



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE



June 23, 2022

**SEASON OF PENTECOST**

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 25

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

## **Resilient: The Cost of Discipleship (or The Cost of Following Jesus)**

By Mr. Noel Wallace  
Music Minister, Savannah United Church

Please read Luke 9:57-62

As Jesus travelled during His earthly ministry, He encountered a number of 'would-be' followers. They made a show of wanting to be His disciples... to impress Jesus, or better yet, to impress the crowds that followed Jesus. Well, who is a disciple?

A **disciple** of Christ is one who follows the teachings, life, and lifestyle of Christ. The aim is to become like Christ in everything and every way.

Jesus made it quite clear that in deciding to follow Him we must count the cost. Salvation is a free gift of God. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. All we need to do is open our hearts and accept God's forgiveness. However, God's goal is not merely salvation but discipleship. God does not want us to merely show up at church on Sundays, He wants us to be a visible, verbal follower of Jesus daily.

Today's Church in general suffers from the fact that only 10% of the congregation do 90% of the work. Why? Excuses! Excuses! We find so many excuses for not following Christ, for not attending church (or even attending regularly), and for not participating in the church's mission. Excuses represent the choices we make by justifying the reasons behind our actions.

To be fair, not all excuses are bad. Some can be, let's say, reasonable. In Luke 9:57-62, we are faced with the dilemma of how reasonable excuses are challenged by Jesus for their superficial nature because they mask what's happening deep inside our hearts.

The Lucan text provides a trilogy for our topic "*The Cost of Discipleship*" (or *The Cost of Following Jesus*). Three scenarios are presented. In each scenario, we see potential Christ-followers who say the right words of commitment, but then add a condition before such commitment. The Bible does not disclose their final outcome- whether they became disciples or not. The emphasis here is for us to **count the cost of becoming a disciple**. The responses of these 'would-be' disciples reveal their initial gut reaction because what comes to

mind first typically exposes the heart. Proverbs 27:19 says, "*As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man*".

### **Let us examine the 1st scenario**

57 As they (Jesus and His disciples) were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."  
58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Perhaps some of us have spoken the same words, "*I will follow you wherever you go*" as the first potential Christ-follower did. It sounds like the right answer—proclaiming our unending love and willingness to fulfill Christ's mission. But is that completely true? Isn't it easier to sing the hymn "All to Jesus I surrender" than to actually do so?

The man said, "*I will follow you wherever you go*". That sounds good, but Jesus has a way of going beneath your words to discover your motives. He told the man that foxes know where they'll sleep and birds know where they will nest, but Jesus who stripped Himself of glory, who was born in a lowly stable for animals and buried in a borrowed tomb, totally relied on the Father's provision during His earthly ministry. What He meant was that following His call to become a disciple will become hard at times. There will be uncertainties. In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ will suffer persecution (as Paul writes in 2 Tim 3:12).

***It costs to follow Jesus.*** In Eastern cultures persecution is rampant, and many Christians pay with their very lives. In the western world, we must admit it's not so dramatic. For the most part, it's our discomfort and inconvenience (although new trends are threatening to be more harmful).

I recall when I was a young teen, I got ready to go to Sunday School, which was held Sunday afternoons. It started to rain so I decided not to go even though I was getting a drive. Then I noticed my friend next door hopping out in the rain with his hockey stick for a game. He was taking the bus so chances are he would have gotten wet for most of the journey, whereas for me I would only get wet getting into and out of the car. It dawned on me that my friend was committed. The Holy Spirit spoke to me. I quickly got dressed again and went.

When push comes to shove, are we willing to suffer discomforts and inconveniences for Christ? What excuses do we make for avoiding attending church or doing tasks required of us? Do we seek opportunities each day to give and serve others, or do we discreetly funnel life circumstances for our benefit at the expense of others?

## **The 2nd scenario**

**59** He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." **60** Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Concerning the second potential Christ-follower, we are faced with the dilemma of loyalty and allegiance. Again, the excuse provided seems reasonable at face value: "Lord, let me first go and bury my father" (Luke 9:59). In fact, one could argue this is indeed a Biblical responsibility reserved for the eldest son.

How then could Jesus rebuke a man who prioritizes family obligations? Are we not called to love, protect, serve, and provide for our families? Yes, of course, but we are challenged to sift through the reactionary layers of our hearts in order to uncover the true message Jesus is driving at.

According to Jewish culture, this man wasn't asking to go to the funeral. He was referring to his father's impending death and to make sure he receives the inheritance. In today's context, he wanted to be present when the will was probated, to ensure he got as much of the 'dead left' as possible. He probably would influence his dying father to will all or most of the wealth to him. This now puts a totally different understanding of the scenario.

Jesus said to this would-be follower, "Let the dead bury the dead". In other words, let those who are spiritually dead worry about those things. One should not delay the calling of God upon their lives, for we are uncertain of the future, and we should put our trust in God's care and provision.

## **The 3rd scenario**

**61** Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." **62** Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

The third "would-be" follower presents a completely different angle regarding excuses, which is perhaps most pervasive within our hearts. This justification centers around whose voice takes precedence in our decision-making. Again, the superficial request seems very reasonable: "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home" (Luke 9:61).

