



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

## WEEKLY UPDATE

June 02, 2021

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

### United in Purpose

By Mr. Noel Wallace  
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Please read Acts 4:32-34

We are in the season of Pentecost when we commemorate and celebrate the birth of the Church as recorded in the book of Acts in the Bible. Following Jesus' instructions, some 120 disciples remained in Jerusalem, and while they were gathered together in the Upper Room, the Holy Spirit fell on each of them. And why 120? In the bible days, this number was required to form a new community. So what was God saying to us? God was doing a 'new thing'. The Church came into being; a Church that would later be comprised of people from all nations, tribes, tongues, and cultures. As the Church spread in numbers and geographical location, the Holy Spirit's presence was not only evident in the upper room but also in the living rooms as Christians met in their homes for worship and fellowship.

So as we examine this topic: **United in Purpose**, what can we glean from the early Church, that quickly mushroomed in numbers and had to adjust and accommodate people groups from various cultures who came to faith in Christ? How did they maintain a unity of purpose?

Nothing precedes purpose. The starting point for every church should be the question, "Why do we exist?" Until we know what our church exists for, we will have no foundation, no motivation, no direction, and no unity.

The early Church knew why they existed. And they were unified about that purpose.

*32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. (Acts 4: 32-34a).*

Jesus had enlisted these followers not to a life of leisure, but to a life of service. While each had a different task they all had the same calling: to fulfill the Great Commission in their generation. They had one leader - Jesus, one purpose - to communicate the gospel to all people. These early disciples

probably did more for the spread of Christianity than any generation of followers since. What was their secret? **Unity!**

All the believers shared in this unity. Not just the Apostles. Not just the leaders. **All** the believers were unified. There was fundamental solidarity of love and purpose. To be *one in heart and mind* is to be unified in every fiber of their being. Three things about this unity I want to lift up.

#### **1. They were Family in Relationship**

They shared the same spiritual father - God Almighty. They shared a spiritual birth - they were born again into the family of God. A song by the Gaithers comes to mind: *"I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God, I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood! Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod; for I'm part of the family, the family of God."*

#### **2. They were Friends in Fellowship**

They shared their lives and their possessions with one another. Fellowship went beyond a kind word or a pat on the back. They gave priority to meeting the physical and practical needs that were evident in the community. Michael W. Smith's song *"Friends are friends forever if the Lord is the Lord of them"* brings out this point.

#### **3. They were Followers of Christ in Partnership**

These men and women shared an enterprise together. They did not assemble merely for family gatherings, or for making sure their physical needs were met. They came together in order to attain an objective. These men and women were partners in reaching the world for Christ. They linked arms not just for their convenience and their comfort but to reach out to the lost.

The story is told of a little girl who was lost in an open field with grass and weeds waist-high. Her family searched frantically and called friends and neighbours to help. They went in all different directions searching for her but to no avail. Finally, just before nightfall, someone suggested, "Let's join hands and walk together up and down the field." Because of their linking arms, the girl was found.

The members of a church are a group of people from various backgrounds with different interests and different perspectives who have been called together for a purpose. That purpose is to cooperate in reaching out beyond our walls so others can know the love of Jesus Christ. We are in the life-saving business. That endeavor is accomplished best when we understand that we are a family of friends in partnership with each other.





In this season of Pentecost, we have reminded ourselves of the core purpose of the Church, the proclamation of the Gospel of the grace of God. We've noticed the core ministries of the early Church; the teaching of the Word and practice of prayer, the fellowship of believers in families/homes,

the communion, and sharing of possessions to assist those in need, to live together in community. We've highlighted three reasons for the Church's unity: (1) They were Family in Relationship; (2) They were Friends in Fellowship, and (3) They were Followers of Christ in Partnership.

There is another season that our world is in, so to speak, that is the season of the **Covid-19 Pandemic**. Many countries face new waves of the virus, new strains of the virus, and terms such as lockdown, travel restrictions, Covid protocols have become the norm.

