



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

March 23, 2022

Season of Lent

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 12

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

Rooted and Reconciled

By Mr. Bryan Bothwell

Please read Psalm 32:1–5

The theme for us to consider under the mind-opening guidance of the Holy Spirit is “Rooted and Reconciled”. That is, rooted in Christ and - in Christ - reconciled to God, by the redeeming grace of God through the Crucified and Risen Christ. An act of such magnitude that, unfortunately, too many people still take it as, literally, “incredible”, and view the enormity of its transformative power as, literally, “unbelievable”.

Therefore, while contemplating the Scriptures, I was saddened anew by two recent contentions that Cayman’s Christian Heritage was one thing that stymied the development of our young people. When these were published, I had felt a real sense of anguish that no one had been able to help these two young people find and hold fast to the words of Jesus Himself, “you must follow Me” – not anyone else [John 21: 22]. The call of Christ to the individual is to follow Christ alone. And there is no way that committed to and following Christ, genuinely endeavoring to live as He lived, in caring concern for other people in all circumstances, and in loving obedience to God, can stymie the true development of anyone.

To the contrary, that is Christian Heritage - and the key to the true ‘life abundant’ [John 10:10]. To live in Christ’s Resurrection [Romans 6] while growing in wisdom, in strength of character and human capabilities, in favor with God, and, inseparably and as a result, grow in a caring, mutually enhancing brotherhood with our fellow human [Luke 2: 52].

That is the only Christian Heritage, an inheritance directly through Christ, to become “children of God” [John 1: 12 - 13], heirs to the type of life Christ Jesus lived on earth - and to His Resurrection [Romans 8, 6]. That fullness of life that transforms a person to become the person God had created us to be originally: “Fearless, Flawless, Fabulous”, to borrow the powerful words of a birthday card by American Greetings. For there are no flaws in the man and woman God made, whom God pronounced “very good”, only, purposefully, a diversity of attributes, reflecting an omnificent Creator. And as St. Paul pointed out, “God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” [2 Tim 1: 7] Having also given us “wisdom” and “understanding” topped off with

“mercy” and “justice” for each other, God felt able to appoint humankind the (servant) ruler over this whole world God had made for us.

So, yes, flawlessly, fearlessly, and fabulously made! And that is the person God calls us to be once again, through Christ. And to then be humbly confident that “I” am that person, no matter my earthly circumstances. But equally, that everyone else on this planet was made with the potential to also be that full person. And one side of this cannot be attained without the other. Which seems a big struggle for us to get right. Though it can be done, with even that “mustard seed” of faith that Jesus spoke of.

But many of us do not accept the awesome self-worth of who “I” am, made lovingly in the Image of God. While some others readily feel that that “Fearless, Flawless, Fabulous” personage fits “me” - but not many others. And either of those will stymie the development of the full person, “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God [Ps 139:14], Whose love for the whole human (body, mind, and soul), has launched amazing acts of creativity in all fields of life, selfless acts of caring compassion, remarkable institutions for the enhancement of bodily and mental health, of wisdom and thought, and of worship. Our God simply had not left any voids that would keep anyone, young or old, from a bountiful and fulfilling life.

However, we humans managed to create voids. For in vainglory, we sought to become our own gods. So, because we started right at our very soul, we ourselves were never able, in all those eons, to fix that deflating void. As a result, there is no wonder a young person might feel today’s world is the Israel of 2,700 years ago, where, as God described through the Prophet Isaiah, “... justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance, truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter, truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.” All because, as God stated, “your iniquities have separated you from your God.” [Isaiah 59]

Thankfully, our loving God would not abandon us in our fatal rebellion. So as Christians we are privileged to once more move toward our defining Easter, contemplating anew the immensity of what God has done for us and renewing our quest to remain secure in God. Yet sharing in God’s pain because of the vast number of people suffering, still, in this world created for life, with sufficiency for all; and sharing in God’s pain that anyone, young or old, many right in our communities, would feel that the heritage we celebrate at Easter can keep them from true fullness of life.

Please read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

St. Paul, with his mind racing away as usual over the enormity of what God has done for mankind, and wants us all to have, has packed a lot into those few verses! Let us look briefly at two aspects, the reassurance, and the challenge.

