



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

October 6, 2022

SEASON OF PENTECOST

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 40



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

Radical Hope In the Face of Suffering

By Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield and Dr. Elizabeth McLaughlin

Please read Luke 17:11-19

Jesus throughout His ministry encountered and healed people who were suffering from various diseases. Sickness and ill-health had not only physical realities for the body but engaged the mind and the spirit. In the context of the 1st century, there were also cultural and sociological implications when someone was diagnosed with particular diseases. The sick was often criticized, condemned, isolated, and ostracized by the healthy in the society. Financial instability, loss of livelihood, impoverished living condition and being labeled as an outcast, accompanied the sick and less able in the society. The life of the sick was one of trauma as the expected support systems were non-existent.

The support expected from one's religious and theological base was insufficient at best and in most cases, blatantly absent. To be ill was very often linked to ancestral sin and personal sin and the need for forgiveness. The issue of the cause of the particular illness was the theme of the theological enquiry and the social gossip. Blame would be distributed without consideration of the pain being inflicted on those who were already suffering from the physical reality of the illness.

Part of the frustration people felt with Jesus was His revolutionary approach to sickness and was his willingness to embrace the sick and ostracized in the society. Jesus gave the sick hope by breaking down the walls of discrimination, segregation, and humiliation. He embraced the suffering, made room for the diseased and comforted the deranged. Jesus not only cured their physical ailment, but He paved the way for their return to society and to living life in abundance. The example of Jesus' interaction with the sick ought to inform our own need to care for the suffering and dying. The diseased woman touched His garment. Jesus touched the eyes of the blind man when he placed the poultice made of spittle and mud on his eyes. Jesus engaged the demoniac, the lame, the fevered and the lone leper in Matthew 8:1-3. He came into their space and allowed them into His space. Such interactions which provided hope and healing defied the social structure and upset the religious impositions. Can we learn to treat illness the way Jesus did?

Leprosy, the cause of the illness in the text, had its uniqueness in terms of the intensity of the reaction from the society and the overlay of the Priest or religious echelon having to declare the person worth of returning to the social structure. The lepers had to locate themselves outside of the city walls. They were bereft of family, possessions, occupation, livelihood, and dignity. They had to announce their approach and declared themselves 'Unclean'. As such, they formed their

own colony and existed together in their misery. Interestingly, within the colony, heritage and social status was of no importance. The common thread was the disease. Hence, among the ten lepers who approached Jesus, one was a Samaritan. Normally, the Jews would not have a Samaritan in their midst, but here, in the leveling, brought on by the dreaded disease, social status was forgotten. They were lepers in common and accepted their status and reality.

The importance of the encounter was not just that Jesus interacted with the diseased, but that healing came to all ten. Hope and change occurred, and their lives would return to normal once they were certified as cleansed. A deeper reading of the text tend to place emphasis on the ingratitude of the nine. They instantly forgot the miracle of their healing and hastily returned to their former life. The nine who never sought Jesus to say thanks perhaps reflect their engagement only with the sociological issues of the disease as against an interaction based on faith. The Samaritan, having returned in gratitude to Jesus, received a new benediction, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well'.

The other nine traded in the leprosy of the body for a leprosy of the heart. They were so diseased in the heart that they did not return to express gratitude, they forgot the camaraderie with the Samaritan, and they hurried to fulfil the religious requirements in order to return to the social status prior to leprosy. This is a real example of how easy it is to allow religiosity to supersede faith. Sometimes, in the name of religion and its structures, we hurry to entitlement, forgetting the need to show gratitude and care for the other. The disease of the heart enables us to foster discrimination, racism, social inequity, and the continuous marginalization of the other. How quickly the nine not only forgot the Samaritan, but also the Healer and the Saviour.

In the past decade, the attention of the world has been on various diseases that have had debilitating effects not only on the individual but on the wider society. For us in the Caribbean, we have seen people suffer from the effects of Mosquito transferred diseases such as Dengue, Chikungunya, and Zika. Over the past two years, the entire world has experienced the crippling effect of COVID-19 on all aspects of life. Monkeypox is also now a present reality.

The other life-threatening diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart related diseases and other comorbidities have been present and continue to impact the health of people and the health care facilities. A troubling question for the society is the depth of our response to the sick and suffering. How have we provided hope? How consistent are we in caring for and remembering persons when they experience debilitating illnesses? Do we linger with them sufficiently or do we hastily pass them by on the other side? Do we blame persons for their illness, or do we embrace and support them through the challenges?

A critical role for the Church and Christians is the offering of radical hope to persons facing the reality of illness and suffering. This hope needs to be offered without delay and without alloy. The hope Jesus gave to these lepers and those whom He healed should enable us to make fundamental changes in our attitude and view towards illness. This understanding and offering of hope should also assist us in coping when we face health challenges and when we interact with those who are ailing. Such hope is rooted in faith. The sadness is that so often, there is disappointment when healing is not instantaneous or when death occurs. Radical hope based on faith learns patience and seeks to accept the sovereign will of God in the midst of the situation. Hope places trust in God's faithfulness and God's promise as Jehovah Rapha. 'The Lord Our Healer. O Lord my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me'. (Psalm 30:2).

Congratulations!



(photo: CNS)

The CIRMC wishes to extend heartfelt congratulations to Nathan Myers, son of Rev. Donovan Myers, and Mrs. Denise Myers of the John Gray Memorial Church (West Bay) on the occasion of commencing his pilot career with our local airline, Cayman Airways.

From a very early age, Nathan dreamed of flying for Cayman Airways. Now, after years of hard work and sacrifices, his dream has come true.

