

August 25, 2021



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Seek Reparations or FORGIVE AND FORGET?

Moderator's Pastoral Message

UCJCI Constitution Corner - Who is a Member?

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Our Vision: Touching Lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ



Pic ©Financial Times

Seek Reparations or Forgive and Forget?

- by Karen Francis

“In my conversations with persons on the matter of reparations, I have encountered responses ranging from hissed teeth, ‘Bawda-Cat-like’ response, “Dat will neva ‘appen,” to strident declarations that, “The UK mus’ pay”.

So, what of reparations? Should we simply forgive and forget or do we champion a cause for just recompense? Let’s pause for a moment and consider the discourse by reflecting on the concepts of Forget and Forge.

Jesus made it clear that forgiveness is to be the chosen path of believers (Matthew 18: 21). It is an act of obedience to God which is lived out in the context of relationship. How does one relate to another who has caused an offence? What of the relationship beyond offence? The call to forgive is a call to release angst, vitriol and self-defeating pre-occupation which poison our very soul and tie up our spirits each time a matter of offence is remembered. I would submit that such action requires not only obedience, but the help of the Spirit of God who is more than able to heal wounds caused by the careless and wicked. This discussion sees forgiveness as a requirement of all believers and ought not to be excluded from considerations around the atrocities of slavery.

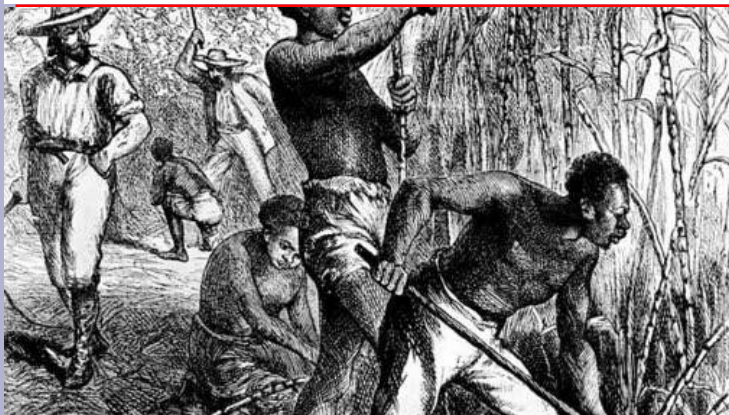
What does forget mean? I found two definitions which I would bring into this examination – ‘fail to remember’, and ‘deliberately

cease to think of’. It would be ridiculous to contemplate that advocates of the ‘forget’ proposition, are suggesting a failure to remember such a horrendous past such as was the Atlantic Slave Trade and plantation slavery. It is more plausible to contemplate that ‘forget advocates’ are proposing “deliberately cease to think of’. It’s about making a choice to put the offence out of one’s mind. In my opinion, such action would require a resolution to accept a matter as finished. It may further require conviction that there is nothing more to be done about the matter.

In contemplating the ‘Forge Forward’ agenda, it is important to understand reparations. The word, ‘reparations’ means - the action of making amends for a wrong one has done, by providing payment or other assistance to those who have been wronged (Oxford dictionary) or: monetary or other compensation payable by a country to an individual for a historical wrong

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(Dictionary.com)

I have noted that many with whom I have spoken do not understand the basis on which reparations would be paid in this 21st century for atrocities committed as far back as the 16th century and are not sure how the average Caribbean national would benefit. As regards the latter, I have also read of the dismissive comment of the UK High Commissioner to Jamaica, Asif Ahmad who asserted: "When it comes to this direct request for reparations from government to government, the reason why it will not prosper is because who do we pay it to?" He further stated, "The people who were harmed directly are no longer here."

Pause to reflect on what is being asked for by proponents of reparations by reviewing The CARICOM Reparations Commission's 10-point Plan for Reparatory Justice. A reading of the elements of the plan will see a call for addressing that which has been identified as legacies of slavery including issues such as illiteracy, health, advocacy for research, debt cancellation and technology transfer. Careful examination of the proposal would address the question raised by the UK High Commissioner to Jamaica. The matter of reparations must be considered within the wider context of the legacies of slavery.

