



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

January 12, 2022

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 02

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

Rooted and called by a New Name – ‘Transformed’

By Rev. Donovan Myers

It is unfortunate that sometimes we reduce people to a challenge, a mistake, an experience, or a particular time of their lives. It is as if they are only identifiable by whatever disability they have or by the one negative story that we know about them. So, we end up using incomplete, inaccurate, and hurtful labels to describe them. Like “Blind Sally” or “jailbird Tom”, and so on. The truth is, we are not fully known by one quality, one action, or one thing that might even be true about us. Regrettably, persons often believe that they are named by their circumstances and over time ‘buy into’ whatever that name represents. An example of this can be seen in the story of a disabled woman whom Jesus healed while she was in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Luke 13:10-17 tells us that, ¹⁰ Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on a Sabbath day. ¹¹ A woman there had been disabled by an evil spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not stand up straight. ¹² Jesus saw her. He asked her to come to him. He said to her, “Woman, you will no longer be disabled. I am about to set you free.” ¹³ Then he put his hands on her. Right away she stood up straight and praised God. ¹⁴ Jesus had healed the woman on the Sabbath day. This made the synagogue leader angry. He told the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days. But do not come on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ The Lord answered him, “You pretenders! Doesn’t each of you go to the barn and untie your ox or donkey on the Sabbath day? Then don’t you lead it out to give it water?” ¹⁶ This woman is a member of Abraham’s family line. But Satan has kept her disabled for 18 long years. Shouldn’t she be set free on the Sabbath day from what was keeping her disabled?” ¹⁷ When Jesus said this, all those who opposed him were put to shame. But the people were delighted. They loved all the wonderful things he was doing.

This lady’s challenge was not just her medical or physiological condition, it was her mindset. She was affected by more than

the paralysis of the body, but by a paralysis of the mind. Her circumstance affected her view of herself. We are told in vs 10 that she had been disabled by an evil spirit – not just that she had a medical condition but that it consumed her. She was overtaken by this ‘spirit’ that affected the very essence of who she was. She felt defined by her illness. She was described as bent over or “doubled in” on herself. No doubt she felt trapped by her illness but more so by her state of mind. Interestingly, Jesus later used the idea of “losing” or “setting free”, to describe her healing. No doubt, the response of the people towards her, also affected how she felt. People in the Jewish culture of that time viewed illness or disabilities as punishment for sin [either personal or familial], so no doubt, she felt isolated, humiliated, mocked, and ostracized. How she was labeled, was indicative of her diminished status as a woman and a person.

Could her story be our story? Might we be living in a space where we have come to accept our ‘plight’ or ‘label’ and think that this is all there is for us? After living with whatever labels we wear, over time, have we come to ‘accept’ that this is who we are? This is where the hope of the gospel comes out in the story. The woman who had blended into the landscape and had become just another unfortunate person is lifted and reinstated with her true identity.

This is done with the simple action of Jesus in stopping long enough to notice her, to speak with her, and to lift her up so that he could look her in the eyes. After being bent over for 18 years and being compelled to look at the ground and forced to live outside of the community, it would have been easy to pass her by or simply stare at her – noticing the curvature of her spine without ever looking in her face. Perhaps, worse than being unseen is being watched and analyzed. But finally, somebody acknowledges her, speaks with her [and not just about her], and puts his hand on her.

Maybe this lady’s experience has been your experience too. Be encouraged because Jesus, in restoring our identity, does for us, what he did for her. He gets our attention, raises us up, and looks us in the eye. It happens when we realize how unproductive life can be when we remain in the limitation of

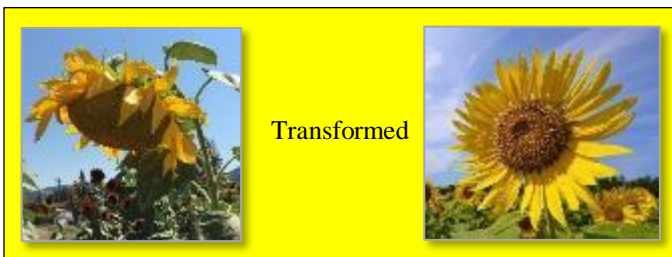
Congratulations Graduates!

our circumstances. Jesus' act is one of tender compassion but also of compelling connection and affirmation. But what about those around us, for whom this is also their experience? Do we stop to see them? Do we allow their gaze to catch ours in such a way that we would both be changed and lifted up?

