



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE



July 28, 2022

SEASON OF PENTECOST

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 30

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

New Perspectives & New Priorities

By Rev. Otto Menko

Please read Luke 12:13-21

The subject of today's reading is our attitude to material things such as money and other assets that we regard in high esteem and also something that is absolutely necessary in our earthly life.

Someone in the crowd asked Jesus to act as a mediator in a family dispute of financial nature. *"Teacher, - the man said - tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."* (v.13)

It may seem strange to our modern, Western way of thinking that someone is asking a spiritual leader (in this case, Jesus) to act as a judge and officiate in a dispute, but it was and still is the custom in Judaism. Jewish men and women always seek the ruling of their rabbi and go to a secular court only as a last resort. The Torah, or Law, has extensive and often detailed instructions for almost every aspect of life, what is permitted, what is not, what course of action is to be followed, and so forth. Rabbis were and still are the professional guides and judges not only in spiritual but also in practical matters.

This man's complaint was not that he didn't receive his rightful portion of his inheritance but that his older brother was still in charge of his share. The words, "tell my brother to divide the inheritance" indicates that this man was a younger brother and although after the death of their father his share of the estate was allocated to him, he still didn't have access to it. He didn't accuse his brother of misusing, mishandling the inheritance; he just wanted to take charge of his share now. He wanted to be independent of his brother, he wanted to have complete control over his assets. Obviously, this matter has become a matter of contention between them and maybe even strained their sibling relationship.

There are two things here that we need to note briefly.

1. Money and any financial assets are an essential necessity for our earthly existence. We need money to live, to take care of our basic needs and the needs of those we are responsible for. Without sufficient and steady personal income, it is impossible to survive. No one dreams about living on handouts day-after-day, depending on the charity of friends, family, or strangers. In short: material things are essential to our existence.

2. The other thing is that material things can easily become our priority so much that their relentless pursuit or hoarding can

completely derail our life, destroy our relationships, even our physical, emotional, and mental health. The issue is not about whether we should own material possessions but about becoming owned and controlled by these.

Now let us turn back to our passage. The man from the crowd who addressed Jesus as teacher, didn't ask for instruction. Instead, he told Jesus what he wanted; he instructed Jesus what to do. This attitude shows where his heart was and where his real interest lied. He was selfish and greedy.

Jesus saw through this man's heart and true intentions and used the encounter as a teaching moment, drawing the attention to the trappings of prioritizing material, earthly wealth over spiritual ones. He said, *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."* (v.15)

According to the world, life does consist in the abundance of possessions. When you are rich, you are able to buy the things you want; you can travel, you don't have any more financial worries. Your wealth will provide you financial security; your problems will be solved: monthly bills, housing, children's education, cars, desirable luxuries, and retirement. Wealth is a sign of "success" and that we 'made' it. It also brings respect, status, and recognition. Of course, material wealth also brings a lot of troubles, conflicts, problems, heartaches, and worries, but this does not deter us from pursuing it, keep wanting more and more.



Jesus warned his listeners and us: "Watch out! Be on your guard..." It is not money that causes the problem, but the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10). Material wealth in itself is not evil. It is our attitude towards it that we must examine.

The parable of the rich fool, a simple story used to illustrate a moral and spiritual lesson, served as an eye-opener to highlight the foolishness of putting ones' trust in material possessions.

The man in the parable was already rich, even before his bumper crop. The harvest just increased his wealth. But, instead of being grateful for this blessing and considering how he could use wisely the extra wealth he gained, he focused on himself. He had much more than what he needed, yet he refused to be a good steward of his extra wealth. He didn't consider the needs existing around him, maybe the needs of his extended family or of friends and community. He was very much like Ebenezer Scrooge, the old miser in Charles Dicken's famous novella, 'A

Christmas Carol' who hoarded his wealth and turned a blind eye to the needs around him.

This rich fool failed not only all those who could have benefitted from his generosity and kind-heartedness but failed God as well, who entrusted him with so much. In addition, he also failed to consider his own mortality, for his wealth couldn't guarantee a long life.

Jesus wanted His listeners to understand that there is a difference between being rich toward ourselves and toward God. Being rich toward God first of all means that we are thankful to God for our blessings. Secondly, it means returning a portion of our material blessings to God, and thirdly, that we use our blessings wisely as good stewards for the benefit of others. This way, metaphorically speaking, we 'store up treasures in heaven'. Of course, we are also permitted to enjoy a portion of our blessings in a sensible and reasonable way.

Although the world bombards us daily with the message that life does consist in the abundance of possessions, Jesus warns us that it is not so. True happiness, contentment, and security lies only in being rich towards God. Most of God's children are not well off, living simple, ordinary lives, maybe even finding challenging at times to come up with that little extra for unexpected expenses, yet they can be happier, more content and grateful than those whose 'cup' overflows. These men and women of faith still find a way to share their meager resources and enrich others. Their hearts and hands are open to recognize and respond to the needs around them.

Being rich toward God is of infinitely greater value than just being rich. We must ensure we have the right attitude towards material wealth and possessions. Jesus invites us as members of His Body, the Church, to reject the vices of greed and selfishness, to adjust our attitude, perspective, and priorities, to reconsider our values and align them with the virtues of the Kingdom of God and of God's will.

CIRMC 2022 SUMMER CAMPS

JULY 10-15 (CHILDREN)

JULY 17-22 (TEENS)



The theme for Summer Camp 2022 was 'A.N.E.W. Season'. In the daily Bible Study sessions, the letters of this acronym invited the campers to consider the implications of being

- **Anchored** (we are called to be anchored/rooted in God),
- **Nurtured** (we need to nurture our relationship with God so that we may grow in Christ),

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

Other camp activities included morning physical exercise, breakfast and lunch duties, praise time, creative activities, involvement in Mission Outreach, participation in radio broadcasts and Sunday morning worship services at the Savannah United Church, and special concerts at the Elmslie Memorial UC, showcasing the talents of the campers. Both the Children and Teens Camp was filled to capacity.

Now that the CIRMC 2022 Summer Camps are over, the children and teens returned to their favorite vacation-time pursuits and will try to make the most of what remains from their summer break. The camp leadership team and the host of volunteers who worked tirelessly deserve some rest and also the Church's gratitude and thanks.

Spending two weeks from morning till evening with dozens of rumbunctious youth is no small feat. Attending to their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs and engaging them not only as a group but, more importantly, as individuals, listening to them, discerning what lies behind the façade and responding with love and understanding is a high call and requires total commitment, openness, and faith. May God bless richly our camp leadership team and all volunteers for their ministry!

A.N.E.W. Season - "To everything there is a season" (Eccl. 3:1) was the central theme of the 2022 Summer Camps. Now, that the camps are over, the ministry must continue to be there for the children and youth when their 'season' arrives, when the 'wind of the Spirit' blows in their lives. The results of Summer Camps or any ministry is not in our 'power'. "The wind blows wherever it pleases," said Jesus to Nicodemus, using a metaphor to describe the work of the Holy Spirit who doesn't work by human will, capacity or control.

There could be some in our Churches who wonder if our Summer Camps have any influence, long-term effectiveness, or lasting impacts. Conventional wisdom may suggest that any benefits fade quickly after the camps are over; that real, life-changing experiences are but exceptions to the rule.

Rest assured that the events planned and held in our Congregations and RMCs, let them be Bible Study, Youth Group, Summer Camp, or any other activity, are much more than fun and games. Our youth leaders and volunteers know that providing a 'good time' for our youth is only a vehicle to achieve something much deeper and more important, namely, to lead them to Jesus Christ and journey with them as they grow and mature in faith. In addition, they are immersed in an environment conducive to their overall development: to grow in social skills, leadership, self-confidence, and receive personalized guidance to find their 'place' and ministry in the life of their Congregation.

The ultimate goal of a God approved Youth Ministry is assisting each and every young person to become authentic disciples of Jesus Christ, to help them discover the relevance of faith in everyday life, and to embark on a journey of life-long transformation to reflect more and more the image of Christ as an active participant in the life and ministry of a faith community.

Thank You!

Dear Camp Personnel, Leaders, and Volunteers, all of you on the front line and behind the scenes,

We thank you for all you have done to make the CIRMC 2022 Summer Camp happen. We are truly blessed to have so many gifted and dedicated members in our congregations.

Thank you for being so generous with your time and talents, for your example in leadership and service. It is our hope and prayer that what God has planted in the hearts and minds of the campers through your ministry may grow and come to fruition.

May God bless you richly as you yourselves continue to be 'Anchored, Nurtured, Empowered and Witness' in your personal life and among those God has placed you.

From the CIRMC

SUMMER CAMP PHOTOS





UCJCI July – September 2022 Focus
Responding

8th Sunday in Pentecost

July 31, 2022

Responding: New Perspectives & New Priorities

Hosea 11:1-11; Psalm 107:1-9;
Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

The church's position as the Body of Christ provides a new perspective on life; it also gives us new priorities. We must seek to bring the values & virtues of the kingdom of God into the realities of human life while rejecting the vices of greed, selfishness, and pride.



Remember in your prayers



All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. **Please also include in your prayers Rev. Godfrey Meghoo.**



Pringle Home for Children



100th Anniversary Service

*"Pringle at 100:
preserving a legacy of service."*

Preacher: Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott
Moderator of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

**Carron Hall
United Church**
Carron Hall, St. Mary

**JULY
31
2022**
10:00 A.M

Streaming on YouTube: UCJCI's Channel

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**WILLIAM POUCHIE
MEMORIAL, NORTH SIDE**

August 3 - 7 (Wed.-Sun.)
6:00 Pm – 8:30 pm



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 31 (Sunday) 8th Sunday after Pentecost

August 3 - 7 (Wednesday - Sunday)

Vacation Bible School – William Pouchie Memorial, NS



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

July 31, 2022
Rev. Otto Menko

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