 was praying that his friend Gaius would enjoy good health, and James told his readers to call the elders of the church if they were sick. Paul advised Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach’s sake. So, we do pray for one another’s health, and we do go to the doctor when we are unwell, and we do seek to prevent in any way we can, someone dying prematurely.

Further, God wants us to enjoy our bodies. That is why, for example, food tastes good and why there are so many pleasurable sensations we can enjoy – different for different people.

Our bodies **are** important. They are important to God. Paul is making a further point about those that belong to Christian

believers: “*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?*” (v. 15), he asks the Corinthians. He continues with another question:

*“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price.”*

God has chosen to make our bodies part of him and, even more amazingly, to indwell them by his Holy Spirit as his temples. We have been bought with a price – the death of Jesus on the cross. These facts alone should direct us in treating and using our bodies in a way that honors God.

However, there is a further point I wish to make. Other people’s lives matter, too. We have been hearing a lot about “black lives matter” – and they do. So do all lives, as with the children’s chorus: “Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight.” If we believe in the sanctity and value of human life, we have to be opposed to abortion. But being pro-life is not just

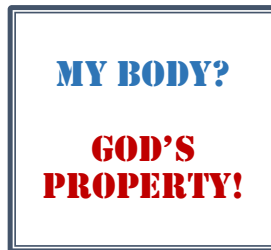
about unborn human beings. Paul Borthwick makes the point in his new book, *Mission 3:16*, that in using that expression he is not restricting this to pro-embryo but “to include protecting the God-created value of... the poor, the immigrant (and) the refugee.”

Human identity is found in the fact that God made mankind in His own image. The Christian identity is found in that, having been bought with a price, we have become members of Christ and we do not belong to ourselves. We belong to him. We are here to serve and honor him. In order to do this, God has placed within us his Spirit to enable us to be the people he wants us to be and do those things he wants us to do – in our bodies. Yes, they have their limitations and weaknesses, but such as we have, we are to live within them for him, as long as he provides us breath. As Paul told the Romans in 12:1, we are “*to offer (our) bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is (our) true and proper worship.*”

Scripture tells us that there is coming a time when God will provide us with new bodies, at His Coming, and at our resurrection. Paul in 1 Corinthians describes it this way:

*“Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. **43** Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. **44** They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies...” (15:42-44 NLT).*

Some of us struggle with our bodies, especially those of us who are aging. But we who are Christians have a wonderful hope and promise: we are going to get new and infinitely better ones one day which will neither pain nor age! On this, we set our sights! Meantime, we must seek to honor God with the bodies he has given us.



2020 PROUD OF THEM Honoree



Savannah United Church is pleased to announce that Jelani Hanson, Head Boy of John Gray High School (JGHS), was recently named a PROUD OF THEM Honoree: Academics and Community Service.

Academically ahead at age 14, Jelani already has attained eight CSEC subjects (7 grade ones, and 1 grade 2) and has enthusiastically participated in many competitions such as: National Spelling Bee, Conyers Debating Tournament, JGHS Reading Challenge, NCF, Rotary Club Short Story Competition; and he is the winner of the 2020 Poetry Contest.

Jelani is a member of our Church and serves on the Media Team and as a Leader in our Youth Group. He is also an avid member and Treasurer of the JGHS Optimist Club; member of the Alex Panton Foundation; a Big Brother, Big Sister Peer Mentor; Pupil Leadership Team Representative; President of the Debating Club; vibrant member of the Alpha LEO Club at JGHS and served as President of Leos (2018-2020). He selflessly gives of his time and energy to both service and leadership.



Lay Leadership Training Program

REMINDER

All newly elected and serving Elders who have not been trained previously, are expected to participate in Module 1 of the Lay Leadership Training Program which starts on **February 13, 2021**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 16. (Saturday)

Women's Fellowship Council meeting - 10:00 am
(Council Office)
YLNE AGM - 2:00 pm at PYC

January 17. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

January 18. (Monday)

Council Executive meeting - 5:30pm via Zoom

January 20. (Wednesday)

CIRMC Finance Workshop - 5:30pm Council office

January 23. (Saturday)

Council meeting - 9:00am Elmslie Hall

January 24. (Sunday) 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Women's Fellowship Sunday, also the beginning of Women's Fellowship Week



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

January 17, 2021
Mr. Michael Bowerman

Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Body, mind and spirit are interconnected, but for some reason we tend to treat them as separate.

God looks at the whole person and not only the soul. Unfortunately, that goes against how we live.

Our physical health, taking proper care of our body is a spiritual issue. It is as important as taking care of our soul. A clean and healthy lifestyle is as much as God's will for us as our salvation and sanctification.

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