



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

Season of Lent

March 02, 2023

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 09

UCJCI 43rd SYNOD THEME – **Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit** (Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite)

Guarding Your Speech

Rev. Donovan Myers

Please read James 3:1-12

As we begin this year's journey in Lent, that forty-day period that Jesus spent in the wilderness, in fasting and prayer – ahead of being tempted by Satan – we note how prominently speech or speaking takes center stage in that Gospel story. Both the absence of audible speech on the part of Jesus, as He separated Himself from people in solitude, fasting and prayer; to the belligerent hounding of Jesus by Satan who tests Him time after time, after time! You can't miss the three times the tempter came to Him and "said" (he speaks or communicates). And then in response, Jesus replies "it is written". Both use language and speech, but while the tempter uses it to beguile and deceive, Jesus uses His speech to point to God.

It leaves us to evaluate and ask ourselves, how do we use our gift of speech?

Maybe you've heard about the three pastors [who were friends and worked in the same town] who went fishing one day. They began confessing their sins to each other.

The 1st one said, "My big sin is drinking. I know it's wrong, but every Friday night I drive to a city where no one knows me - go to a bar and get drunk." The 2nd Pastor shared, "My big sin is gambling. In fact, all the money I raised for that mission trip - I took it to the casino and lost it all." Finally, it was the 3rd turn, who was all too eager to share. He said, "Guys, I probably should have gone first because my big sin is gossiping."

Our power of speech has the ability to destroy just as it is able to build up. Talk is more than 'just words' strung together. It is often an indicator of character. For the Christian, it is often a gauge of how well we are following Jesus. Our speech can tell something about the **authenticity** of our faith!

The Apostle James writes about the negativity of speech! He says of the human tongue, as a symbol of communication – that it can be evil, destructive, and out of control. He is a bit pessimistic when he says that often people try to control their speech but can't really – almost like it's a train wreck waiting to happen. You are left asking the question, "Is there anything good that resides in human speech?" It's almost as if James is saying, "not really – be careful, there is always duplicity".

It's fair to ask why he speaks in this way! Is his only point that the tongue is inherently evil and incapable of real change? In other words, is it true that there is no good that's possible, so there's no use trying?

Perhaps James is trying to grab our attention – to get us to notice an issue that can be easily overlooked. So, he substantively uses metaphors to offer us a chance to look for the alternative / the other side -- that we must make our own determination as to which way the images should turn.

James uses three-word pictures to make the point that the tongue is *small* but *powerful*. That speech might seem innocuous, but it can be impactful!

The first is that of a HORSE. How are horses controlled? The rider manages the strength, speed, and direction of a horse much larger than himself by means of a bit in the horse's mouth. The tiny metal "BIT" is an implement which functions by pressing against the animal's tongue. The one who is able to control the horse's tongue with the bit in its mouth controls its whole body.

The second word picture is that of a SHIP. A ship is turned by a rudder which is about one per cent of the ship's weight. Yet it is used by the captain to turn the ship wherever she wants it to go. The *captain, rudder, and ship* are analogous to the *rider, bit, and horse*. However, this time the word picture of the ship considers the influence of outside forces: wind and waves that could take the ship on a different course or destroy it altogether. The captain who is able to keep control of the rudder, like the

person able to keep control of one's tongue, can weather difficult circumstances and emerge intact and on course.

The third picture that James offers is that of a FIRE. A very powerful force – like the bushfires we often hear of in California –begins with a spark. This is a distinctly different direction than the first two pictures. Bit and rudder are simply tools. For James – the tongue isn't simply a tool to be utilized but remains something that is independent of its possessor. Unlike the bit and rudder, the flame is uncontrolled and uncontrollable -- what it sets in motion is not purposeful but destructive.

He goes *on...* to describe the disruptive nature of uncontrolled speech. It upsets the entire created order and ultimately, this fire has its source in the everlasting fires of Gehenna (often translated as "hell"). For those living in the vicinity of Jerusalem, the vivid imagery would be the trash dump which smouldered continuously, fed by the city's refuse – something which we, thankfully, have not had to deal with except on the occasional eruption of Mt. Trashmore.