There is another compelling action that Jesus takes in restoring this woman's sense of self and identity. He called her a "daughter of Abraham". This wouldn't fit with the settled notions of his listeners who could only see her as being unclean, a sinner with an impure or evil spirit. In that statement, what Jesus did was, restore what she had been robbed of! Her rights as part of God's covenant people. By this, he challenges the hypocrisy of their better treatment of animals than they have treated this woman. He challenges their use of the law to justify shutting out this woman from being freed and empowered. By identifying her as a "daughter of Abraham" – he renames her and reframes the narrative of her life – she is a legitimate member of the household of faith, she is part of God's chosen people.

This illness had no right to control this woman's life – to frame her story or make her less of a person. Just like God's intention for her, God's intention for us is that we should live "whole" or complete lives. And this is made possible by God's Son, who came so that we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).

What is our infirmity? What keeps us in bondage? It might be people's negative words to us, or our past mistakes and sins, those things that we have done that we should not, or it might be our family situations, our reputations, lifestyle, or associations. Jesus offers to restore and affirm us by walking alongside us, being present with us in the midst of our darkest day. God's desire is to free us or lose us from whatever holds us captive, by giving us a new identity and pattern for life. Embracing our renewed selves comes with the assurance that we are daughters and sons of God, with all that makes us unique, special, and different. Lifted up and renamed, we now move from skepticism to obedience, from ordinary to purposeful, from scarcity to abundance and fullness, from inferiority to image-bearers, from embarrassment to dignity. Accept your call to live by a New Name!



On Saturday, January 8, 2022, graduating participants from the CIRMC gathered at the Council Office to celebrate the successful completion of Module 1 of the UCJCI Training for Lay Leaders Certificate Course. The fifteen (15) persons receiving certification for Module 1 represented our West Bay, George Town, Savannah, and East End-Gun Bay Charges.



(Ten of the fifteen graduates were able to attend the social)

We (CIRMC) are proud of them and thank them for completing their training. It is our hope and prayer that they have been blessed by it and found it useful as they continue to serve and engage in ministry in their congregation or wherever God may lead them.

In all, one hundred and fifteen (115) participants completed Module 1 successfully in the four (4) Regional Mission Councils of the UCJCI. A church-wide **Graduation Celebration** will be held on **Sunday, February 6, 2022, at 2:00 pm at the Hope United Church (Kingston, Jamaica)**. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, this special occasion will be attended only by a limited number of persons and special guests but, it will also be streamed live via the UCJCI YouTube channel for the public (*see flyer at the end of this publication*).

UCJCI Training for Lay Leaders Certificate Course

The UCJCI Lay Leaders' Training, Module 1 was launched on January 18, 2020, in each Regional Mission Council but was suspended in early March 2020, after just three sessions, due to Covid-19 related restrictions in both the Cayman Islands and Jamaica.

The training was subsequently re-launched in a newly designed format in collaboration with the **International University of the Caribbean** and renamed as UCJCI Training for Lay Leaders Certificate Course. It is conducted in three Modules. Each module provides training based on the knowledge and skills needed by specific groups of lay leaders for which the training is:

- **Module 1:** for Elders and interested persons (all prospective or new elders are required to complete Module 1)
- **Modules 1 & 2:** for Specialized Lay Leaders (those serving or desiring to serve in specialized ministry areas)
- **Modules 1, 2 & 3:** for those desiring to receive qualification as Lay Pastors.

The modules are designed to progress sequentially, building on the previous, and serving as a prerequisite for the next. Although the modules are compulsory for the above categories of leaders, each module is open to *anyone* who desires to learn more about the UCJCI and/or who wishes to be equipped to effectively respond to the needs of their local congregation and its context. Individual Course Topics can be audited upon request and without registering to the programme (*see flyer at the end of this publication*).

Those participants who complete all three Modules may matriculate to the **International University of the Caribbean's Diploma in Theology**, providing they also have Mathematics and English at the CXC level.