This man's commitment seems firm that He would follow Jesus. He merely needed a few minutes to say goodbye to his family first. In some ways, we could argue that Jesus is confronting this man's hesitation in prioritizing His command. What seems even more apparent is Jesus knows the more time this man has to "reconsider" his decision, the more likely he will abandon his decision altogether due to the negative influence of his family and friends who do not share his beliefs, understand his rationale, or approve of his decision. That is why Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

It is virtually impossible to plow a field in a straight row while looking backward. It will be so crooked. In today's context, there is no way one can drive a car through traffic while looking backward through the rear windshield. That's a certain accident

waiting to happen. Therefore, we cannot be double minded in our commitment to Christ, nor can we delay our commitment to Christ, for if we 'dilly-dally', we are tempted to compromise our commitment or even change our minds. Jesus insists you have to get off the fence to follow Him. You must not allow even family relationships to affect your loyalty to Christ. Christ must be first, period!

In closing, Jesus made it quite clear that in deciding to follow Him we must count the cost. Whereas salvation is a free gift of God, discipleship is costly. It's demanding, hence we often make excuses, reasonable excuses at times. In our Lucan text today all three 'would-be' followers gave excuses, but Jesus could see deeper than the surface to the real motives and challenge them.

The Christian faith requires dying to self, serving, and forgiving others, enduring ridicule, inconveniences, and suffering persecution even. However, the eternal benefits of following Jesus far outweigh these temporary 'light afflictions'.

May God help us to be resilient in our commitment to Christ, to count the cost, and be willing to go all-in for Christ. For, it will be worth it after all.

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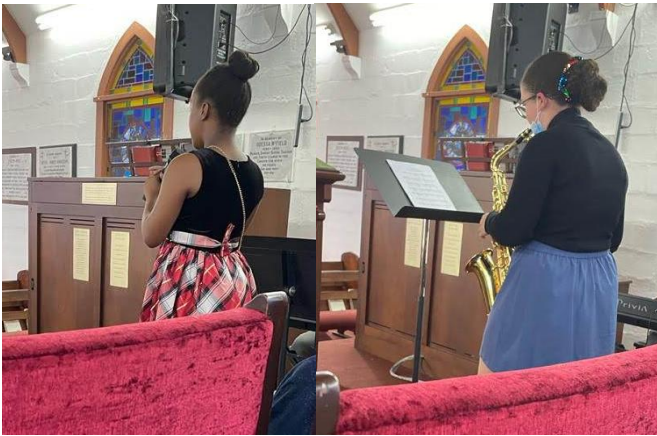
## **IN OTHER NEWS**

### **CPR/AED Training**

On Saturday, June 18, 2022, thirteen Camp leaders and two Council staff participated in a CPR/AED training offered by the Cayman Islands Health Service Authority Training Unit. Although our camp/youth leaders have their Basic Water Rescue Certification to prepare for eventualities (camp activities include visits to the beach), it was felt that supplementing this with other 'life-saving' skills was absolutely essential. Emergencies can happen anywhere. We might be at a church event, at school, at home, or on the road where our training and quick response might save a life or give it a chance until professional help arrives.







On Sunday, June 19, 2022 (Father's Day) the children and youth of Webster Memorial United Church (Bodden Town) paid tribute to their fathers by handing our gift packages and presenting special musical items. Leanah Squire sang a song and Payton Robinson played on the saxophone.

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The Savannah United Church Girls Brigade Award Ceremony was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 24 (Friday)  
**Elmslie Memorial International Night – 7:30 pm**

June 25 (Saturday)  
**Lay Leaders Certificate Course Training– 9:00 am-2:00 pm via Zoom**  
**Camp Leaders' Social – 6:00 pm – Elmslie Memorial UC**

June 26 (Sunday) 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
 every Sunday at 7:45 am

**June 26, 2022**  
 Mr. Noel Wallace

# SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH YOUTH

THURSDAY  
JUNE 30, 2022  
AT 7PM.

## SAVANNAH UNITED CHURCH (SUC) PRESENTS SECOND ZOOM PANEL DISCUSSION

Including Panelist from SUC Youth and Young Adults Group

## Memorial Stone Anniversary Ceremony

Please Join Us

as we commemorate 1st July 1920 -  
 the day the memorial stones were laid at Elmslie

When: Friday, 1st July 2022  
 Time: 12:30 pm (midday meditation)  
 Where: Elmslie Memorial United Church

In memory of those who served in the various ministries and members who faithfully attended elmslie throughout the past 100+ years, please bring flowers to place around the building as a floral tribute.

Names of those for whom flowers are laid will be written into memory books provided, and saved for posterity.

Snacks will be provided in the church hall after the midday service.

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*Cayman  
Church Sports  
Outreach  
C.C.S.O*

## FCA Cayman Sports Symposium



Are you a COACH who is motivated to take your athletes to another level? Are you a PASTOR, a Youth leader, Ministry leader, longing to see eternal change in your communities?

This event is for you! See you there!

**COME**  
see and learn

EVERY Coach and Athlete  
EVERY Family  
EVERY Community

**GO**  
reach EVERY one



**Date:** June 25

**Time:** 4pm. - 6pm.

**Cost:** FREE

**Location:** First Assembly of God  
195 Old Crewe Road

George Town, Grand Cayman

**Contact:** Yolanda Whitaker  
ywhitaker@360globalsport.com  
345-917-4832



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