What are the evident reminders of slavery despite its formal end? Council for World Mission embarked upon a series of hearings in 2017 to unearth ways in which Caribbean, Africa region and North America continue to experience the manifest remnants of slavery. This process led to a number of outcomes which include the identification of unhealthy perception of identity and self, blackness and whiteness, persistent poverty, to name a few. Racism and deprivation were consistent elements of the legacies of slavery which continue to impact people in this generation. A study of these legacies will throw up possibilities of work which needs to be undertaken in order to fashion a different future for the next generation.

In fact, there is quite a radical proposal of a Zaccheus Tax by Council for World Mission. It is located in the understanding

that many well-heeled financial institutions such as Barclays, JP Morgan Chase had their origins in the trade. In the face of a movement by nations, churches and other organisations for reparations, taxation is seen as a means of redress focusing systemic and systematic economic inequalities. This could be the means of administering restorative and reparatory action by rewarding work and redistributing gains, promoting sustainability of the environment and penalizing resource depletion.

According to CWM's Zacchaeus Tax Project, "The project therefore calls for a global tax and economic system that acts like Zacchaeus, which delivers equity and makes reparation for exploitation and injustice. Central to this is a redistribution of resources towards impoverished communities in order to deliver social and public good." The project encourages remembering, remembering that the current economic order is 'indebted' to a world shaped by the transatlantic slave trade and the colonial powers who profited so richly from it.' It may be useful here to return to the UK High Commissioner to Jamaica's statement: "The people who were harmed directly are no longer here." The Zacchaeus Tax project speaks directly to the people who continue to benefit from that which was done long ago by making life better for those who are still here and will be here in the future.

Do we forgive and forget or forgive and forge forward?

Testimony which may be brought in the case for 'Forgive and Forget' is offered by former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron. On a visit to Jamaica in 2015, he stated to the Jamaican Parliament that slavery was "abhorrent in all its forms". However he also added: "I do hope that, as friends who have gone through so much together since those darkest of times, we can move on from this painful legacy and continue to build for the future", a statement which doesn't quite say, "Let's forget about it" but for many hearers he may just as well have said that. Moving on, requiring descendants of enslaved persons not to be fixated on what happened in the past but to press forward to a new future.



Advocates for 'Forgive and Forge Forward' propose that forgetting, which requires a deliberate decision to accept there is no way to correct the matter, is not acceptable. In fact it does not accord with the Word: *What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* There is much to do to pursue justice, mercy and faithful discipleship. Though the reparations journey is uphill, it is worth tackling the mountain.

MEET THE COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY TEAM - SYNOD ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE!



Ms. Jonielle Daley

Communication and Information Technology Coordinator

Join us in welcoming **Ms. Jonielle Daley** to the position of Communication and Information Technology Coordinator in the Synod Administrative Team, effective August 3, 2021.

Ms. Daley is a member of the Blue Mountain United Church, Manchester. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism with a special focus on Cultural and Creative Industries from the University of the West Indies, Mona.

Jonielle comes to us from the Gleaner Company Limited and is a communication practitioner with experience in brand management and marketing. She has worked widely in visual storytelling and creating extraordinary experiences including theological inspiration for various audiences. We look forward to Ms. Daley's contribution to the ministry and mission of the UCJCI!

You may contact Ms. Daley at: Email: citc@ucjci.com Telephone: 876-864-2253

Communication and Technical Support Officer

The Synod Administration Centre welcomes the **Rev. Kraig De Leon Diederick** to the team in the capacity of Communication and Technical Support Officer effective July 1, 2021. Rev. De Leon Diederick is an ordained minister of the United Church and brings to the role critical skills and competencies in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). He holds an Associates of Arts Degree in Theology from the United Theological College of the West Indies, as well as an Associate of Science in Management of Information Systems from the Portmore Community College.



Rev. Kraig De Leon Diederick

Rev. De Leon Diederick has, on several occasions, offered technical support and assistance to the Synod Administration Centre and the wider church and he is passionate about helping the Church in its strategic course in using best ICT practices to advance the work of God's kingdom. We look forward to Rev. De Leon Diederick's contribution to this area of ministry focus.