Module 1 of the Training for Lay Leaders delivered by the UCJCI Lay Training Institute offers an opportunity for participants to:

- Provide leadership that is relevant to the needs of the church of the 21st century and beyond
- Learn critical skills to function more effectively as elders, leaders in specialized areas of ministry, or as lay pastors, accordingly
- Discover/clarify areas of service in the church for which they are best suited
- Learn about what the UCJCI believes and how it functions
- Become acquainted with opportunities for service within the local church and discover/clarify areas of service for which they are best suited and have discerned a call to serve

Topics of Module 1 include the following:

1. Spiritual Gifts and the Discernment of God's Call
2. The Role of the Lay Leader in Congregational Life
3. The Spirituality of the Leader
4. Leadership
5. The Leader as Evangelist, Disciple-Maker and Mentor
6. Communication
7. Strategic Planning for Church Growth
8. Components of Effective Caregiving
9. Team Building and Conflict Management
10. Leading Small Groups
11. Planning and Leading Bible Studies
12. Planning and Leading Worship
13. Church Administration
14. History and Ethos of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (Part 1)
15. Understanding the Sacraments
16. Introduction to Theology

The current round of **Module 1** will run from February 12 to August 2022.

Anyone interested, please speak with your Minister and/or call the Council Office for Registration Form and further information.

Telephone: 947-1963 or Email: cirmc.info@gmail.com or rdgs@cicucjci.com

UCJCI Lay Training Institute
TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS 2022
 Offered in collaboration with The International University of the Caribbean

Get Ready to Serve!

MODULE 1 BEGINS FEBRUARY 12, 2022

ORIENTATION JANUARY 29, 2022

REGISTER NOW
 through your Regional Mission Council office

TRAINING FEATURES

- Weekend and Weekday classes
 Saturdays 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Thursdays 6 - 8 p.m.
 (2nd and 4th Saturdays and Thursday in the immediate week following)
- Combination of Learning in Virtual Classrooms via Zoom and in Learners' own time

For more information:
cirmc@ucjci.com; cirmc.info@gmail.com; wrmc01@yahoo.com; smc@ucjci.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 15. (Saturday)

Women's Fellowship National Council Meeting -10:00 am @ Council Office
 Youth Leaders National Executive AGM -10:00 am @ PYC

January 16. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

January 17. (Monday)

Bethesda Counselling Centre Board of Directors Meeting – 6:00 pm via Zoom

January 18. (Tuesday)

Council Executive Committee Meeting – 6:30 pm via Zoom

January 22. (Saturday)

Council Meeting – 9:00 am via Zoom

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE
CAYMAN ISLANDS LAY TRAINING INSTITUTE
IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF THE CARIBBEAN



*Lay Training
Graduation
Celebration*

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2022 - 2:00 P.M.

GUEST SPEAKER: DR. YVONNE LEYS DAWKINS
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH
CARIBBEAN

The Celebration will be streamed live from Hope United Church via
the UCJCI YouTube channel!
ALL ARE WELCOME TO TUNE IN
Due to COVID 19 restrictions there will be limited in-person
gathering of specially invited guests

CORONAVIRUS: PRAYER FOR HEALING

Father God,
I come before you today to seek
mercy and healing.
Have mercy on your children who are
infected with coronavirus.
You alone can restore their health.
Heal them and make them whole again.
Give them the strength to carry on.
Comfort them in these scary times of their life.
I dedicate doctors and nurses to you,
Lord, Help them in all their doings
Protect them from this disease.
And give them the heart to continue
taking care of the sick.
In Jesus name,
Amen

THE BLISSFUL CHAPTER

TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS,
PLEASE FOLLOW THESE PRECAUTIONS

FACE MASKS
Wear non-medical face coverings

SOCIAL DISTANCING
Keep 6 feet away from others wherever
possible and respect others' space.

HAND HYGIENE
Wash your hands frequently with soap,
scrubbing for at least 20 seconds and
rinsing well.

The Lord will
TRANSFORM
every area of your life that
you **SURRENDER** over
to Him



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

January 16, 2022
Rev. Donovan Myers

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