



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

AUGUST - REALIGN THE HOME

Our fellowship with God enables our communion with others. What happens in the home affects the society, hence God in Jesus Christ must be the Head of the home in order for the family to dwell together in peace.

Genesis 32:22-31

Jacob, as the leader in his home, is not perfect, and he wrestles again with God. This time, he has a family to lead, and God needs to transform his life to lead a nation as well.

Matthew 14:13-21

In the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Jesus transformed a private homemade lunch into a public event. Can the things in our homes become blessings to others?

The home, realigned by the Spirit is a safe haven not only for the family but for the community.

Psalm 17:1-7, 15

Romans 9:1-5

- (UCJCI Preaching Themes – Sunday, August 6, 2023)

The Spirit Realigns the Home

Mr Michael Bowerman

A few years ago, my wife Mary and I attended my parents' 78th wedding anniversary in England. Yes, you read aright – 78th! When they were interviewed by the local newspaper, the reporter indicated that he believed them to be the oldest married couple in the whole of Leicestershire – a county of about 700,000 people.

Some may ask, “How could any couple stay married that long?” In today’s Western world, many marriages hardly last into double digits. The Cayman Islands is reported to have a high divorce rate. In 2020, there were 318 divorces, nearly five for every 1000 people, and twice the rate in the United States.

My parents from the start of their marriage had a motto for themselves. It is written on a plaque in the church graveyard where their ashes are laid. It simply says: “Each for each other

and both for God.” They were certainly not perfect; I can well remember many loud arguments. However, none of us as their children ever doubted two things: their commitment to God and their love for each other. Both had become Christians in their teens, and they had known each other for 85 years!

My formative years were the ‘60s. I was living in England at the time. Social commentators will tell you that in this period there was a marked shift in the UK and North America with regard to how society viewed morality, especially with regards to love, sex and marriage. The Sexual Revolution introduced what was called the ‘New Morality’ which stressed that love was merely a feeling, sex was merely for pleasure and that the old traditions of abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within it were old-fashioned. The Beatles sang, “All you need is love,” and ‘love-ins’ and recreational sex became the order of the day. The covenant of marriage, with its vows: “... for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy law” became less important and commitment to one another less than necessary. The impact was increasing breakdowns in relationships, large numbers of children growing up in one-parent homes and the inevitable weakening of the strong societies that had characterized the Western World to this point.

Over fifty years on, this cultural revolution has gathered pace and is now permeating our modern Cayman society. It is exacerbated by the confusion of today’s world with regard to gender identity, what actually defines ‘marriage’ and the apparent need to affirm and celebrate lifestyles that a couple of generations ago were generally considered wrong. We are being informed that personal freedom is the bottom line, not whether something is right or wrong. Love is about feelings, we are told, and these are our ultimate guide, happiness our ultimate goal and judging others the ultimate sin. Those who are not considered ‘inclusive’, or consider certain lifestyles and behaviour unacceptable, are called ‘hateful and ‘bigoted’. The national anthem of our modern culture is Frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way.”

One Christian writer has stated, “Our Western culture is secular so it is widely believed that moral values are socially constructed rather than God-given. As is commonly asserted, ‘No one has the right to tell anyone what is right and wrong. Everyone has a right to determine their own moral values.’”

As a Christian, I would categorically deny this assertion. The reason why there is so much confusion, and why there are so many broken homes, single parents and hurting children is

because we have forgotten that God in God's wisdom created parameters for those whom He made in His own image. And it is the enemy of our souls who attacks that which God created for our good – marriage between a man and a woman, and the biblical home. Satan is the great deceiver and delights to sow confusion in our modern culture.

But it is God by His Spirit who can reverse this shift. It is God who can restore marriage and God who can make the home what He intends it to be. The principles of Scripture have never changed as it relates to marriage. Simply choosing to live together – what used to be termed 'shacking up' – is not biblical marriage, and nor is a same-sex marriage. Rather, the Bible states that "at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'" This 'one flesh' is not merely a physical oneness but signifies a union of mind and spirit as well as body.

The Bible also stresses the importance of a strong and loving home, with both a dad and mum committed to each other, raising their children as God intends.

This is a big subject but in view of time restraints, I want to briefly suggest four principles in which the Holy Spirit can bring alignment – that is, order to the Christian home. There are four injunctions that Scripture, through the Apostle Paul, gives in Ephesians 5 and 6.

One: "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as to the Lord." Wow – a controversial statement in today's world! However, this command does not imply she is of lesser worth or inferior, let alone in any sense unequal, but it recognizes a divinely ordered relationship whereby the husband is given the responsibility of leadership in the home. Paul states elsewhere that the man is the head of the woman, Christ is the head of the man and God the Father is the head of Christ. Yet we know there was equality within the Godhead. But Jesus, we know from John's Gospel, submitted to his Father. In the same way, a wife submits to her husband. This is a topic for further discussion on another day.

Two: "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." I believe if husbands did just that, there would never be any need for discussion about the first requirement. If the wife is loved in this way by her husband, she will never feel resentful or inferior and, further, this kind of love of a husband for his wife will be the greatest testimony to their children.

Three: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Dependent children must be encouraged – better, taught – the importance of respect and obedience. It is this which provides security and safe parameters for their lives. Undisciplined children are rarely happy or feel secure.

Four: "Fathers... bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord." Yes, it states 'fathers'. While it is true that both parents have the responsibility for raising their children, including ensuring they are taught the Christian faith, Scripture indicates the priority of the dad in this important role.

Statistics have shown when this is the case, far more children become committed Christians.

One observation from these four injunctions is that in every case the injunction is given in the context of each one's relationship with "the Lord" – in other words, it is because we want to do what God wants, we want to please him. Thus, we need to seek God's help in getting things right in our family life for, human nature being what it is, we usually make a mess of life unless we allow the Spirit of God to help us live as he wants us to – and that includes within our marriages and our homes.

So, it is God who by his Spirit will enable us to realign our homes as he wants them. And we can do no better than end by returning to my parents' motto for their lives as a guide to a marriage and home that did just that "Each for each other and both for God."

JOHN GRAY MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH VBS



The John Gray Memorial United Church had its VBS from July 24-28, 2023, with an average of 55 children and youth in attendance. The ministry was well supported by a total of 29 volunteers. This year's VBS was entitled **Stellar**, a space-

themed programme, offering the children a week full of exciting adventures, teaching them how to "Shine Jesus' Light" to the world.



The daily activities included Bible adventures, songs, games, snacks, and an 'Imagination Station' where kids could make surprising discoveries. Special thanks to everyone who offered to support the youth leadership in their efforts and the volunteers for making the VBS a stellar success.



CIRMC 2023 SUMMER CAMPS

JULY 12-16 (CHILDREN)

JULY 19-23 (TEENS)



Spirit' and the material was developed by the YLNE Camp Planning Team in reflection on the current Synodical period's theme, 'Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit.'

Day 1 – Introduction - Understanding the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Campers were introduced to the theme “Ketch di Fyah” by laying the foundation for an understanding of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. If they were to be Reignited by the Spirit, they need to know more about the Spirit. Key verse: Romans 12:11 “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.”

Day 2 - FIRE: Purify & Refine

Campers had the opportunity to better understand the importance and necessity of the Purifying and Refining ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Key verse: Gal 5:16 “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

Day 3 - WIND: Power & Guidance

Day 3 helped campers to learn why and how to rely on the Holy Spirit in their lives for Power and Guidance. Key verse: John 3:8 “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Day 4 - WATER: Salvation & Sustenance

Through the day's theme campers explored the link between water as the main source of life, and Jesus as the source of Spiritual Life. Key verse: John 4:14 “But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Day 5 - OIL: Anointing & Serving

On the last day, campers were challenged to be Filled with the Spirit and to go as Christ's Ambassadors into the world to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. Key verse: Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoner.”

Other camp activities included daily morning physical exercises, breakfast and lunch duties, praise party, creative activities (dance, music, photography, cooking/baking, art & craft), and a visit to the beach. In all, thirty-two children and twenty-seven teens attended under the leadership of thirty-seven volunteers.



The Children's Camp at Webster Memorial UC (BT)

The CIRMC 2023 Summer Camps came to a close on Sunday, July 23, 2023, with the Teen's Camp participation in the morning worship service at the Elmslie Memorial United Church. The overall theme 'Ketch Di Fyah – Reignited by the



The Teen's Camp at Elmslie Memorial UC.



Arts & Crafts



Cooking/Baking



Developing musical skills



The Camp Leadership Team headquarters in the Council Office

THERE IS ALWAYS THAT ONE SUMMER THAT CHANGES YOU

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 2023 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 in your personal life and among those God has placed you.

From the CIRMC

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 especially the family of the late Mr. McFarlane Conolly (EEUC), also Mr. Mike Bowerman and his wife Mary (EMUC), Rev. Joe Crawford and Rev. Harry Bodden.



on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am

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