You may contact Rev. De Leon Diederick at: Email: ctso@ucjci.com Telephone: 876-570-8828



Help Haiti



My sisters and brothers,

Greetings.

The earthquake, which had its epicenter near Haiti, on Saturday August 14, 2021, has been devastating for that nation. The severe physical, economic and social impact on Haiti have been made more challenging as shortly thereafter they experienced the passage of Tropical Storm Grace. All of this follows the recent assassination of their President.

The earthquake has caused much disruption in the lives of the people of Haiti, particularly in the Les Cayes Region. At the last count over 1,400 persons have lost their lives, and more than 6,900 persons have been injured. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to rise. Additionally, there has been significant damage to, or the destruction of, homes and other buildings. Many persons are now homeless and desperate and the livelihood of others is severely threatened.

As part of our initial response as a church, we wish to offer financial support to the relief efforts in Haiti, through our established contacts there.

We are therefore requesting that your congregation/charge makes a contribution to this effort through a special offering over the next two Sundays August 22, and August 29, 2021. We are aware of the restrictions on attendance in worship in Jamaica and would suggest that, where possible, congregations make a contribution from their own funds.

Please remit your contributions in Jamaica to:

Bank: National Commercial Bank Jamaica Ltd

Address: 90-94 Slipe Rd. Kingston 5

Account Name: United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Account #: 234297392

Type of account : Savings

In Grand Cayman, please send your contributions to your local congregations, which will then remit the same to the Cayman Regional Office.

While we offer this much needed support, let us also continue to pray for those affected in our sister nation.

Blessings,

From the Office of the General Secretary

Vacation Bible School

Elmslie Memorial United Church

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The Elmslie Memorial United Church held its VBS on August 2- 6, 2021, (Mon.-Fri.) 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm. focusing on the theme, "Mystery Island...Tracking Down the One True God" .

In the world there's so much confusion about who God is and what God's like. Through the daily Bible studies and various activities the children and youth were uncovering the truth about how amazing God is! Each day they learned about one of God's amazing attributes such as great, almighty, ruler, Emmanuel, trustworthy, and how these apply to their lives. On average 120 attended every day and a total of 50 leaders and

volunteers assisted throughout the week.



The VBS closed on Sunday, August 8, 2021 with a special morning worship service held in the Sanctuary



Scenes from Elmslie VBS

IN THE AFTERMATH OF TROPICAL STORM GRACE ...



A fallen tree blocking the driveway to the Council Office.

Tropical Storm Grace was a stark reminder of our vulnerability but also of God's Grace. As true Reformed Christians, we recognized early that we would be saved by faith through God's Grace and that the presence and peace of Christ would be with us. For some persons, this was a new experience but for many, it was a recall of hurricanes past.

Prayer, resilience, hope and patience became the tenets for the twelve hour passage of Lady Grace. Thankfully, these were daylight hours and that enabled persons to cope better.

Contributed by Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield



Moderator's Pastoral Message

“I strongly encourage you to take the vaccine.”

My Sister and Brothers, warm greetings to you. I trust you and your loved ones are well.

I am reaching out to you at this time in light of the fact that the Delta variant of the COVID 19 virus has now been confirmed in Jamaica which, we are told, is more contagious than the earlier strain. There are a number of persons who are becoming infected, hospitalized or who have passed on. Anxiety is growing; many families and communities have been plunged into grief.

Like some of you, my extended family is experiencing grief and brokenness as well, on account of the onslaught of COVID 19. On behalf of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands I extend condolences to all these families and pray for the healing and comfort of Christ Jesus.

Sisters and brothers, COVID 19 is no joke. God expects us to access the credible information that is available to us and to use wisdom. I know some of us are confused on account of all the views that are out there about the vaccines. What we know for sure is that people are getting really sick; people are dying; based on the reports, almost all those who are infected and in our hospitals in Jamaica did not take the vaccine.

