



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

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

Impartiality: The Character of God

By Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield

Please read Isaiah 35:4-7a and Psalm 146: 5-10

As the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands continues its focus on **PEACE**, we are provoked by two passages from the lectionary reading which invite us to recognize new ways of understanding creation and the nature of our relationship with the neighbor and the stranger. But more so, we are challenged to understand God's intention for creation, and we are called to discern God's will for how we ought to conduct ourselves as travelers along the journey of life.

God's providential care for creation and God's preferential option for the poor become obvious in the passages. It is evident also that by character and nature God is impartial and has a deep desire that humanity imitates this behavior. In being unbiased, God is able to embrace all and thereby seeks to provide benediction for everyone. Such is the nature of the God we serve.

Both the Psalmist and the writer of Proto-Isaiah point to an understanding of God whose impartiality eliminates disorder, discrimination, marginalization, and deprivation. God's help is available to heal the ailing creation and to help the socially and physically impaired because God is the *'creator of the heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them'*. A peculiar reading of the text does make the call for the inclusion of humanity as a critical part if not the central prong of God's creation. However, whereas creation can be in total obedience to God and God has command over the wind and the rain, humanity's volition tends to cause defiance and disobedience. This attitude of defiance and disobedience to God is lived and manifested not only towards God but also towards fellow human beings. Further, creation groans because of the crippling actions of humanity towards the environment. Both texts invite us to re-examine our approach to creation and each other and for us to cultivate a deep desire for peace.

GOD TRANSFORMED CHAOS TO PEACE IN CREATION

Proto-Isaiah points to God who will come with power to execute retribution and to protect those who need to be rescued. The blind, deaf, lame, and mute will be able to participate fully in society as their ailment will cease. But more so, the harsh areas of nature will be transformed *"Water will gush forth in*

the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow".



(image: ashevillenc.org)

The thorns and thistles(Genesis 3:18) that prevailed in the wilderness, which signified curse and devastation crowded creation with chaos. The attempt seems to have been the reversal of God's proclamation at the end of each day of creation that it was 'good'. Even though God sustains creation, so often the uproar and disturbance would want to suggest the absence of God, however, the Bible is replete with God's restorative nature and power. Hence in the text from Proto-Isaiah, the wilderness gives way to water that quenches the thirsty land, streams are found in the desert, and pools of water in the burning sand. Grass, reeds, and papyrus can now flourish in places previously devastated and destroyed by wild beasts. The harshness and arid conditions are flooded with water divinely provided and transformation occurs.

Wilderness and desert now have the capacity to be fruitful and to provide shade and blessing for many. This transformation points to the fact that falsehood and evil can no longer defeat the goodness God intended for creation. Peace in creation and nature is established by the cathartic power of God. It is God's intention for peace to reign even where there seems to be no capacity or allowance for peace.

GOD TRANSFORMS HUMAN PLIGHT INTO PEACE

God not only created peace in nature but also according to the Psalmist, God has the desire and capacity to transform human plight to peace for those in the underbelly of the society. God proclaimed through the Psalmist that God will save, heal and restore those who are rejected by the structure of society.

Help and hope for the oppressed, hungry, prisoners, the blind, the bowed down, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow can be found in God. Taking care of the most vulnerable in society seems to be the underlying thesis of Psalm 146. The circumstances of their vulnerability seem to beckon God into anger as God speaks of frustrating the way of the 'wicked', which implies that they, the wicked caused or created the stumbling block for those who cannot survive within the social context. God however lauds the 'righteous' and announces love for those who act righteously. God undoubtedly hears the cry of the distressed and the diseased and extends mercy beyond measure. The writer of Lamentation 3: 19 – 26 reminds us:

"I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 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.' The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

PEACE IS OUR MANDATE

By extension, the Church and Christians are challenged to examine how we treat those who are disqualified by the standards of social, political, economic, and religious norms. So often we tend to disassociate ourselves from those who are the 'less' or the 'least' based on barriers which are social constructs. Too many persons are allowed to remain on the outside of acceptance while those who are the standard-bearers announce their preference and prejudice in remarkable ways.

We are called to follow God's attitude as the defender of the poor which was manifest in the incarnational presence of Christ among us – *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

As we live through the pandemic, the issue of refugees, climate change, and the challenges to poorer nations, can we seek God's peace? Yes, we can, but the deeper question is - do we really want God's peace? This statement is made against the background that many who seek to control and dominate find it difficult to release and embrace the way God intended for us to do as human beings. We often fail to see God in Jesus Christ moving through church and community seeking for the ordinary people, those with little or no means, those for whom the doors of opportunity are closed, and those without influence and power. Jesus says, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor"* (Lk 4:18).

Peace then, according to God's activity is the transformation of disorder into order. There are too many situations that exist where it is evident that the peace of God is absent. Such an absence lends itself to the crisis and chaos which can cradle destruction. When God's peace is present, war is mitigated, souls are satisfied, and life is lived to its fullness.



The Cayman Prep and High School received an overall 'Good Report' from the Office of Education Standards in May this year, with the High School being given an 'Excellent Report'.

The Inspectors lauded the school on the following points:

- Students' excellent attainment and progress in English, mathematics, and science in secondary and post-16.

- The Christian ethos across both campuses, the exemplary behavior of students and their positive attitudes to learning.
- Students' excellent knowledge and environmental understanding and their knowledge of Caymanian culture and history.
- The good start children get in Kindergarten and primary, built upon with excellent teaching and learning at secondary and post-16, resulting in well-rounded young people ready to take their place in the world.
- Excellent leadership across the school and the school's strong links with parents and the community.

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands wish to express profound appreciation to the Governors, Administrative leadership and the Staff of the school for the tremendous work being done, the witness of which is borne not only in the results of the inspection but in the excellent external examination results over the years. Truly, the school endeavours to fulfil the motto 'Let Your Light So Shine'.

On Tuesday, August 31, 2021, the Council presented gift baskets to the staff as a way of showing our appreciation for a job well done. A special token was also presented to the Director Ms. Debra McLaughlin.



We extend a warm welcome to the new teachers who joined the staff in this 2021-2022 academic year and we do look forward to the continued excellent work being done at CPHS.

Tribute to Lay Pastor Ormond Williams



The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council wishes to extend profound thanks and appreciation to Lay Pastor Ormond Williams for his sterling leadership as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Cayman Prep and High School. Pastor Williams succeeded Mr Bryan Bothwell MBE as Chair in

September 2013 and after serving for eight years, he tendered his resignation as Chair of the Board of Governors effective July 28, 2021.

Pastor Williams built on the legacy he received and in both 2019 and 2021, the school obtained 'Good Report' from the Office of Education Standards, and this is a testimony to the caliber of the leadership of the Board of Governors, the Administration and the Staff.

Mrs Sheena Thompson, Governor and Deputy Chair has been appointed to act as Chair until a new Chair is retained.

We thank the parents and guardians of the children of CPHS for their continued support and for entrusting our school with their children's education.



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council

175th Anniversary

HOPE IS HERE!

Back to Church
Sept. 12, 2021 Sunday

PLEASE REMEMBER
to prayerfully and actively participate
in this ministry.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 4. (Saturday)

Women's Fellowship AGM – 9:00am – Council office
YLNE Meeting – 2:00pm – Council office

September 5. (Sunday) 15th Sunday of Pentecost

September 12. (Sunday) 16th Sunday of Pentecost

Back to Church Sunday

September 18. (Saturday)

Girls' Brigade Monthly Meeting & AGM – 9:00am – Council office

September 25. (Saturday)

Council Meeting – 9:00am – William Pouchie Memorial

PRAY ♦ PRAY ♦ PRAY

Let us Pray Together

Every Wednesday

12 noon—1:00 pm

- Rev. Garwell Bacchas and family with the passing of his brother, Mike and sister-in-law, Marcia.
- The climbing number of COVID 19 infections in Jamaica.
- Patients, families and workers in the health sector in Jamaica
- Members of staff with relatives affected by COVID 19.
- The people of Haiti and Afghanistan
- Rev. Dr. Norman Francis in hospital



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

September 5, 2021
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield

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@cicucici.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky