



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

April 20, 2022

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

Resilient: In the Face of Doubt

By Mr. Herman Wilson

All people experience doubt throughout their lives. Believers in Christ, however, have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to overcome this negative experience concerning the things of God.

It is evident in the Gospel of Mark that before His crucifixion, Jesus' disciples were somewhat doubtful about the resurrection; they could not grasp it. "He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. (Mark 9:31-32)

In John 20:19-31, Christ Jesus our Lord appeared to His disciples in His resurrected state. He gave them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them. Thomas, who was not present at this first encounter, did not believe that Christ Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. He doubted. However, Thomas believed when the Lord Jesus appeared to all the disciples the second time.

Christ Jesus said to Thomas: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen me yet have believed." (John 20:29)

After Pentecost, the apostles made their belief in the resurrection quite clear to the Jewish Sanhedrin comprising Pharisees and Sadducees who had them detained for their belief in the risen Lord. The apostles made the following declaration: "We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:29-32)

The apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, also addressed those who might have doubts about the resurrection. He wrote: But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified

about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Cor. 15:12-15, 20)

Jesus' statement to Thomas pertains to believers today. "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen me yet have believed." (John 20:29)

What is doubt? How do you overcome doubt when it arises?

These questions inevitably exist within the Christian context. Subject to their level of faith, some believers may have difficulty embracing various spiritual realities, including the resurrection of Christ Jesus. Romans 10:9 states: "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9)

Doubt is a feeling of uncertainty, to consider something unlikely. The seed of doubt first entered the human context in the Garden of Eden, where due to Satan's deception, Adam and Eve doubted God's implicit plans for their future. (Genesis 3)

Faith and doubt are contrary to each other. The remedy for doubt is faith, and this is a gift from God. "... faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Heb. 11:1) "...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." (Rom. 10:17)

Consequently, doubt is overcome by continually and diligently seeking a greater understanding of the Scriptures. Christianity is supernatural by nature. We are called to embrace things that we do not see. Every believer is endowed with a level of faith. We are encouraged to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit with whom we are sealed for the day of redemption.

How? By spending time daily in prayer, by meditating on God's Word and the ultimate consummation of the Kingdom of God. We should seek to know Christ Jesus better each day. He is the Head of the Church and the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Therefore, in faith we persevere knowing that Christ Jesus was the first to have been resurrected from the dead. He has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light. (cf. 2 Tim, 1:9b-10) Christ Jesus will raise the bodies of believers to life at His Second Coming because God is not the God of the dead but the living, the new humanity in Christ, citizens of the Kingdom of God. He will change our mortal bodies to be like His glorious body. To God, all are alive. (cf. Luke 20:38) The resurrection of Christ Jesus is a demonstration

of the awesome power of God and the confirmation that Christ is indeed the Son of God.

Doubt often stands in the face of what is. However, doubt cannot erase or diminish the reality of the risen Lord. To God be the glory, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Looking Back at Holy Week and Easter Sunday

East End – Gun Bay (North-East Charge)

In both Congregations, the children and youth took center stage in bringing the message of Easter home. The Easter message and the accompanying skit in Gun Bay highlighted the dramatic changes initiated by the resurrection of Jesus, from Sadness to Happiness, from Greed to Giving, from Hatred to Loving, from Conflict to Peace, and from Pride to Humility.



In East End, the children and youth presented a skit - including a tomb and a rolled-away stone! (by Mrs. Itza Bodden)



Savannah – Bodden Town Charge



The Savannah United Church held their annual Easter Cantata on Palm Sunday. The Cantata entitled “Who is this Man?” involved the Sanctuary Choir, Young Adults, Young Musicians, Drama ministry and Dance Ministry. The presentation was narrated by Ms. Gaynel Callender and conducted by Mr. Noel Wallace, Music Minister.

WHO IS THIS MAN?

“Who is this man?” This question was asked by the Pharisees, the crowds that witnessed His teachings and miracles, and even King Herod when news of Jesus spread throughout the region. Jesus’ disciples when they saw Him walk on water asked, “What manner of man is this?”

How could Jesus have such a far-reaching impact in just three years of ministry to become the most influential person in history? How is it possible that His message of hope has continued to grow to this day?

This Cantata was one more occasion when we retold the Easter Story, a story of Hope, of Triumph and of Victory. The songs have been selected to show the immense Love of God as Jesus reached out to the common people of His day. (by Mr. Noel Wallace. Photos courtesy of Mr. Reuben Barnes)

SUC Dance Ministry



SUC Young Musicians



SUC Drama Ministry

On Thursday evening, April 14, members of the Bodden Town-Savannah Charge gathered in the Savannah United Church Hall to observe the Last Supper. The theme for the evening was “Rooted in Resilience”. Participants formed groups and were invited to share in conversation as they reflected on the text from Matthew 26:36-46. Other highlights of the event included the Choir ministering in song and everyone sharing in a Meal consisting of a vegetable soup, salad & bread rolls. At the end of the evening, everyone departed in silence. *(by Mrs. Renee Barnes)*



On Good Friday Rev. Euthman Wray, assisted by Elder Dale Ebanks, administered the Sacrament of Baptism to three adults and one child at Spots Beach.