Our health sector was challenged before COVID 19. I used to be anxious about having to take anyone to the hospital because I knew it would take hours. You and I have heard horror stories in relation to care in some of our hospitals and there was no COVID 19 then. Can you imagine what the situation is now and likely to be? Our hospitals are already under pressure; our medical personnel are stressed, overworked and anxious about their own health. In a few weeks I will be doing the funeral of one of our nurses who died as a result of COVID 19. Try to avoid getting sick with COVID because if you have to be hospitalized you will be placed in isolation where no one will be allowed to visit you. I can tell you, that is not easy to deal with.

So, I have taken both shots of the vaccine; some members of my family have taken the vaccine; other Ministerial Colleagues, Commissioned workers, Full time workers and members of our congregations and of other denominations have taken it and we are still here serving our Lord.

I know it's your personal decision, but I want to strongly encourage you to take the vaccine, to protect yourself; your family and friends and the wider community - Let's do the Christian thing; let's be neighbourly. We know it is possible to still become infected after taking the vaccine, but we also know that you are not likely to get very sick as would likely be the case if you did not take the vaccine.

The education of our children has been severely interrupted since last year March. The online for various reasons has not really worked for many of our children. The Pfizer vaccine is now available for those who are 12 and older. Students in other countries have been vaccinated. Let us make use of this opportunity to protect our children as well and to allow them to be back in school.

Indiscipline - not wearing masks; not observing the physical distance; not observing the curfew hours—has contributed to where we are today. Look at what happens in some of our town centres; look at what happened at some entertainment venues? Look at what happens at some of our funerals?

The "no movement" days will be particularly challenging for those less fortunate, but let us make this sacrifice for the common good.

As people of God, let us set the example; let us encourage others to do likewise, so that together we can come through this ordeal victoriously. We are Christ's light and salt - let's shine; let's offer flavour and preservation to God's creation.

The Lord bless you.



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Government of Jamaica, on August 19, 2021, announced a number of amended provisions under the Disaster Risk Management Act. These provisions are for the period August 20 to September 7, 2021.

We wish to share with you the ones which will affect congregational life from August 22, 2021:

- ◆ **Church Services** - There will be 7 'no-movement days', three of which are Sundays. These are August 22, 29 and September 5, 2021. The number of persons allowed in the sanctuary on August 29 and September 5, 2021 will be a maximum of 20 persons. Each person is required to have a place of Worship Authorization Form.

Where persons are required to travel to the sanctuary on Sundays, a completed Place of Worship Authorization Form is necessary.

Please do the following prior to the service:

- * Print and fill out all sections of the Authorization Form
- * Insert the name of the person who will participate in the service (use one Form for each person who will participate, do not exceed 20 persons)
- * Each Form should be signed by the Minister or Lay Pastor, including her/his own Form
- * Place your Church Stamp/Seal where indicated on each completed Form. This is a critical requirement (if you do not have a Church Stamp, visit your regional office and have them stamp each document)
- * Ensure that each participant in the worship service has her/his copy of the Authorization Form, along with a valid form of identification, for presentation to the police at a check point

We encourage congregations to record or stream their services where possible.

- ◆ No **crusades, conferences or conventions** will be permitted.
- ◆ **Funerals** will be not be allowed between August 25 and September 7, 2021.
- ◆ **Burials** will be allowed for 30 minutes on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm with a maximum of 15 persons at the graveside.
- ◆ **Weddings** – no more than 20 people allowed.

Existing provisions remain in place as under:

- **Physical Gatherings** are limited to 10 persons.
- **Stay at home** – persons 60 years and over. Fully vaccinated persons are exempt.
- Please note that **the wearing of masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing** are still required for public spaces and gatherings.

WE INVITE YOU TO COMPLY WITH THESE PROVISIONS.

Constitution Corner

WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS?

The inaugural Constitution Corner will focus on Chapter One of the Constitution, that is, the Congregation. Particularly, we will pay close attention to the present position on Membership.

Part of Chapter One of the Constitution states as follows:

“Members in full communion and good standing are those who faithfully perform their duties.”

What determines “good standing”?

The Constitution says that “if a member is absent from the Holy Communion for more than one year, excepting for reasons which must be satisfactory to the congregational board, that member is no longer considered to be in full communion and in good standing”.

