



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

July 14, 2022

**SEASON OF PENTECOST**

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 28



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

## ***There's A Choice to Be Made***

*By Mr. Bryan Bothwell*

Please read Amos 8:1-12 and Luke 10:38 – 42

The theme developed for us to grapple with this week is “There’s A Choice to Be Made” in responding to ‘God Who so loves the world’. Scholars assure us, though, that that “choice” is not between “being” versus “doing”, as some may have interpreted that Gospel Scripture - they remain inseparable! Though clearly Jesus did say that the way in which Mary had prioritized His presence, having taken the posture of a then student focused raptly on being shaped by a Rabbi, was “better” than Martha letting herself be, as the Divine Jesus sensed, “worried and upset about many things”. We don’t know what those were. Luke says that one thing that “distracted” her was all that had to be done to prepare the meal for Jesus, and the disciples travelling with Him, which was an important element of caring for one’s neighbor in those days. And we could speculate from what Martha said that she was also “upset” that Mary was not helping her. And we probably all know how that feeling of “why is it always me having to do everything?” indeed distracts us from Godly thoughts! But we do not have to speculate on the details; Christ knew, and Christ has spoken. Though we should learn from the caring voice in which He “corrected” Martha.

Our Amos text, on the other hand, is very explicit, in keeping with the rest of the book, clearly showing God to be very upset with the antipathy of His people. Well, the vast majority of them. Obviously, there were still some Marthas and Marys, eager to serve Him and listen to Him, even if they do not always get it exactly right, as we saw with Jonah, who had also been sent out at the same time as Amos and Hosea to proclaim God’s message. Amos forthrightly proclaimed the messages he had been given for both Israel and surrounding nations, even if he did plead with God sometimes on behalf of Israel – though perhaps those were ways God was keeping Amos compassionate. For we see throughout the book that God’s heart remained pained, even in His holy anger over the oppression and unholiness rampant amongst His people. And His messages drew the wrath of both king and priest, just as Jesus’ message did 700 years later. Even worse, perhaps, were the many more in Israel who simply ignored Amos, as they had done with God’s message for centuries, responding with showy rituals where God demanded righteousness. Through Amos, as

through the other prophets, God had reminded them of the many times their forefathers had rebelled and strayed from His message, bringing awful suffering down on themselves because of their callous disregard for the wellbeing of weaker individuals, and other unrighteousness. Then came crying back to Him to be rescued and lifted back up, as God in His characteristic forgiving love had patiently done time after time. Now, in the time of Amos, they were riding the crest of one of those highs again. The rich and powerful grabbing more and more of both from anyone they could take from. Riding that crest of materialistic euphoria, gods of their own lives, in their own eyes, while wallowing in the pits of human ignobility.

Amos is filled with examples of social and economic injustice, oppression, other godless living and evil. And, inevitably, both kingdoms of Israel ended up weakened, destroyed, and exiled to the lands of their separate captors. Judah was eventually restored, as God had promised, though not the Northern Kingdom, “never to rise again”, as in Amos 2. Then after these national defeats, exiles and restoration, and the 400 years of the “famine of hearing the words of the LORD” (Am 8:11) – ‘the silence between the Testaments’ - God Incarnate appears in Judah (once more occupied by a foreign conqueror, Rome) to put in train God’s final process of saving not only Israel, but the whole world. And what does He find?

Was it the same picture God presented to Amos, of “A basket of ripe fruit”? For the Incarnate God then presented to His disciples an image of a ripe harvest, “The Harvest is plentiful” He declares when, as Matthew reports (9: 36), “He saw the crowds [and] had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”? And yet the appointed ‘shepherds’ were still dogmatic on the rituals, but without the heart and the righteousness, as Jesus and John the Baptist made clear. In Amos, the emphasis was on the ripe fruit that ‘would be spared no longer’, though in God’s compassion He declared that some would be – Israel would be “shaken in a sieve”, like grain, and “all the sinners among my people will die”. Those who smugly boasted it would never happen because they were God’s chosen, yet they had continuously chosen not to follow God [Am 9: 9, 10]. In the picture Christ presented, His emphasis is on a ripe harvest ready to be saved, to be, in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “fetched home to the Kingdom of God”. The same homecoming God had sought for them to choose when He had pleaded and warned through, as well as before and after, Amos.

But still there was “a choice to be made”. And in Christ’s words the options were no less diametric than in Amos: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to

save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already ...”

We of today’s world are truly blessed if we have chosen to “believe in His Son”. However, as His work is not done, echoes from the Book of Amos cry out across our world. “I can’t afford milk for my babies”, captions the picture of anguished Sri Lankan mothers in a BBC headline. On the same page, another blares: “cask of rare Scotch whiskey auctioned for £16m”. Not even touching on the slaughter of our Ukrainian neighbors while so many others seem more concerned of what they have to ‘sacrifice’ in fuel costs if we want to help deter Russia. And we know our local headlines. Therefore, the sieving continues. And those who have not yet believed, are standing in those two images, ripe to be spared no longer, but blessed that God is still holding open that choice to be “fetched home to the kingdom of God”. But there outside of the Kingdom is not where any of us would want to end up.

When we left Martha earlier, she was being ‘corrected’ in deeming to tell Christ what to do, jumping to lead rather than follow, even while addressing Him as “Lord”. Clearly, she did not yet know fully Who He was. Thankfully, when we next come across her in the Gospels [Jn. 11], just before Jesus raises her brother from the dead, she readily acknowledges that “whoever lives and believes in [Him] will never die” and declares, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who has come into the world.” She had been safely “fetched home”.

Will you and I “go and do likewise”? Make the right choice to gratefully believe then follow faithfully, allowing Christ to lift us up from however we have stumbled, bring us safely home, and remain Lord of our lives. Amen.

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*By Dr. Richard Wildman  
Principal of Clifton Hunter High School  
Moderator of the Panel Discussion*

On Thursday, June 30, 2022, at 7:00 pm the Savannah United Church held the second Evangelism Zoom Panel Discussion, entitled ‘Sharing the Gospel with Youth’.

The four panelists, Pastor Christopher Murray, J-Mark Clark, Rev. Louis Sully, and Mrs. Jodian McLean were allotted 3 minutes to respond to the following questions,

- How do we reach youth across age and culture?
- How can parents help their children share the gospel with their peers?
- How can youth use social media as a medium for sharing the gospel?
- What scriptures are useful to share with young people?
- How should parents support youth who are unsaved?

- Should Christian youth separate themselves from their non-Christian peers?
- What are the best ways for youth to share the Gospel?

The panelists and attendees also discussed how the Bible can be made practical for the youth e.g., showing them how to pray using scripture passages for the situations, guiding their use of social media, and assisting them to use apps that share the gospel, mentoring, loving, praying with them, and most importantly, modeling an exemplary Christian life.

#### **What are the aims of sharing the Gospel with the youth?**

1. Youth need to be led to Jesus Christ to be saved and save others
2. They need guidance and direction in discovering and developing their spiritual gifts and abilities
3. They need to be equipped and empowered for a life of service within God’s church and community
4. They need to be integrated into all aspects of the church’s life and leadership.

Our youth also need assistance in how to cultivate a quality life: Spiritual (Spirit and mind), Physical (Body), and Material life (finance), how to connect with others (fellow church members through networking, and the youth of the community through evangelism and community service).

#### **The panel discussion was summed up in the following points,**

- Evangelism has to do with a commitment to Christ
- Evangelism starts from within, not from without
- Evangelism is the result of a good life management
- Evangelism equals “Testimony”: to tell others what God has done for you”.

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During the summer various churches offer Vacation Bible School and camps. Other institutions and civic groups run specialized camps for music, sports, expeditions, and water activities. The United Church Camps at Prospect have been blazing the trail with exciting and pulsating camps each year.



*Special cupcakes with the 2022 Camp theme*



The theme for Summer Camp 2022 is 'A.N.E.W. Season'.  
The meaning of this acronym is as follows:

**A - Anchored**

We are called to be anchored/rooted in God.

**N – Nurtured**

We need to nurture our relationship with God so that we may grow in Christ.

**E – Empowered**

We must call on the Holy Spirit of God to empower us to walk in the ways of Christ and be the light in the world of darkness.

**W – Witness**

We are called to share the Light of the World (Jesus Christ) with others, through actions and words.



*Campers and leaders enjoying the lunch provided by the Cayman Council Women's Fellowship.*

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**Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council** \$125 CI  
**SUMMER DAY CAMPS 2022**  
CHILDREN'S (AGES 8-12) JULY 10-15  
TEENS' (AGES 13-17) JULY 17-22  
Theme: **A NEW SEASON**



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**July 17, 2022**  
Mr. Bryan Bothwell

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**WEBSTER MEMORIAL  
BODDEN TOWN**

July 25-29 (Mon.-Fri.)  
8:00 am – 12:00 pm



UCJCI July – September 2022 Focus  
**Responding**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Pentecost**

**Responding:  
There's A Choice to Be Made**

Amos 8:1-12; Psalm 52; Col. 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

The prophet Amos was scathing in his reproof of those who chose profit over people. Mary was lauded for staying close to Jesus, while Martha was busy elsewhere. As the church responds we must always seek to make the right choice.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 14 (Thursday)

**Lay Leaders Certificate Course Training**– 6:00 pm-8:00 pm via Zoom

July 17 (Sunday) 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

July 17-22 (Sunday - Friday)

**Teens' Camp** – Prospect Youth Centre



### Remember in your prayers

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Offer praise, give thanks, and intercede. Consider how **you** can become an answer to prayer in a practical way.

*Please also include in your prayers Rev. Godfrey Meghoo, who is unwell.*

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