For James, the might of the Tongue is shown in the fact that it... **DIRECTS** where you go. Almost an indication of the fact that many of our conversations go downhill – nowhere purposeful or even into unhealthy places. Also, the might of the Tongue is shown in the fact that it...Can **DESTROY** what you have. Unchecked speech can destroy relationships. Careless gossip, hurtful words, and unverified statements can ruin lives! So too, the might of the Tongue is shown in the fact that it...**DISPLAYS** who you are. That's because speech or communication is not *really only* about the tongue, but it's about the heart. Note that Jesus in Matthew 12:34 is clear in pointing out that "...whatever is in your heart determines what you say."

So, the problem with our tongue is really a problem with our hearts.

- A person with a harsh tongue has an angry heart.
- A person with a negative tongue has a fearful heart.
- A person with an overactive tongue has an unsettled heart.
- A person with a boasting tongue has an insecure heart.
- A person with a filthy tongue has an impure heart.
- A person with a complaining/critical 'tongue' has a bitter heart.

The takeaway then is that the text offers an opportunity to look for the alternative - for the other side -, which way do we want the images to be expressed in our lives?

May I suggest that our tongues, speech and ability to communicate should be exercised with **High Responsibility?** We can exercise Leadership to show the potential of our words on others - both individuals as well as the community. James in vs. 1 of chapter 3 says, "Not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we, who teach, will be judged more strictly." Friend, I ask: Do you recognize and embrace your high calling in Christ?

Also, our tongues, speech and ability to communicate point us to our **Need for the Divine.** The suggestion is not that we are not capable of change, but change doesn't come from human effort alone or even primarily. Vs. 8 says, "...no one can tame the tongue", a suggestion that it requires the supernatural to be at work – submission to the work of God's spirit in helping us to exercise control. The question is: How involved is God in our efforts to transform the trajectory of our communications?

Lastly, how we use our tongues, speech and ability to communicate, **is an opportunity to Live Out whom we are meant to be!** James poses the question this way in vs. 11-12, "Does a fig tree produce olives, or does a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring."

Since blessing God with our voices requires sincerity, we can't bless God and curse people, because they bear God's image. So, we must examine ourselves – what we say, how we communicate in order to determine who we truly are.

For us to control our unruly tongue, it will require constant attention to who we are, what God has made us to be and how well we are living into our identity as God's children. Be truly mindful of our words because they hurt or heal; they can destroy or build up; they can speak death or life!

A 6' 6" guy walked up to the counter at Burger King, slammed down his big fist and said to the girl behind the counter, "I want half a Whopper." She said, "What?" He said again, "I want half a Whopper and I want it now!" Not being sure what to do, she said, "Excuse me for a minute." And she headed back to her manager without realizing that the man was following right behind her. She got back to the manager and said, "There's a big klutz out there who is dumber than lead and he has ordered half a Whopper." And just then she suddenly realized the 6' 6" fella was standing right behind her. She quickly added: "***And this gentleman wants the other half.***"

We must be truly mindful of our words because we might one day have to eat them!

SYNOD CORNER

Bulletin #7

Theme: Rooted and Resilient: Reignited by the Spirit.

Moderator-Elect: Rt Rev Gary Harriott

Date: April 23-30, 2023

Service of Life and Witness

On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, the Service of Life and Witness will be held at the Elmslie Memorial Church at 6:00 pm.

This service memorializes those who have faithfully served the Church and have been called home during the 2021 – 2023 Synodical period. A floral tribute will be done in their honour.

The Synod will celebrate the witness and ministry of persons attaining significant Ordination milestones during the service.

Lay Persons from the four Regional Mission Councils will receive Special Synodical Awards for their dedication and faithfulness at the Congregational and Council levels. **Mr Lewin Handel Whittaker** and **Mrs Aliceann Kirchman** are the Awardees from the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council.

Mr Heber Arch will receive a Special Synod Award for his service to the Church as a member of the Cayman United Church Corporation.

All ministers and lay pastors will receive Certificates of Appreciation for the resilience shown during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Moderator, Rt Rev Gary Harriott will preach, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated.

All are invited to attend this service and share in the celebrations with the Awardees from the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council.