However, in light of the pandemic and the online presence of many of our churches, the Constitution and Doctrine Committee is in the process of reviewing what it means to be a member in the “Post-COVID” United Church. Stay tuned to find out about this development as it unfolds.

Constitution and By

March 2019



Remember to wear Black on Thursday as you work for a world without violence

Happy Birthday



Rev Dr Roderick Hewitt



Rose Wedderburn

PRAY ♦ PRAY ♦ PRAY

UCJCI responds to the
COVID-19
pandemic and other local,
regional and global
challenges as a community
of faith

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

A PRAYER-AT THIS TIME

In this time of COVID-19, we pray: When we aren't sure, God, help us be calm; when information comes from all sides, correct and not, help us to discern; when fear makes it hard to breathe, and anxiety seems to be the order of the day, slow us down, God; help us to reach out with our hearts, when we can't touch with our hands; help us to be socially connected, when we have to be socially distant; help us to love as perfectly as we can, knowing that "perfect love casts out all fear."

LITURGY FOR WORSHIP AT HOME

August 29, 2021



REACHING OUT TOWARDS PEACE

When peace is present and experienced, is it such a beautiful thing. It makes for light and warm relations and an inspirational environment. We must imagine my peace; we must desire it; we must reach out to it and work for it

Song of Solomon 2: 8-13

Psalm 45: 1-9

James 1: 17-27

September 5, 2021



SELFLESS SERVICE

When peace is present and experienced, is it such a beautiful thing. It makes for light and warm relations and an inspirational environment. We must imagine my peace; we must desire it; we must reach out to it and work for it

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Psalm 146

James 2:1-10



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**

John Gray Memorial (West Bay) - 10:30am	Savannah United (Savannah) - 10:00am
Elmslie Memorial (George Town) - 10:30am	Webster Memorial (Bodden Town) - 11:00am
South Sound United (George Town) - 9:00am	East End United (East End) - 11:00am
Robert Young Memorial (Crewe Rd.) - 8:45am	Gun Bay United (East End) - 9:30am
William Pouchie Memorial (North Side) - 9:00am	

All are invited!

 Event poster for "RISE to LIFE" featuring a protest scene with raised fists and graffiti. The text includes:

- 3 DAY ONLINE FORUM MON OCT 25 | WED OCT 27 | FRI OCT 29 2021
- the commitment
- the call
- the agonies
- 3 SESSIONS/DAY
- LONDON/WEST AFRICAN TIME (GMT+1):
- | SESSION 1 | 12:00PM - 1:30PM
- | SESSION 2 | 2:30PM - 4:00PM
- | SESSION 3 | 5:00PM - 6:30PM
- RISE to LIFE
- doing theology in public places
- THREE ENERGIES MEET AT THIS EDARE EVENT

- 1 the commitment of CWM to "chant down Babylon" and its shitstems in order to allow all life (not just humans, but creation and the planet) to flourish;
- 2 the call upon church and community agents, biblical critics and theologians, to practice and perform our trades in public places;
- 3 the agonies that current endemics (esp. racism, sexism, covid) bring which require collaborative theological, biblical, and missional responses.

REGISTER NOW!

<https://edare.cwmission.org/register>

UCJCI VALUES

In seeking to live out our calling, we particularly value and are committed to:

Family:

Family is a gift from God. As we grow in relationships, we encounter God through each other, and are strengthened to live for God in the world.

(Psalm 127:3-5, 128:3-4,
Ephesians 5:22-33, 6:1-4)

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Congregational, Disciples of Christ ,Presbyterian

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Tel: 876 926-8734

E-mail: synod@ucjci.com ♦ Website: www.ucjci.com

Moderator

Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

General Secretary

Rev. Norbert Stephens

Regional Deputy General Secretaries

Cayman Regional Mission Council
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Southern Regional Mission Council
Rev. Norbert Stephens (Interim)

North Eastern Regional Mission Council
Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

Western Regional Mission Council
Mrs. Mauleen Henry

SYNODICAL THEME:

“Rooted, Resilient: Responding in H.O.P.E. (Health - Opportunity - Peace - Evangelism)”