During the height of the lockdown in 2020, churches had to quickly revise the way we 'do Church'. We had to engage in online platforms for streaming our worship services, Bible studies, and prayer meetings, also committee/planning meetings. During the stay home campaign, we had to encourage families to observe the Sacrament of Holy Communion in their homes, to have family prayers, and strengthen the family altar. Our Synod office has since provided House Worship materials for us to have church in our homes, and they still provide to this day. During this period, we also engaged in providing relief for the needy. Lots of families experienced difficulties finding meals and basic necessities. Many churches and civic organizations provided warm meals daily to families in need.

Why am I reminiscing on the Covid-19 experience anyway? Many of us were so happy to see January 1, 2021, with the hope that 2020 will never repeat. Experience can be a hard schoolmaster so we must learn the lessons and learn them well. Let me juxtapose Pentecost with the Pandemic for a moment.

Despite the difficulties and trauma that the Covid-19 lockdown brought, wouldn't you agree that it gave us time for rest, reflection, and relaxation? To focus on the more important things in life? Wouldn't you agree that we had the opportunity to spend 'home' time with family; for in our busy world, we sometimes glimpse our family members in the mornings and nights and catch up mostly on weekends. The lockdown gave us the opportunity for bonding. How well we utilized the opportunity is another matter and another sermon.

And what positives did the lockdown bring to the Church? Did it not cause us to focus on our core mission? Did we not concentrate on our main ministries when only a skeleton staff and limited numbers were allowed to gather?

So now that in our beloved Cayman Islands, we are enjoying the removal of restrictions and a return to some degree of normalcy, are we going to be distracted from or become derailed in doing the core mission of the church? Are we still reaching out to others or have we become inward-looking once more? In less than a year since the lockdown, have our numbers attending worship services and prayer meetings fallen? Have

our family time and family prayers ceased? Are we still looking out and providing relief for needy families in our community?

May I ask where are those persons who started attending church during the rough times of the pandemic? When situations improved did we 'move on' and left God behind?

May this Pentecost season as well as the pandemic experience call us back to core Christianity. To worship God at all times (in the good and the bad), to fellowship with believers and attend church in person as much as possible (not just when it is convenient), to be faithful in our stewardship and our giving, and to offer relief for the needy among us.



**Let the Church arise and remain steadfast, united in faith, hope, and love; united in purpose. Amen!**

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### **Crisis Preparedness and Response Capability Guidelines for Congregations and Council**

*(continued from last week)*

#### **Part 3. NATIONAL EMERGENCIES – PREPAREDNESS, CAPABILITIES AND RESPONSE**



Secondly, Congregations must be ready to give guidance, oversight and assistance when a national emergency is declared. In all cases this will mean ensuring that guidance and direction given by the appropriate Government agency is followed. In the case of hurricanes, most steps can and should be ready in advance and reviewed before 1st June annually. These must include:

**A.** Each Congregation should have in place a Disaster Preparedness and Business Continuity Plan, that covers the functioning of the church itself, protection of the buildings – including the manse, etc. – the essential records, and the ability to resume the work of the church in the event that the primary location – office and/or sanctuary – should be destroyed. These arrangements must include adequate distribution of the list of members and adherents, to ensure that there should be copies of these available immediately after the event to ensure that all are checked on (see B below). [There is a Council Plan in the Council Manual which may be used as a basis, but many elders will have access to professionally designed plans that can be used as guidance.]

**B.** A Plan of Action covering the Congregation's Minister, Members and Adherents. This should have categorised the individuals, so as to enable us to give priority to those who may need our help the most:

- Age/infirmity
  - i. Any who require critical care where loss of electricity at the hospital(s) may have life threatening implications,

- e.g. those on dialysis. Such persons may need to leave the Island before the onset of an intense hurricane.
- ii. Include ability to turn off utilities, concerns re propane, prescription needs, other physical considerations
- Single parent with minor children
- Extended Family not available
- Know official shelter - or Medical Shelter, if needed?
- No Available Transportation
- Strength of house and availability of resources to make storm-ready
- Ability to obtain (and keep secure) hurricane kit supplies, including water

After identifying the persons under B above who appear to warrant special concern, the Congregation must then seek to sensitively confirm the situation with those persons and establish individual plans of action for each person likely to need special assistance in the event a hurricane watch or warning is issued. These plans will include, as applicable:

- Those who may need to leave the Island (see (i) above); those who will need to be evacuated to an official shelter or other place of safety with members or others; and what kind of help each will need in order to move.
- Those who will need help to secure their homes, and whether or not they will be able to pay for this to be done (i.e. whether they only need a member to organise the work for them, or whether they will need the work actually done by volunteers).
- Lists of volunteers for shuttering houses, transporting evacuees, putting in food and medical supplies, etc.
- List of agencies and groups who are providing emergency services, rebuilding, road clearing, etc., known builders who can be called on to begin making repairs to church properties and properties of members, giving priority to needed living conditions.
- The persons who will be responsible for establishing the list of Members/Adherents who, after the event, are determined as needing specified help and ensuring they receive it.

The Congregation will also want to ensure that all Members/Adherents know that they should establish and keep under review a personal plan for themselves and their families – see appendix for those members who need help with this.

**NB. Please seek to obtain a Hurricane Survival Kit which contains detailed information on what preparations and precautions each of us should undertake and helpful numbers. Please keep handy and follow the advice in that.**

The Congregation should endeavour to implement arrangements to stockpile food, sanitary supplies, wipes, water, etc., to make available to persons in need after the storm if persons have lost their supplies, shops are unable to reopen, etc. Care must be taken in choosing where to keep this stockpile. Volunteers should be ready to make assessments and help distribute such supplies (and the list of these volunteers maintained by the Minister and delegated Elders).

Members and Adherents are also encouraged, depending on their personal circumstances, to volunteer to assist in the

community as far as possible, as Shelter Wardens/Assistants, aid distributors, clean-up crews, rebuilding groups, etc. Often the extent of the work required to be done, which would include that needed by our own Members and Adherents, is of such magnitude and requires such equipment and skills that Members/Adherents may not have these in sufficient supply, and working with Government and other relief agencies, other Church and community groups, may be the most effective way of bringing help to our people and others.

The Synod has also requested each Congregation to create and build up a fund from which disaster recovery assistance can be quickly provided, both locally and internationally. After a badly damaging hurricane, the Congregation should endeavour to financially assist those Members/ Adherents (and others in the community) who have suffered major losses, especially those who are underinsured or those who have restricted incomes, etc.

As soon as possible after the emergency situation has been lifted, Members/Adherents should begin checking on each other as the situation dictates – i.e. travel may be the only form of communicating and that may be restricted. And as soon as possible again, the Minister and Elders should begin meeting to ensure coordination of the verification of the safety and situation of each Member/Adherent. Therefore, other Members who have made contact with persons in the Congregation should try to report in to the Minister/an Elder the situations that they have verified, in order to expedite the process. The agreed procedure should then be followed for listing the help needed by each Member/Adherent and how this will be provided, who is taking responsibility for whom, etc.

*(to be continued next week)*

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## IN OTHER NEWS



*On Sunday May 23, 2021 (Pentecost Sunday), Rev. Euthman Wray baptized three teens and one pre-teen at Spotts Beach. All four are from the Savannah United Church Sunday School and Youth Ministry.*

## SAV UC Youth Discipleship Pantry Distribution



On Saturday May 8, 2021 the Savannah United Church Youth Discipleship Group took grocery baskets to the Savannah Community for the elderly. The teens were blessed with the opportunity of praying and sharing the love of Christ through giving.



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Members of the South Sound UC gathered for an evening of fellowship and fun on Friday, May 29, 2021 at the Prospect Youth Centre.



In preparation for the 2021 CIRMIC-UCJCI Summer Camps, leaders from our congregations gathered for their first training event on Saturday, May 29, 2021, at the Council Office, Prospect. These camps will be awesome!

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During the Youth Sunday Service held on May 30, 2021, at the William Pouchie Memorial Church, North Side, Ms. Sarena Whittaker was commissioned as Girls' Brigade Officer. She was surrounded by the love and support of fellow GB officers, leaders of the National GB Council and girls of all ages.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 6. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday of Pentecost**  
**Girls' Brigade International Day of Prayer**

**June 12. (Saturday)**  
**Lay Leaders Training Course – via Zoom**

**June 13. (Sunday) 3rd Sunday of Pentecost**



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
 every Sunday at 7:45 am

**June 06, 2021**  
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