



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)

Greatness Redefined

By Rev. Otto Menko

Please read Mark 9:33-35

As human beings we all have fundamental needs that are essential not only for our survival but also to function and live as well-balanced and wholesome individuals. Some of these fundamental needs are addressing physical and safety requirements such as food, water, sleep, shelter and security without which we would perish. Others, like belonging, being part of a group, being accepted and loved point to needs that are social in nature. Last but not least, some needs are related to our self-esteem and self-worth, for example dignity, accomplishment, independence, or being accepted and valued, just to mention a few.

All these and some other fundamental needs show us just how complex we, human beings are, how many things and conditions affect, influence and even determine our sense of completeness, our life as a whole. But they do more than that. They also influence our values and our motivations. Our overall wellness is dependent on a healthy balance of all these, through which personal and collective interests are equally represented and ensured by mutual dependence and support.

Unfortunately, as it is often the case, we try to satisfy our fundamental needs by focusing primarily on ourselves and in the process we either neglect others or we pursue our interests at their expense. For example, having a healthy sense of self-worth and self-esteem is fully justified and even necessary, but fulfilling these through seeking power, status, dominance or glory, are definitely not. Why? Because these are unmistakable manifestations of being self-centered, of seeking selfish goals out of selfish ambition. The Bible touches on this matter repeatedly and our text from Mark 9:33-35 is just one of the many examples.

The text says that on their way to Capernaum the disciples had an argument among themselves about who was the greatest, that is to say, the most important, the most significant, the most prominent in the group. Their argument was not a going back and forth heated exchange, but most likely a passionate discussion that involved reasoning and sharing their views and opinions.

There are a number of things that are not disclosed by the story. For example, we don't know what prompted the discussion, what criteria the disciples used to support their arguments, who were the best candidates to receive the special title, 'the greatest'. Were they promoting themselves ("I am the greatest, because...") or each other ("You are the greatest among us, because"), or have they come to a conclusion at all? For obvious reasons, all of them already counted themselves special, maybe even the greatest among their contemporaries. Since they were associated with the most significant man of their times, the greatest must come from their ranks.

Before hastening to make an unfavorable judgment of the disciples for being interested in becoming someone of great importance, we must pause and look into ourselves. Did not we have similar inclinations? Some other gospel passages indicate that the disciples were very much interested in which one of them would become the most prominent in the Kingdom of Heaven, who would be sitting next to Jesus, the Messiah. It is most unlikely that we would have similar aspirations. Ours are more earth-bound, maybe concerning our professional, social, academic, or even spiritual life. Perhaps we imagined reaching the top of the career ladder, or dreamed about becoming famous, popular, much in demand, or hugely successful, someone who really 'matters'.

There is no point in denying that in one way or another we all seek the applause and approval of others, we want to be praised, we are concerned with our social status, with our appeal, with glorified achievements and pecking order. These are behind the kind of greatness we see openly promoted and widely embraced in the world. When we allow our inner inclinations to take us down this path, we cross the thin line that separates justifiable fundamental human needs from unjustifiable self-centeredness, self-importance and selfish ambition.



When Jesus said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all," he redefined true greatness by turning our self-centered value system upside down. The way to matter the most is not achieved by elevating ourselves above others but by becoming "the very last, and the servant of all." It means turning away from a self-centered life where everything revolves around our ego and begin to nurture and practice a God-centered existence that finds ultimate expression in serving others. This new way of being is expressed by thinking of others first and ourselves last, by putting the needs of others

before ourselves, by willingly serve and take on tasks even if they seem to be trivial or lowly.

We know from 1 Samuel 16:7 that “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” God’s criteria are not the same as the standards of this world. What God prizes, what glorifies God is our self-giving service in love and humility. In the Kingdom of Heaven, the last is considered the first, the least the greatest, the most insignificant, the most important, the lowliest, the most elevated, the most unassumed, the most highly regarded.

“We are valued and prized much more by God than by the world.”

Ultimately, our importance and the significance of our life is not subject to worldly attainments. Our value as human beings has been determined by God long before we were born. In John 3:16 we are informed in unmistakable terms about how much we ‘matter’ to

God. “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.” We are valued and prized much more by God than by the world.

May this faith sustain us as we answer the call to serve with a humble heart, whenever, wherever, and whatever way we are privileged to do so.

Savannah Afterschool Enrichment Programme (SASEP)

On August 30, 2021, the Savannah Afterschool Enrichment Programme (SASEP) reopened its doors to the children of the Savannah community. The programme run by the Savannah United Church has been an integral part of the ministry for a number of years.



Programme Coordinator Monique Anderson-Coke addressing the parents and students in a recent publication said, “It is exciting to be part of a community of great students, parents, and teachers. We at S.A.S.E.P pride ourselves in being a “Community of Learners” where our students and staff look for

opportunities to learn from each other in our daily lives. We are committed to high academic expectations, mutual respect, social responsibility, and spiritual enrichment.”

The afterschool programme runs from Monday through Friday during the regular school year from 3:00pm to 6:00pm and includes devotion, homework, literacy, and numeracy, snack time, free and organized playtime, cleanup projects, and outdoor games. The current enrollment is 28 primary school students under the care of two administrative staff, five teachers (three each evening), and five volunteers.

Back to Church Sunday

On September 12, 2021, Back to Church Sunday Services were held throughout the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council. Laity and clergy prepared enthusiastically for this special occasion. Preparations were in their final phase when on last Friday a Covid-19 positive case was confirmed in one of our communities, raising alarm island-wide. Some of the congregations scaled back on their plans, shortening their service or cancelling the fellowship meals altogether. It is our hope and prayer that despite the last-minute changes, the message of **HOPE** reached the hearts of many.

We would like to express our appreciation and extend special thanks to all those who willingly and happily gave their time, talents and resources to make this Back to Church Sunday Service happen.



BTCS at Webster Memorial UC, Bodden Town



BTCS at Savannah UC



BTCS at Gun Bay UC



BTCS at East End UC



BTCS at Elmslie Memorial UC



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

September 19, 2021
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Packaged meals at Elmslie Memorial UC

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 18. (Saturday)

Girls' Brigade Monthly Meeting & AGM – 9:00am – via Zoom

YLNE/Sports Committee Meeting – 2:00pm – Council Office

September 19. (Sunday) 17th Sunday of Pentecost

September 20. (Monday)

Council Executive Meeting – 5:30pm – via Zoom

September 25. (Saturday)

Council Meeting – 9:00am – via Zoom

All are invited!
OCTOBER 16, 2021



Cayman Council
Women's Fellowship
presents

Gathering 2021

Theme: Creating Awareness for Gender Violence

Venue: Savannah United Church
9 am – 2:00 pm

Come Expecting a Dynamic Educated Programme