After joining Cayman Airways in May 2022, Nathan passed his flight training last month and became one of the newest first officers on the Twin Otter fleet operated by Cayman Airways Express.

Nathan has a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautics from Liberty University in Virginia and an Associates in Science degree from the University College of the Cayman Islands with a concentration in Physics and Environmental Science. He has a Commercial Multi-Engine License with Instrument Rating.

(Read full article on CNS)

<https://caymannewsservice.com/2022/10/>



United Church Men's Fellowship Message for Synodical Men's Fellowship Sunday October 9, 2022

Each year, we pause to celebrate the United Church Synodical Men's Fellowship Sunday. This year we do so under the theme **"Men on a Mission – From Crisis to Christ"**.

Crisis may be defined as a situation that is extremely dangerous or when there are many problems. As we examine the state of our world today, we are forced to conclude that it is in crisis. There are indeed many problems. Currently, there is a war between Russia and Ukraine that has created an energy crisis, a food security crisis, and an international transportation crisis to name a few. There is an environmental crisis caused by climate change. The Covid 19 pandemic appears to be receding, but we are now faced with Monkey Pox. One crisis after another.

Jamaica is affected by all of these and more. We are beset by crime and violence, corruption, and a general breakdown in values. Our younger generation is distracted by different value systems. Scamming and the general easy way out in making a living seems now to be the order of the day. We look to persons who may be regarded as less than desirable but who have become role models, and social media has become a negative influence especially on our young people. Education is under siege and there is general indiscipline in schools. Indeed, there are crises all around us.

But we need not despair. With every crisis comes opportunities. Recall in Mark 6:34 - 44, the disciples informed Jesus that they were in a crisis and that He should send the crowd away to find food for themselves. But Jesus enquired about the resources that were available and He used the available five loaves and two fishes to feed the crowd. Although the disciples were with Him daily, they did not understand that He was bigger than the crisis. This was only manifested to them when the five loaves and two fishes fed over five thousand men, not counting women and children. They eventually had twelve baskets of excess food.

Christ has given us the resources that can transform our society. Like the disciples, we are not recognizing the power He has endowed on us. We need to utilize our God-given resources of talent, time, and money to transform our society. We need to use our influences by:

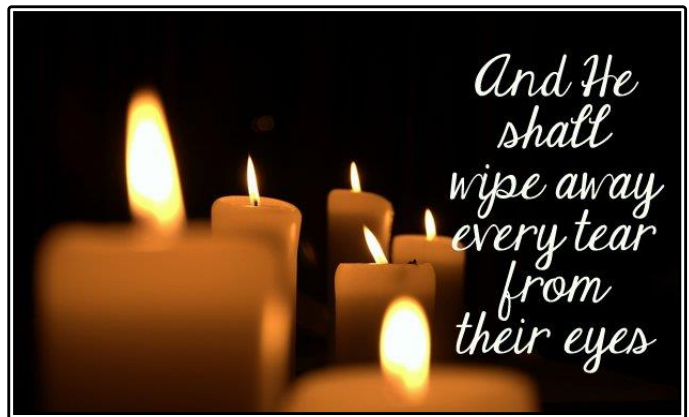
- becoming Sunday School Teachers,
- mentors for the young boys and girls in our community,
- assisting with the Home Work Programmes,
- identifying the young boys in our communities and involving them in the Boys' Brigade of which we ought to be leaders,
- getting involved in other community projects such as feeding the hungry, caring for the fatherless, the aged and the disabled.

Christ said that whatever we do for the least of these brothers and sisters, we do it for Him. We can use our resources to move people from today's crises to Christ.

My challenge is that we begin to identify the resources with which God has blessed us and invite our other brothers – young and not so young - to join us as we begin this mission of moving our people from the crises that seem to pervade us. I am confident that the results we achieve will assist in advancing the Kingdom of God.

I wish God’s blessings on you as you celebrate this Men’s Fellowship Sunday and may you, with urgency, seek to join this Mission of moving people from crisis to Christ.

Errol Miller
Acting President General
United Church Men’s Fellowship



Men’s Fellowship Breakfast




October 29, 2022
at 8 :30 AM
John Gray Memorial United Church Hall
West Bay


Guest Speaker: Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott
Theme: Men On A Mission


Caribbean Breakfast
Ackee, codfish, callaloo,
Boiled bananas, dumplings
Cost \$15.00
A Father Son / Mentee Event



Cayman Council - Men's Fellowship







AGM 2022

SATURDAY OCTOBER 29, 2022
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM
PROSPECT YOUTH CENTRE
292 PROSPECT POINT ROAD

THE INTERSCHOOL/INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS INVITES ALL BOARD MEMBERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SPONSORS, STUDENTS, DONORS, PARTNERS AND INTERESTED PERSONS TO ATTEND ITS 3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.


REGISTER AT: <https://www.isivcfky.com/events>

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT DR. ERICA GORDON, BOARD SECRETARY, PH: 326-0578


UPCOMING EVENTS

October 8 (Saturday)
Council Meeting – 9:00 am East End United Church Hall

October 9 (Sunday) 18th Sunday after Pentecost



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 at this time

- Pastor John Macmillan (RYMC) and
- Mrs. Itza Bodden, Youth Worker (EE-GB) – both face health related challenges.
- The bereaved families of the late Mrs. Janilee Clifford (Robert Young Memorial) and
- Mrs. Johnet Jackson (Savannah United).



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

October 9, 2022
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield & Dr. Elizabeth McLaughlin

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947-1963 Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky