



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

May 04, 2023

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 17



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



Time To Pull Up Anchor!

(The Sermon of the Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott, Moderator of the UCJCI, on the occasion of the Closing Service of the 43rd Synod of the UCJCI, held at the Elmslie Memorial United Church, George Town, Grand Cayman)

TEXT: Acts 4: 13-22

I join our General Secretary in expressing profound thanks to the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church for the great job you have done in hosting this 43rd Synod of the UCJCI. Thanks to the Government of the Cayman Islands for facilitating the entry of the Jamaican delegation; thanks to all the congregations and individuals who made meaningful contributions which made the Synod the success it was. Let us commit to deepening our connections as we move forward as a church. Let us Pray,

**Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
To receive the food of Your Holy Word...
And by grace, we'll stand on Your promises
And by faith, we'll walk as You walk with us
Speak, O Lord, till Your Church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory. Amen.**

We gathered as a church over these day in times of inspirational worship; deep and provocative Bible Studies; we wrestled in discussion about the state of affairs of our two countries - the socio-political challenges; the need to give serious attention to our children, youth and men's ministry; the need to be more intentional in our pastoral accompaniment of our schools; the need to affirm the dignity of those of our sisters and brothers in our societies who are disabled; we listened to the pain coming out of our sister nation - Haiti and what must be the response of CARICOM and the World Church; we were challenged in lecture; we were inspired by the stories of some who have given themselves to the work of Christ and the Church; with the motif or the central theme of the **ship** we have determined that we need to address the quality of our **worship**, our **fellowship**, our **discipleship**, our **stewardship** and our **leadership**.

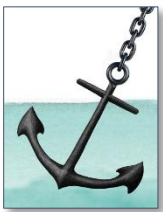
Over 200 of us gathered in the business sessions of this Synod (physically and virtually) and many more of us from across the regions of the church and beyond participated in the worship services. And so we come to this moment. What must this closing service mean for us? I want to declare to us my sisters and brothers, whether you were as a delegate at Synod or member of the United Church who connected with us during worship or the other public events, that this Closing Service does not mean the end, in fact, it is the beginning; the past days were preparing us for the start. We have gathered to receive our

marching orders; **it is time to pull up our anchor and set sail**; it is time to be on the move; it is time for all hands to be on deck, rowing in the same direction.

That's what the followers of Christ were like in the early church. After they encountered the risen Christ and experienced the outpouring or the igniting of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, things were never the same; they were on a move, and you could not stop them. They had a clear sense of who they were; Peter - full of the Holy Spirit, set the record straight in terms of their identity with the risen Lord; their fellowship deepened as we see in Acts Chapter 2. In Acts Chapter 3, enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, one man whose life had been reduced to begging on account of his disability, had his dignity restored as he was healed and was now in a position to help himself; he was now able to paddle his own canoe as some people would put it and the miracle erupted into praise, wonder and amazement.

One would think this was something for everybody to celebrate, but it caused "ruption". The followership of Christ was now growing; people were gravitating to Christ -responding positively to the preaching of the Word - because it was a Gospel of liberation; a Gospel that was setting people free from religious and socio-political captivity. As a result, some people's power- base was beginning to shake; insecurity and jealousy of religious leaders began to surface, and so they tried to silence the Apostles; they tried to quench the movement of the Spirit.

If we were to be honest with ourselves, even in church today some of us don't want to see changes because they disturb our power-based; our hold; our stifling grip. No sisters and brothers; this is a movement for everyone, so we either join the movement or be moved by it. Let us not stand in the way of what God wants to accomplish in our congregations. Let us not stand in the way of what God wants to accomplish in the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Let us each examine ourselves - I am being a stumbling block or a stepping-stone; am I standing in the way of my congregation moving forward and realizing new exploits for God or am I an enabling force; am I stuck in the past or am I ready to get on board - to join the movement; to move forward?



It is time to pull anchor my sisters and brothers; it's not time to park; it's time to be on the move.

In Chapter 4 of Acts, the religious leaders - the priests, the captain of Temple Guard, the Sadducees (these were the key religious leaders) tried to interrupt this Divine and

Holy Spirit fueled movement by placing Peter and John in jail. It never stopped the movement. We are told in the earlier part of Acts 4 that while the arrest took place, people were still believing, including about 5000 men.

As we read the account, it is clear that one of the characteristic features of the life empowered by the Spirit was **BOLDNESS**. The Apostles stood up and spoke up.

1. They were prepared to defend the faith in the public space.

Earlier in Chapter 4, after having Peter and John in jail overnight, the big guys gathered the next day to determine what they would do to silence these Apostles and to put a stop to the Movement. *"The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" (v.5)*

Peter stood up and spoke; he presented the Jesus of Nazareth as the one behind the healing of the man; he challenged them for the injustice they had meted out to Jesus; how they murdered Jesus, but he also declared God's purpose in all of it. We are told that 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

What a testimony, Brothers and Sisters! This movement that I am inviting you to join that has the potential of turning your family, your community, your nation, and the world around begins with an encounter with Jesus. Peter and John were not university graduates; they were not people of great social standing in the community; they were not politicians - they were some ordinary fishermen who responded to the call of Christ to follow him; they obeyed; they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, and they were setting the then world on fire for Christ.