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
presents
43RD SYNOD
Theme
"ROOTED, RESILIENT:
REIGNITED BY THE SPIRIT"
Blended Modality
REGISTER NOW!
The registration portal closes on Feb. 28, 2023.
*For those applying for Cayman Visa registration ends on Feb. 15, 2023.
STAY TUNED FOR MORE UPDATES
START **APRIL 23**
END **APRIL 30**
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL OFFICES OR VISIT <https://synod.ujci.com>

World Day of Prayer-March 3, 2023

Press Release

"I have Heard About Your Faith"



Our sisters in Taiwan are sending us blessings with the service they have prepared for World Day of Prayer 2023. Taiwan is an island rich in natural resources and culturally diverse. The women of Taiwan share the issues faced geographically, politically and socially and also their hopes for the future. Let us join them as we give thanks for the beautiful island and people of Taiwan and

encourage one another in our faith just as Apostle Paul did in his letters.

(artwork by Hui-Wen HSIAO; source: wwdp.org.uk)

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organization which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a church near you on Friday, March 3 2023 people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Taiwan.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world --- through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

(source: wwdp.org.uk) (All information and images in this article: Copyright © 2021 World Day of Prayer International Committee, Inc.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 03. (Friday) **World Day of Prayer**

March 04. (Saturday)

Training for Lay Leaders Certificate Course - Module 1 Orientation – 9:00 am via Zoom

March 05. (Sunday) **2nd Sunday of Lent**

Remember in your prayers!

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Please, include in your prayers the victims of recent disasters in Turkey, Syria and Greece, as well as those sick or bereaved!



NOTICEBOARD



TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS

Equipping the saints for the work of ministry

IT'S TIME TO REGISTER!

Register now for Module 1.

Training begins **March 11, 2023** and continues **2nd and 4th Saturdays** (9-1:30 pm) and **Thursdays** (6-8 pm) following each training Saturday. Module 1 concludes in August.

Delivery online via Zoom. Learners may join online from one location in each region by special arrangement with Regional Mission Council offices. **Cost: \$9000**

ORIENTATION SESSION

Come and learn about the Training

An Orientation session is planned for those who register as well as others who are interested in learning more about the Training for Lay Leaders Course.

This will be held on Saturday **March 4, 2023** online from 9 am - 11:30 a.m. via Zoom
Meeting ID: 879 2238 3834
Passcode: 192859

UCJCI Lay Leaders Certificate Course is designed to prepare lay persons to serve in leadership.



For more information, contact your Regional Mission Council or email: laytraining_admin@ucjci.com or WhatsApp 876 8818783



(Training for Lay Leaders)

UCJCI Lay Leaders Certificate Course



2023 Module 1 Schedule

- (Sat) March 11. - The Lay Leader in UCJCI
- (Sat) March 25. - Introduction to Leadership
- (Sat) April 1. - Planning and Leading Bible Study
- (Sat) May 13. - Strategic Planning for Church Growth
- (Sat) May 27. - The Church Then and Now – How Did We Get Here?
- (Sat) June 10 - Planning and Leading Worship
- (Sat) June 24. - Understanding the Sacraments
- (Thu) June 29. - The Leader as Evangelist
- (Thu) July 13. - Church Administration
- (Thu) July 27. - Communication
- (Thu) August 17. - The Leader as Caregiver

All sessions are on Zoom. Registration is necessary to have access to the sessions. Please register with your Minister.

Anyone interested in the **UCJCI Training for Lay Leaders Certificate Course 2023** please speak with your Minister and/or call the Council Office for Registration Form and further information.

Telephone: 947-1963 or **Email:** cirmc.info@gmail.com or rdgs@cicucjci.com

InterSchool & InterVarsity Christian Fellowship



presents

COMMUNITY SOUP OUTREACH

Saturday, March 4, 2023
9:00am at Watler Park

Join us as we distribute soup and pray for the residents of the community

www.isivcfky.com

345-929-5111



United Church Young People's Fellowship

SYNOCDICAL SPORTS DAY WILL CAYMAN FAN THE FLAMES OF VICTORY?

"Rooted, Resilient: Reignited by the Spirit"

Noranda Sports Complex

Saturday March 18, 2023 at 8:00am

General: \$200 // CHILDREN UNDER 12: \$100



on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am

March 5, 2023
Rev. Rohan Forrester

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