The good news of reassurance

It is for two kinds of people. God has completed a “new creation”, by Christ coming into this world as the only divine and thus only sinless human, Jesus, on Whom humankind unleashed the kinds of wickedness we subject each other to, in blatant disobedience to God. From jealousy, rejection, lies, belittling and betrayal, through the denial of justice in the rigged trials, and the flagellation and other awful cruelty that followed, through to the ultimate inhumanity of one human to another, murder. But not only did Christ willingly take on the human suffering inflicted by humankind on each other, He took on the resulting penalty of eternal death, separation of sinful humans from the Holy God. Paul uses other terminology in other letters, as do other Apostles and Jesus Himself, to describe this process by which, in God’s answer to rebellious humankind, Christ took upon Himself that sin. Thereby we could have the opportunity to repent and have our sins wiped away, and, as Paul says in today’s text, to become “righteous” and thus be able to be “reconciled to God”.

None of them suggested that the miracle of the Cross and Resurrection meant that every human would thenceforth be free of sin. Jesus made it explicitly clear that only “whoever believes in [Christ] shall not perish but have eternal life”. Paul today echoed that determining fact, terming it, “if anyone is in Christ”, that is the person “reconciled to God”, that is the “new creation”. St. John [1: 12 – 13] explained it as “... to all who received [Christ], to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God ... born of God.” C S Lewis uses John’s words to emphasize the magnitude of the change into this “new man” and “new woman” into whom God has transformed the sinful human who commits to Christ as Lord of his or her life. That it is not merely an improvement in the old, it is a “change from being creatures of God to being children of God”.

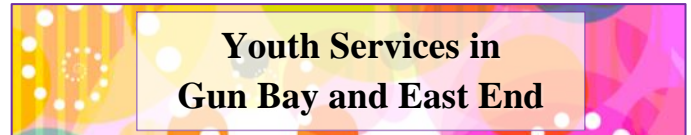
This is wonderful news for two kinds of people: first, those who have already accepted Christ as Lord, even though the transformation continues, as with the spiritual disciplines we eagerly grow in Christ [2 Peter 3: 18], and “remain in [Christ]” [John 15], let Him nurture us so we can be firmly rooted in Him, and allow God to prune us [John 15], so we are always becoming more like Christ [e.g. 2 Cor. 3: 18], as a natural baby matures in wisdom, grace, mind and body. It is also wonderful news for those who have not yet accepted Christ – and therefore are still able to do so. If there is anyone in that category listening, I borrow St. Paul’s words and “implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God”. Become “born of God” anew, and for eternity, as that flawless, fearless, fabulous new woman, new man that God had always made us to be.

The good news of challenge

This is only for those who have accepted Christ: we are therefore “Christ’s ambassadors”. God has now given us the “ministry of reconciliation” through whom God will “appeal”

to those who still must accept the invitation to be reconciled to God. Paul is of course only emphasizing the ‘Great Commission’ that Jesus gave to all who would follow Him. It is an awesome privilege; it can’t be done by anyone else; and one cannot commit to Christ and not do it. Don’t we naturally want to share good things with the people we love, and help them get their essential needs?

Thankfully, Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to be with us always. For it is also an equally awesome responsibility: to faithfully present the caring Christ to others, without distorting their view of His perfect holiness, ensuring they get to know Him directly, so they will want to follow Him and claim Him as Lord of their lives, to the Glory of God.



Youth Sunday Services were held at the Gun Bay and East End United Church Congregations on March 20, 2022, with the children and youth assuming duties over all aspects of the service. The message based on Exodus 3:1-15 was delivered by Youth Worker Mrs. Itza Bodden who focused on God’s calling on our lives. Youth Group meetings resumed in Gun Bay last Friday and East End will follow in steps this coming Saturday.



Members of the Gun Bay United Church Youth group with Mrs. Itza Bodden



**News from John Gray
Memorial Church,
West Bay**



**WEST BAY GIRLS' BRIGADE
COMPANY**

The West Bay Girls' Brigade commissioned its newest Lieutenant on Sunday, 20th March 2022. Ms. Alikie Kandler is no stranger to the Girls' Brigade; she grew up in it and is an active member of the John Gray Memorial Church. Coming through the ranks of the Girls' Brigade from a young age, to become a Lieutenant was a natural progression for her. Alikie has demonstrated her commitment and dedication to the Girls' Brigade since assisting the Explorers section in September 2020. She has completed all the required training, and we are thrilled to have her take on this leading role. Those welcoming and surrounding her with love and support included Captain Mrs. Melanie Ebanks-Jackson, National Chairman Ms. Debra McLaughlin, National Chaplain Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, members of the Girls' Brigade Company and the Congregation.