One of the calls made at the Synod was for us to know what we believe; to be confident in what we believe; to learn from the Scriptures; to learn from the Apologetics of our faith; those who defended the faith with rigor and reason so that we can remain standing; moving forward in the world that would like to silence us.

In their boldness, the Apostles defended the faith in the public space and they

- **Spoke Truth to Power**

Earlier, the Apostles declared to the leaders that they were the ones responsible for the death of Jesus. In this portion of the text, the powers that be stood confounded by the presence of the man who was healed; they couldn't deny it, so their next best option was to ask the Apostles to stop the Movement and anchor the mission; bring to a halt; to stop it. 16 *"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. 17 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." 18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

Those religious leaders were to understand that the mission was not about them; that they could not control the movement. Sisters and Brothers, we must never get to the place where people are allowed to silence the church or to prevent her from executing her mission. This Movement must not only reach the poor and vulnerable, but those who are strategically placed in society as they are the ones who tend to set the tone for what goes on around town. This is where the advocacy that we spoke about at Synod comes in; we must advocate for; be the voice of those without a voice; those without representation. **It's Time To Pull Up Anchor and Get sailing.**

2. Empowered by the Spirit, the Apostles were able to point to the evidence of the Spirit's work through them.

The problem they had in trying to discredit the Apostles, was the evidence of the healed man in their presence. They could not hide the evidence; they could not tamper with it. It was the same thing with Lazarus - after the resurrection of Lazarus and they were confronted with an undeniable evidence of that resurrection, they tried to kill Lazarus again, in fact, it has been pointed out that the Greek word used was that they wanted to mince Lazarus into pieces so there would be no hope of another resurrection and therefore kill the evidence. Wasn't it the same when Jesus was killed as well; guards were placed at his tomb to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and for them to spread a propaganda that he was risen. But guards could not stop the resurrected power of God demonstrated in Jesus. The guards, who were supposed to be guards, powerful and fearless, became afraid. The resurrection was an undeniable reality.

My brothers and sisters of the United Church, on this movement we need to see the evidence of the power of God. Yes, it may be some supernatural healing - and we have seen real ones of those - not the fakes and gimmicks to fool people, but can we see more lives being turned around - turned to God; can we see more communities living in peace; can we see homes free of domestic violence; can we see less of our children suffering from abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and psychological); can we see more of our children realizing their full potential; can we see more of our children at school living in peace with each other; can see our young people moving away from scamming, from drug abuse; can we see less of our young men with potential going to prison; can we see more equity; more justice; less discrimination and prejudice in our societies because we the people of God are here? Where God's spirit is at work there is evidence to show, and critics are silenced by it. The Church must make a difference in the world.

21 After further threats they let them (Peter and John) go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

This man had a problem for a long time; he lost his dignity; he was reduced to begging, but the men of God who were on the move restored him. Many more in our homes, communities and nations need to be restored; need to experience life in its fullness. At the Synod we talked about the need to rescue our children; our youth; our men, but a congregation that is comfortably anchored will not be able to do so. **It's time to pull**

up our anchor. I believe God spoke to us at Synod; I believe God spoke to us during these services.

Isaiah heard the voice of God asking, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Having experienced the touch of God, he responded, "Here I am, send me." May the Spirit of God touch some of us; may the Spirit of God ignite or re-ignite some of us so that we may release our intellect, our skills, and abilities to the mission of Christ. May the Spirit of God touch us so that we may avail some of our time to the service of God. May the Spirit of God touch us so that we may release our resources, our monies to the Mission. May the Spirit of God touch us so that wherever we work or serve society we will seek opportunities to represent Christ and to disciple others.

Time to pull up anchor sisters and brothers; be a part of this movement; we don't want anyone to be left behind. I commission you as Jesus commissioned the believers, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

Amen.

Thank You!

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council expresses sincere appreciation to all who contributed in various ways to make the hosting of the 43rd Synod of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands the blessing that it was for the Church.

