



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

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

GOD IS LOVE

By Rev. Godfrey Meghoo

Please read 1 John 4:7-12

The writer of 1 John said, “**God is love**”. John was one of the twelve disciples. He was the same John who in the Gospel bearing his name referred to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” (John 13:23). In two other passages he did the same, avoiding mentioning his name. But why? Maybe he felt unworthy because of his past. Would we find it surprising that Jesus loves us, despite everything else in our life?

Peter also felt ashamed of himself that he had denied knowing Jesus in the hour of threatening danger. On the very night when the Lord was betrayed by Judas, Peter strongly said, “*I don’t know the man!*” (Matthew 26:72) He went on to curse and to swear to prove his point. No wonder when Jesus conquered death and rose again, Peter was asked by Him, “*Simon son of John, do you love me?*” (John 21:16) Jesus asked Peter that question three times, not only because Peter had denied Him three times, but rather because He was searching Peter’s soul to find out what kind of feelings he had for Him. Peter kept on answering Jesus, “*Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.*” (John 21:17)

In this passage Jesus was using the word **agape** for ‘love’, the highest and most miraculous type of love, while Peter was answering by using the word **philia**, translated as ‘friendship love’. So even after the Resurrection, Peter was not sure that his devotion to God was the highest. He still had prejudices against Gentiles, considering them common and unclean. Yet God forgave Peter and restored him to the joy of salvation, he was forgiven.

Eventually, Peter was one of those who followed in the Lord’s footsteps and was crucified. According to traditional accounts he admitted that he was not worthy to be crucified in the way Jesus was. So he was crucified upside-down. As Peter showed in his life and death, it is never too late to demonstrate our love of Christ. The love of Christ compels us. We may think we have disappointed the Lord in our life. But the Lord is still waiting.

We can say to the Lord, “**Just as I am, and waiting not, to rid my soul of one dark blot, to Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot—O Lamb of God I come.**”

The Apostle Paul in his letter written to the believers in Corinth spoke about **agape** love (1 Corinthians 13). This well known passage has often been used at wedding ceremonies. “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love (**agape**), I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (v1), in other words, ‘I am only making a big noise’. This is saying that although marital love is full of pleasure in its physical and emotional enjoyment, it can be fully enriched and enhanced by that special divine love (**agape**) which comes from God alone. What a joy it is when husband and wife care for each other, as it is voiced in the traditional marriage vow, ‘**For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.**’



I know a couple who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. A prayer was offered for them, as they prepared to share that special ‘kiss’ again.

“Oh, Spirit of the Father, breather on them from above
So mighty in Thy pureness, So tender in Thy love;
That, guarded by Thy presence, from sin and strife kept free;
Their lives may own Thy guidance; their hearts be ruled by Thee.

Except Thou build it, Father, the house is built in vain;
Except Thou, savior, bless it, the joy will turn to pain,
But naught can break the union of hearts in Thee made one,
And love Thy Spirit Hallows Is endless love begun.”
(John Ellerton).

In further reference to family, marriage and the upbringing of children the Bible firmly says, “*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*” (Proverbs 22:6). Children need the emotional support of both a father and a mother. “*When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the Lord will take care of me*” (Psalm 27:10). The Church and some other social agencies have contributed much in caring for children who are unfortunately forsaken.

Edith Clarke wrote the book called: ‘My Mother Who Fathered Me’ indicating that many good women, grandmothers, aunts and others have lovingly stepped in to show tender love for such

children. If we are disciples of Jesus, we surely know what James said about religion, *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”* (James 1:27). It has been said that every child needs at least five persons who care for a child. Children not only want to be assured that **their parents love them**, but they also want to **see that their parents love one another**. This will give children a greater sense of security and self-worth for the future.

Children who feel and experience such care and love are more likely to do well in school, to grow up as emotionally stable young adults, as well as to have happy families themselves. They will be more likely to understand what it means to call God **‘Our Father’**.

Someone once asked Jesus, *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”* (Matthew 22:36). To that man it seemed that Jesus’ teachings were different from the Old Testament’s Ten Commandments. Jesus answered giving the gist of the commandments by saying, *“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”* The emphasis in His answer is based on **LOVE**. But how can we love such a way? *“We love because he first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19) *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16) **Let us then allow God’s love (agape) to fill us and to overflow!**

The Door Into Lent

As part of the Church’s annual liturgical journey, next week we will transition from the **Season of Epiphany** into the **Season of Lent**. During the six weeks (and five Sundays) of Lent we engage in a meaningful spiritual preparation for **Easter**, the greatest Feast of the holy days in the Christian calendar.

The very first step of this preparation, **Ash Wednesday**, sets the tone for our spiritual journey to the cross and to the empty tomb of our Lord. The symbolic meaning of ashes indicating mourning and sadness, is a stark expression of our sinful nature. It is also a solemn reminder of our mortality and desperate need to find forgiveness through repentance and reconciliation with God. On our own we are hopeless, but through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ there is the promise of cleansing and of new life that extends beyond the grave! Let us then journey on in faith, hope, and love!

As you make your way through these special 40 days of Lent, consider tapping into the limitless riches of fasting, in whatever form, length, and intensity you choose.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 12. (Friday)
Love Festival (carnival games, food and much more) – 7:00 pm Elmslie Memorial Church - Elmslie hall/parking lot


February 13. (Saturday)
Lay Leaders Training Certificate Course 1 – 9:00 am Council office

February 14. (Sunday) 6th Sunday after Epiphany

February 17. (Wednesday)
CIRMC Ash Wednesday Gathering– 7:30-9:45 am – Savannah United Church

February 21. (Sunday) 1st Sunday of Lent

February 20. (Saturday)
Council Executive Retreat– 9:00-12:30 pm – Governor’s Square Conference Room


CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

Ash Wednesday Gathering

February 17, 2021
7:30 – 9:45 am

Location: Savannah United Church

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 (Health, Opportunity, Peace, Evangelism)

WORSHIP THE LORD
 Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council
 Ministry of 21st Century Media Cayman

on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am

February 14, 2021
 Rev. Godfrey Meghoo

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: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
 Website: unitedchurch.org.ky