Those baptized (from left to right) were Ms. Janet Dixon, Miranda Miller (child), Mrs. Naidelys Henry from the Savannah United Church and Mrs. Olsie Dixon from the Webster Memorial United Church.

In keeping with the ‘spirit’ of the new alignment, on Easter Sunday, the choirs of the Savannah-Bodden Town Charge combined for an Easter Cantata. It was a joyous occasion and a musical treat for the choirs and congregation. The first and last items were presented by the combined choir. Throughout the programme each choir also presented individual selections. The choirs were directed by Mr. Everton Garth Webster and Noel Wallace. The charge was given by Rev, Euthman Wray.



John Gray – South Sound Charge

Members of the John Gray – South Sound Charge gathered for the first time for the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service (at South Sound United) and for the Good Friday Service (at John Gray Memorial). On Maundy Thursday refreshments awaited those arriving for a time of fellowship before the service and on Good Friday the South Sound Choir presented a special item.



Ukraine Crisis Appeal

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council (CIRMC) of the UCJCI is still collecting donations in support of the people of Ukraine until the end of May. Contributions can be made 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).

The CIRMC will transfer all the donations to the **Cayman Islands Red Cross** who, in turn will send it to the **Ukrainian Red Cross**.

EVANGELISM CORNER

“Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times.” (Ephesians 5:16 Msg. Bible)

As believers, we acknowledge that Bible passages such as Romans 1:29-32, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and Matthew 24:5-7 are displayed in our spaces at an accelerated pace.

In these desperate times, we are often distracted and caught up in the darkness brought on by fear, distress, hopelessness, and deceptions that prevail as we view news reports, social media posts and even personal experiences. Ephesians 5:16 prods us to be resilient as we refocus on “Gospel work” by loving others and sharing with them this Good News that brings peace with God and the hope of eternal life. Sharing the Gospel with urgency moves us to wisely saturate our actions, conversations, and relationships with proclamations of Christ’s love for all. Believers, you are *“chosen to be a holy people, God’s instruments to do His work and speak out for Him, to tell others of the night and day difference he made for you.”* (1 Pet. 2:9-10 Msg. Bible) Let’s shine the light of God’s love and use every opportunity to dispel the darkness for others.

By Mrs. Sonia Wallace
CIRMC - Evangelism Mission Action Team

Sauca acknowledges that the pandemic has widened the gap between rich and poor, between the powerful and the vulnerable. “Cruel wars in Ukraine and elsewhere in the world are taking thousands of innocent lives, allowing all sorts of atrocities, destroying everything in their way, and multiplying the waves of displaced and refugees,” he writes. “Violence against women, children, elderly people and those who are different from us is dramatically increasing.”

Desolation and hopelessness seem to prevail everywhere, he laments—but ultimately the God of life prevails.

“Strengthened by our faith and hope, we should not be afraid, we should not despair when we see what happens in our world today but confront it with courage,” he writes. “Looking at the empty tomb and listening to the angel’s voice, we discover in the midst of the darkness of our world a life of light, joy, love, and newness.”

Christ’s resurrection ever reminds us that, ultimately, God, the God of life, prevails over all powers of sin and death, Sauca reflects.

“Christ’s resurrection is the source of a new life recreating and renewing all things in Christ,” Sauca writes. “It is a source of healing, wholeness, and renewal.”

Christ’s resurrection brings joy for the sorrowful, light for those living in darkness, liberation for those oppressed, reflects Sauca. “It leads the world to unity and reconciliation,” the message reads. “Christ’s resurrection is the power offering to the world the possibility and the chance for a new beginning.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 22. (Friday) – **Earth Day**

April 23 (Saturday)

Lay Leadership Certificate Course Session – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm via Zoom

Women’s Fellowship Council Executive Meeting – 10:00 am Council Office

April 24. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday of Easter

April 28 (Thursday)

Lay Leadership Certificate Course Session – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm via Zoom



World Council of Churches

(source: <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-easter-message-christs-resurrection-a-source-of-healing-wholeness-and-renewal>)

WCC Easter message: Christ’s resurrection is “a source of healing, wholeness, and renewal”.



Amid feelings of despair in our world, Christ’s resurrection is a source of hope and new life, writes World Council of Churches acting general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca in an Easter message.

“As we look around, we see only signs of destruction and death,” writes Sauca. “The victims of economic and ecological injustices are increasing throughout the world.”



on Radio Cayman 89.9
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