**Service of De-Linking, Linking
and Induction of Minister of the
Savannah-Bodden Town
Charge**

The Service of De-Linking, Linking and Induction of Rev. Euthman Wray as the Minister of the newly formed Savannah-Bodden Town Charge will held on **Sunday, March 27, 2022, at 5:00 pm** at the Savannah United Church.



**JOHN GRAY MEMORIAL
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

It's Party Time!

By Katherine Jackson

Even though the strains of Covid-19 are still amongst us, we can still rejoice and be exceedingly glad as we know that the Lord of Heaven and Earth is with us and will help us accomplish whatever He has called us to do.

So, with those thoughts in mind, the Ladies of the Women's Fellowship at John Gray Memorial Church organized the March Birthday Party last Saturday, 19th March 2022, for the residents of the Pines Retirement Home who were celebrating their birthday this month.

The Fellowship Ladies had a sweet opportunity to contribute something for the party, and although they were not able to participate at the Home, Vice President Carol Ann Ebanks and Coordinator of Visits to our Close-at-Home members, Alice Jane Ebanks, loaded up their vehicles and delivered the goodies, on time and on target!

In response to this act of kindness, Ms. Lana Bonilla of the retirement home responded: "We are very thankful for the community support. Your generosity always makes a difference in the lives of our residents."

We thank God for such a lovely occasion to bring joy to those senior citizens who reside at the Pines. May God bless us, everyone!



Some of the Ladies of the Women's Fellowship at John Gray Memorial Church (with Mascot, Albert Carlyle 😊) as they met at the Church with refreshments and birthday gifts to deliver to the Pines Retirement Home.

HELP UKRAINE

Ukraine Crisis Appeal

The people of Ukraine are subject to violence, upheaval, displacement, and the trauma of war. Your urgent support is needed!

In response to the humanitarian crisis created by the war in Ukraine, charitable organizations around the world are collecting contributions to provide humanitarian relief (food, shelter, first aid, and medicine) as well as to assist with reuniting separated families, repairing vital infrastructure, homes, healthcare centres, schools, etc.

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council (CIRMC) of the UCJCI is inviting all Congregations within its bounds to **Help the people of Ukraine** with their donations.

Donations will be collected on March 20, 27, and April 3 during the Sunday morning Worship Services or can be dropped off at the church offices during the week or made online (please call your Church Office or speak with the Minister for instructions).

Once all donations are collected from the Congregations, the CIRMC will make the transfer to the **Cayman Islands Red Cross**.

Your donation
- no matter how small it may be –
counts!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 26. (Saturday)
Lay Leaders Certificate Course Training– 9:00am-2:00pm via Zoom

March 27. (Sunday) 4th Sunday of Lent

March 31. (Thursday)
Lay Leaders Certificate Course Training– 6:00pm-8:00pm via Zoom



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

March 27, 2022
Mr. Bryan Bothwell



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW LOST A LOVED ONE TO SUICIDE?

The APF's Bereavement Support Group provides free, private, and confidential grief support, in a safe place for adults to heal from their loss and to be equipped with the tools for moving forward.

JOIN THE APF'S BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP 24 FEB - 31 MAR | BETHESDA COUNSELLING CENTRE

Location: Bethesda Counselling Centre, Unit 4, 68 Mary St, George Town
Time: 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Frequency: Every Thursday for 6 weeks
Dates Active: Thursday, 24 February - Thursday, 31 March
Contact: edu@alexpantonfoundation.ky



About the Facilitator:

April Lewis is a licensed Mental Health Counsellor with over 20 years of experience in therapy and counselling. Ms Lewis holds a Master of Arts degree in Christian Counselling and a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. She has worked with the Cayman Islands Government as a Counsellor, for the Employee Assistance Program as Director, and installed one of the first online therapy programmes in the Cayman Islands.

UCJCI Lay Training Institute



TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS 2022

Offered in collaboration with The International University of the Caribbean

Module 1 - 2022

Saturday, March 26, 2022 – 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

- Leading Small groups (Part 1)

Thursday, March 31, 2022 – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

- Leading Small groups (Part 2)

For more information, please contact cirmc.info@gmail.com

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