We express profound thanks to the following:

- *All CIRC Synod Planning Team members for contributing their time and resources, including purchasing the Synod souvenirs, plates and cutlery, and banner. Team Members - Rev Euthman Wray, Ms Ann Marie Mason, Ms Tessa Bodden, Ms Melody McLean, Mr Roy McGregor, Mr Noel Wallace, Mr Antonio Sanchez, Rev L Christopher Mason, Mrs Renee Barnes and Mrs Jacynthia Anderson and Rev Otto Menko.*
- *Cayman Border Control for granting the visas to the delegates from Jamaica*
- *Host Families for welcoming the delegates into their homes or providing apartments for delegates to use during the Synod.*
- *The Technical Teams at the Emslie Memorial Church and the Savannah United Church for facilitating the live-streaming of the Services and the Zoom platform for the Business Sessions.*
- *Ms April Lewis - Synod Chaplain*

- *Participants in the daily Bible Study*
- *Table Group leaders*
- *Liturgists, Musicians and Readers for the Worship Services*
- *All nine Congregations for providing meals for breakfast and afternoon tea.*
- *Volunteers who prepared the venues served meals for the Services, Reception Public Lecture and Business Sessions*
- *Mr Francisco Sta Maria (Savannah United)and Mr Arnet Martin (Emslie Memorial) for their preparation of the sanctuaries and premises*
- *The Emslie Memorial, John Gray Memorial and Savannah United for making their busses available to transport delegates*
- *Drivers of the busses and persons who used their vehicles to transport delegates on a daily basis.*
- *Those who loan the Synod their personal vehicles and rented a motor vehicle for the use of the leaders of the Church.*
- *Cayman Prep and High School*
- *Cayman Islands Scouts*
- *Girls' Brigade Cayman Islands*
- *Women's Fellowship - Cayman Islands*
- *The Men's Ministry / Discipleship MAT*
- *Mr Bryan Bothwell and his family*
- *Mr Leonard Ebanks and family*
- *Mr Nickerson Godfrey*
- *Mr Jerris Miller for the loan of the Cat Boats*
- *Ms Karen Ryan and Mrs Lisa Arch Scott- publishing of the Worship Booklet and Orders of Worship*
- *Cayman Islands Folk Singers*
- *Cayman Island Dancers*
- *Ms Norma McField*
- *Ms Tessa Bodden*
- *Pastor Ormond Williams*
- *Ms Melody McLean*
- *Mrs Pamela Burke*
- *Mr John Burke*
- *Mrs Gerry Robinson*
- *Mrs Cora Grant-James*
- *Mr Roy Grant*
- *Mr Edmund King*
- *Rev Donovan Myers*
- *Ms Kathy Jackson*
- *Mr Bonnie Dixon*
- *Mrs Melanie Ebanks Jackson*

- *Ms Lorna Reid*
- *Mr Brian Barnes*
- *Mrs Mavis McField and family*
- *Mrs Terri Merren and her family*
- *Chill Spot Restaurant*
- *Liberty's Restaurant*
- *Subway Restaurants - Mr Troy Burke*
- *Cost. U. Less*
- *Signs of Paradise- Ms Tina Webb*
- *Massive Equipment Ltd- Mrs Dara Munroe*
- *Ms Tunisia McLean, Ms Lidka Scott and the Board of the Cayman Islands National Museum*
- *Cayman Turtle Centre - Ms Kathy Jackson, and those who financially facilitated the visit*

A Brief Pictorial Story of the 43rd Synod of the UCJCI April 23-30, 2023

Saturday, April 22, 2023 - Arrivals



Sunday, April 23, 2023 – Opening Service



Monday, April 24, 2023 – 1st Business Day and Moderator's Reception



Tuesday, April 25, 2023 – Tenure Awards, Book Launch, Service of Celebration of Life and Witness



Wednesday, April 26, 2023 – Resiliency Awards (1) and Public Lecture



Friday, April 28, 202 – Immersion Day



Saturday, April 29, 2023 – Fellowship Gatherings



Sunday, April 30, 2023 – Closing Service



GENERATION 4:12

G412
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
IS/IVCF CAYMAN ISLANDS
PRESENTS

A WEEKEND RETREAT Date Nights With The King

STARTS: SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023 AT 6:00 PM
ENDS: MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023 AT 4:00 PM
AT THE PROSPECT YOUTH CENTRE
292 PROSPECT POINT ROAD

GROW IN CHRIST JET SKIS PRIZES VOLLEYBALL AND MORE!

AGE 17 - 22 YEARS OLD
WEEKEND COST: \$95 PER PERSON
(INCLUDES MEALS AND ACCOMMODATION)

DAY COST: \$30 PER PERSON
(INCLUDES MEALS)

REGISTER AT: ISIVCFKY.COM/EVENTS
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2023

CONTACT US AT 516-3679 FOR MORE INFORMATION

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."
Jeremiah 29:13

ELMSLIE MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH'S
YOUTH MINISTRY PRESENTS A

FISH FRY

Menu:

- Mahi Mahi (fillet) \$15
- Whole Snapper \$12
- Sides: Fried Breadfruit, Plantain & Fritters
- Pastries, water and soft drinks available for purchase, too.

Saturday,
May 6, 2023
7am - until ...

ELMSLIE CHURCH HALL
108 Seafarers Way
George Town

Tickets available for purchase after Sunday services in the belfry or contact Jennelle McLaughlin or Roy McGregor.



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

May 07, 2023
Rev. Louis-Herard Sully

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